

Faculty of Arts
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The Age of Brown Envelopes

*Athletics and Football as Case Studies of the Professionalization of
Finnish Elite Sport from the 1960s to 1990s*

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Cover photograph: Paavo Nurmi running at the Olympic marathon trials in Vyborg, Finland, on June 26, 1932. TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture/Sports Museum of Finland

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Abstract

For most of the twentieth century, Finnish sport was characterized by the “shamateurism” of elite athletes. Professionally motivated athletes were ushered towards practices such as under-the-table rewards, ostensible jobs and inflated expenses because of the amateur code of the International Olympic Committee. The amateur rules prohibited athletes from receiving monetary rewards from sport and set strict limits on costs compensations and training times. Amateurism was rationalized for its educational and ethical values, but it proved to be impossible to accommodate its ideals to the practical realities of elite sport within capitalist Western societies. The discrepancy between the ethos and practice of sport was particularly notable in the Nordic countries, where national amateur sport dominated the sports landscape until the 1990s.

This dissertation approaches the understudied transition from (sham) amateurism to legitimate professionalism in Finnish elite sport from the 1960s to 1990s from the perspective of athletes with a particular focus on athletics and football. How did shamateurism manifest in Finnish elite athletics and football? What financial and sporting opportunities were related to it, and how did athletes take them? What sources of income did track and field athletes and football players have during their careers, and how did these change during the transition towards open professionalism? How did mitigations to the amateur code on the one hand, and professionalization on the other, impact athletes’ career pathways and opportunities?

The primary sources for this dissertation consist of oral history interviews and written contemporary sources from archival documents to newspapers and magazines. These include interviews with seven former Finnish track and field athletes and eleven former football players, documents from the archives of the governing bodies of sport and selected club archives, as well as a variety of Finnish newspapers and magazines. Methodologically, the research combines methods of oral history with rigorous study and contextualization of original sources. The concepts of amateurism, shamateurism and professionalism form the conceptual framework for my analysis.

The dissertation includes three original articles and a summarizing report. The findings of the three articles demonstrate the mechanics of the system of shamateurism as it developed behind the façade of amateurism during the twentieth century Finland. The system provided elite athletes pathways to full- or part-time training conditions and earnings that surpassed what most of their contemporaries in Finland earned, while requiring them to pose as amateurs in public. However, in addition to a high level of sporting prowess, shamateurism required a spirit of entrepreneurship that not everyone possessed and did not apply as such to all elite level athletes.

In athletics, under-the-table rewards, sinecures, and broken-time payments provided star athletes with comparably professional conditions as early as the interwar period. During the postwar decades, the founding of the Finnish Athletics Federation’s stipend system in

1970 and a trust fund in 1983 were particularly notable landmarks in the professionalization of athletics. The former improved athletes' training both in terms of quantity and quality, and the latter enabled over-the-table rewards from meets and from sponsors.

Shamateurism also proved to be a relevant concept in Finnish football. In the 1970s and 1980s, player rewards at the highest tier of Finnish football, officially an amateur league, were partially paid under-the-table, enabling total earnings that at their highest surpassed Finland's average salary. The dissertation thereby shows that the emergence of written contracts and increasing tax investigations did not immediately end under-the-table practices in Finnish sport. After the turn of the 1990s, Finnish football players' career prospects changed significantly when overt professionalism became the primary model of elite sport in Finland, and opportunities to play professionally in foreign countries increased after the Bosman ruling in 1995.

Tiivistelmä

Suomalaista huippu-urheilua luonnehti suurimman osan 1900-lukua sala-ammattilaisuudeksi kutsuttu ilmiö. Sala-ammattilaisuus ilmeni muun muassa pöydän alta urheilijoille maksettuina palkkioina, näennäisinä työpaikkoina ja liioiteltuina kulukorvauksina. Sala-ammattilaisuuteen urheilijoita ajoivat Kansainvälisen olympiakomitean amatöörisäännöt ja sääntöjen taustalla vaikuttanut amatörismin ihanne. Amatörismiä perusteltiin kasvatuksellisilla ja eettisillä syillä, mutta sen ideaali osoittautui jo varhain vaikeaksi sovittaa kapitalististen länsimaisten yhteiskuntien käytäntöihin. Urheilun julkisen eetoksen ja huippu-urheilijoiden eletyn todellisuuden välille kehkeytnyt ristiriita korostui erityisesti Pohjoismaissa, joissa urheilun julkiset rakenteet perustuivat urheilijoiden amatööriyteen 1990-luvulle saakka.

Tämän väitöskirjan aiheena on suomalaisen huippu-urheilun vähän tutkittu siirtymä näennäisen amatööriyden ajasta legitiimiin ammattilaisuuteen. Erityisenä tutkimuskohteena on yleisurheilun ja jalkapallon ammattilaistuminen 1960-luvulta 1990-luvulle. Millaisia muotoja sala-ammattilaisuus sai Suomessa? Millaisia taloudellisia ja urheilullisia tilaisuuksia siihen liittyi, ja miten urheilijat pyrkivät hyödyntämään niitä? Miten yhtäältä amatöörisäännöistä luopuminen ja toisaalta ammattilaistumisen prosessi vaikuttivat yleisurheilijoiden ja jalkapalloilijoiden uranäkymiin ja tulonlähteisiin?

Tutkimuksen alkuperäislähdeaineisto koostuu entisten yleisurheilijoiden ja jalkapalloilijoiden haastatteluilla keräämästäni muistitiedosta sekä kirjallisista aikalaislähteistä, joihin sisältyy aineistoa urheilun keskusjärjestöjen ja valikoitujen seurojen arkistoista sekä sanoma- ja aikakauslehdistä. Metodologisesti tutkimus yhdistelee muistitietotutkimuksen metodeja kirjallisten alkuperäislähteiden kriittiseen analyysiin ja kontekstualisoimiseen. Käsitteellisen viitekehyksen analyysilläni muodostavat amatörismin, sala-ammattilaisuuden ja ammattilaisuuden monitahoiset käsitteet.

Väitöskirja koostuu kolmesta artikkelista ja yhteenveto-osasta. Artikkelit kuvaavat sala-ammattilaisuuden toimintamekanismeja amatörismin julkisivun takana 1900-luvun Suomessa ja osoittavat sen yhteiskunnalliset ja kansainväliset yhteydet. Maanalainen järjestelmä epävirallisine käytäntöineen tarjosi huippu-urheilijoille väyliä koko- tai osa-aikaiseen harjoitteluun sekä tienesteihin, jotka ylittivät suomalaisen keskiansiotason. Rahallisten ansioiden hankkiminen kilpailuista vaati kuitenkin myös erityistä yrittäjähenkä, jota kaikilla huippu-urheilijoilla ei ollut. Sala-ammattilaisuutta ei täten voi yleistää koko huippu-urheilua koskeneeksi ilmiöksi.

Yleisurheilussa salaiset palkkiot, suojatyöpaikat ja menetetyn työajan korvaukset loivat suomalaisille tähtiurheilijoille verraten ammattimaiset olosuhteet jo maailmansotien välisenä aikana. Sotien jälkeisinä vuosikymmeninä erityisesti Suomen Urheiluliiton stipendijärjestelmän perustaminen vuonna 1970 ja urheilijarahaston käyttöönotto 1983 kiihdyttivät siirtymää avoimeen ammattilaisuuteen. 1980-luvulla kansainvälisen

yleisurheilun voimakas kaupallistuminen ja asteittainen luopuminen amatöristä mahdollistivat urheilun palkkatyöläistymisen yhteiskunnan ja urheilun pelisääntöjen mukaisella tavalla.

Sala-ammattilaisuus osoittautui olennaiseksi käsitteeksi myös suomalaisen jalkapallon kontekstissa. 1980-luvulla osittain pöydän alta maksetut palkkiot nostivat pelaajapalkkiot kotimaisen jalkapallon ylimmällä sarjatasolla, SM-sarjassa, enimmillään suomalaisen keskiansiotason yläpuolelle, vaikka virallisesti kyse oli amatöörisarjasta. Tutkimukseni osoittaaakin, että kirjallisten sopimusten ja muiden juridisten käytäntöjen omaksuminen urheilussa ei merkinnyt välitöntä luopumista pitkään harjoitetuista pimeistä käytännöistä. Suomalaisten miesjalkapalloilijoiden uranäkymät mullistuivat 1990-luvulla, kun ammattilaisuus löi läpi Suomessa ja kynnys siirtyä ammattilaispelaajaksi ulkomaille aleni vuonna 1995 hyväksytyn Bosman-säännön seurauksena.

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One sometimes hears that writing acknowledgements is the most difficult part of a doctoral dissertation. For me, it is very much the opposite. Being able to thank the people who made this possible is not only enjoyable and easy but also proof that this research is finally just about to be finished.

I would like to thank the following people and organizations. Firstly, The Sports Museum of Finland, presently known as TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture, must be mentioned. It has been a privilege to be able to work in such a cultured place from 2008 onwards – first as an intern and later as a permanent Special Researcher. As I have learned in the congresses of ISHPES (The International Society for the History of Physical Education and Sport), such a place of openly available archives of sports organizations is not to be taken for granted elsewhere in the world. We Finns truly find ourselves in a privileged position.

I want to thank all my colleagues at the Sports Museum, in particular Ossi Viita, Matti Hintikka, Vesa Tikander, and Kalle Rantala. Although not directly involved with this dissertation, they are all renowned sports historians from whom I have learned immensely. Ossi has already supervised, encouraged, and supported me in many book projects. Thank you so much! Special thanks also to the museum's former director, Pekka Honkanen, who believed in me as an inexperienced history student and not only hired me but also gave me challenging projects, among which designing content for the Football Museum of Finland's new permanent exhibition in 2016 stands out in particular.

My alma mater is the University of Helsinki, where I completed my master's degree in history in 2012 and now, in 2023, my PhD. Choosing to study history was far from obvious to me, but as soon as I started my university studies, I realized that I was in the right place. Thanks to my parents Tarja and Matti for their wholehearted support for this decision and to my brothers Jyri and Kasper, both of whom later completed their studies in history as well, specializing in political history and economic history, respectively.

I started to think about doing a PhD in my fourth year of university, by which time I had come to realize that sports history was an actual thing. I have always been interested in sports. Football in particular has been, and still is, immensely meaningful for me – as a player, a supporter, and now a researcher. You, the reader, can judge whether this has influenced my reading of the near history of Finnish

football in the pages below. University circles, where football seems to be an even more popular sport in Finland than ice hockey, have enabled me to have endless thought-provoking discussions about this great sport. Playing football has also given me much-needed breaks from research. Thanks to all of you who have played with me in Kroonikot, Karhupuiston Vartijat (KPR), Kilo IF/3, and Zoom!

This dissertation was initially supervised by Panu Pulma and Seppo Aalto. Because of the funding difficulties that characterized the first years of my PhD studies, I could not utilize their expertise as much as I would have wanted. However, both Panu and Seppo directed me to focus on the athlete's perspective – a significant piece of advice that I have carried to the finish line. My later supervisors Anu Lahtinen and Jouko Kokkonen provided a perfect, varied combination of historical acumen, which benefited me in various ways. Thanks to all of you, and special thanks to Anu for spurring me on and for quick replies whenever I asked for something!

I am indebted to all the eighteen people who agreed to be interviewed for this dissertation, none of whom I had previously met. Their reflections and recollections from their active careers were not only fascinating to hear as such, but provided vital source material for this research.

The list of the funders of this dissertation is a short one. Despite countless submitted applications during the years, the only funding I received between 2013 and 2023 was a six-month grant from the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation. Much of the dissertation had thus to be written in my spare time. Whether this was more due to my poorly written applications or the marginal status of sports history in the academic world, is hard to say. In any case, my heartfelt thanks to the Wihuri Foundation. I wrote article number III and most of the summarizing report during the six-month period between August 2022 and January 2023. Without this opportunity, this research would never have been completed. During these final stages, I received valuable comments and peer support at the research seminar for Finnish and Nordic history in the University of Helsinki. I want to thank Kimmo Isotalo in particular for comprehensively and critically reviewing my manuscript. Thanks also to Jörg Krieger for contacting me in early August 2022, at a perfect time, and proposing an article about amateurism in Finnish athletics. Your suggestion eventually changed the contents of this PhD a lot, and definitely for the better.

Many thanks to Professor Emeritus Hannu Itkonen and Associate Professor Torbjörn Andersson from the Malmö University for agreeing to be the preliminary examiners of this dissertation. Your thoughtful and critical examination gave me a lot to think about and helped me change the manuscript for the better. I am grateful to Hannu for also agreeing to be my opponent in the public defense.

Finally, two people deserve a special mention. Firstly, my long-time friend Jukka, who always believed that I would complete this work. Concrete evidence of

this lies in my kitchen's cabinet, waiting to be raised in celebration in karonkka. Secondly, Liisa. One pivotal moment has always stood out when I try to understand the path that took me to a PhD. In 2010, during my fifth year in the university, I gave Liisa the first version of my master's thesis for reading and feedback. At the time, I thought of myself as a fairly decent writer, so imagine my surprise when the paper I got back was completely filled with red marks. In her critical analysis, she exposed all my mannerisms and as a result, made me a writer.

Jukka and Liisa, I dedicate this dissertation to you.

In Helsinki, July 31, 2023,

Jouni Lavikainen

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List of original publications

This thesis is based on the following publications:

I Lavikainen, Jouni. 2021. “If the IOC Finds Out about This, All of You Will Be Declared Professionals’: The Professionalization of Finnish Track Athletes from the 1960s to 1980s.” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 38:10–11, 1050–1066. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523367.2021.1984233>.

II Lavikainen, Jouni. 2023. “The Professionalisation of Finnish Football from the 1970s to 2000s: From Amateurs to Professionals.” In Mihaly Szerovay, Arto Nevala, and Hannu Itkonen (eds.) *Football in the Nordic Countries: Practices, Equality and Influence*, 94–105. *Critical Research in Football*. London: Routledge.

III Lavikainen, Jouni. 2023. ““We Cannot Afford to be Amateurs” – The Rise and Fall of Amateurism in Finnish Athletics.” The manuscript is accepted after peer-review and submitted for publication in Jörg Krieger (ed.) *Athletics in the Nordic Countries: History and Developments*. The book will be published by Common Ground in 2023.

The publications are referred to in the text by their roman numerals.

Abbreviations

Amateur Athletic Union	AAU
Helsingin Kisa-Veikot	HKV
Helsingin Jalkapalloklubi	HJK
Federal Republic of Germany	FRG
Finnish Gymnastics and Sports Federation [Suomen Voimistelu- ja Urheiluliitto]	SVUL
Finnish Olympic Committee [Suomen Olympiakomitea]	FOC
Finnish Ski Association [Suomen Hiihtoliitto]	FSA
Finnish Athletics Federation [Suomen Urheiluliitto]	FAF
Football Association of Finland [Suomen Palloliitto]	FA of Finland
German Democratic Republic	GDR
International Amateur Athletics Federation	IAAF
International Ice Hockey Federation	IIHF
International Olympic Committee	IOC
International Tennis Federation	ITF
International Track Association	ITA
Major League Baseball	MLB
Major League Soccer	MLS
National Basketball Association	NBA
National Football League	NFL
National Hockey League	NHL
The Swedish Sports Confederation [Riksidrottsförbund]	RF
The Athletics Congress	TAC
Workers' Sports Federation [Työväen Urheiluliitto]	TUL

1 Introduction

1.1 The context and purpose of the study

Hardly anything has wounded our sport as much as the problem of modern amateurs, those veiled professional athletes, Pharisees of the twentieth century, who suck rotten wounds into all healthy and dignified sports. As an unsolved mystery it still haunts all countries threatening as ever.¹

Amateurism in sport has been described with many terms during its long history. It has been a paradox, a historical relic, and a curiosity, as well as idealism, elitism and an artificial obstacle to the development of sport. It has been seen as hypocritical rhetoric, but also as an ethically and educationally important part of elite sport. Sport is the only walk of life in which amateurism has been lauded to such an extent that monetary rewards were prohibited by the rules, and breaching such rules sometimes resulted in bans even for the very best of athletes. Even though amateurism is usually associated with the Olympic movement, its societal roots are in Victorian Britain, where the principle of sport for sport's sake was codified into the rules of sports organizations from the 1850s onwards.² In many sports and countries, the era of amateurism in the context of elite sport continued in one way or another nearly until the end of the twentieth century – and in the case of North American college sports, even beyond.³ In the process, amateurism grew into a complicated, multi-faceted system with contradictory values. On the one hand, amateur sport was rationalized for its capabilities for moral and physical improvement; on the other, it provided means to exclude everyone but the most privileged athletes from sports arenas.

¹ “Tuskin mikään on urheiluamme niin suuresti vahingoittanut kuin ongelma nykyajan amatööreistä, noista naamioituneista ammattiurheilijoista, 20:nneen vuosisadan farisealaisista, jotka imevät mätähaavoja kaikkeen terveeseen ja arvokkaaseen urheiluun. Selvittämättömänä arvoituksena kummittelee se yhä vielä kaikissa maissa yhtä uhkaavana.” “Kilpailukausi 1905 ulkomailta. Kestävyyspyöräily” [Competition season 1905 abroad. Long-distance cycling], *Suomen Urheilulehti*, no. 1 (1906), 45.

² Gruneau 2006, 570.

³ Smith 2021, 231–238.

This research marks the end of a process that began in 2010 when I started to work on my master's thesis about the early effects of amateurism in Finnish sport. The choice of the research topic then stemmed from the realization of how novel a phenomenon openly professional sport in Finland is, and how long elite athletes in Finland were not allowed to openly earn a living from sport – an absurd notion in the context of elite sport today. I decided to continue that work in a doctoral dissertation because of the lack of historical research on the period when amateurism was put aside in Finland, but also for research ethical aspirations – to highlight the effects of a system that had trampled on the rights of athletes for so long. Because of amateurism, athletes were put in a contradictory position: top results were expected of them, but the means to pursue those results were limited, and financial rewards could only be received in brown envelopes under-the-table. The amateur rules robbed athletes of the financial and sporting opportunities that the athletes of today take for granted.

In the Nordic countries, sports authorities adopted amateurism eagerly, although without the elitist, socially exclusionary British aspect.⁴ Balancing the ideals of amateurism with the contrasting reality became a standard feature of Nordic elite sport early in the twentieth century. In Finland, the amateur rules resulted in constant headaches for the organizations that, sometimes sincerely but often ostensibly, tried to monitor the rules. The incompatibility of the amateur ideal with capitalist practices in the rest of society brought on various ways to circumvent the rules, and drove organizations and their decision-makers towards double standards and moralism.⁵ As early as the mid-twentieth century, the general public was well acquainted with “wallet runners” at Finnish athletics meets, and had become accustomed to listening to athletes and officials, who, when confronted with accusations of “shamateurism”⁶, claimed not to know anything about it.⁷

The most well-known wallet runner in international athletics is undoubtedly the “King of Runners”, Paavo Nurmi, who was infamously suspended by the IAAF in April 1932 for under-the-table payments that he had received in the previous summer. The FAF defended Nurmi until the end, but to no avail: despite being allowed to continue to run in domestic events, he never ran in international meets again. In Finland, the IAAF's Swedish board members J. Sigfrid Edström and Bo Ekelund were seen as the main culprits, and sports relations with Sweden were cut off for years. Nurmi's fate was etched into the nation's collective memory, as the

⁴ Peterson 2008, 3–4.

⁵ See, for example, Laine 1989, 305–326; Lavikainen 2012, 189–208.

⁶ I define shamateurism (sham amateurism) more extensively in chapter 3.2. but in short, it refers to athletes who took hidden payments in return for participation in, or results achieved at, sports events.

⁷ Kokkonen 2015, 168–169.

alleged cause of his treatment – the jealousy of the Swedes.⁸ In Finland, Nurmi's treatment was considered extremely unfair:

(...) And would it not be the biggest of blows to the authority of the leadership of the international sports movement, if it now declares Nurmi ineligible, and only then considers the principles on the basis of which it has done so in which case it may turn out that a mistake has been made. And what an irreparable insult it would be to Nurmi, who would thus be deprived of an opportunity that may never come again.⁹

This assessment of reporter Kallio Kotkas in *Suomen Urheilulehti* is sound. However, as a victim of amateurism, Nurmi pales in comparison to Jim Thorpe, the winner of the decathlon and pentathlon at the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, who was suspended for amateur violations soon after his Olympic triumphs. Thorpe's fate is a prime example of the arbitrary manner with which amateurism was enforced. When Paavo Nurmi was suspended, he had won twelve Olympic medals, including nine golden ones, and profited from his abilities more than any of his rivals. His achievements were not erased, and he was not deprived of his medals, let alone of his earnings. Jim Thorpe, however, was stripped of his gold medals, nominally because he had briefly played in a professional baseball league, but actually because the president of the AAU, James Sullivan, wanted to prove to the IOC that the AAU was committed to preserving amateurism, and restore his personal reputation in the process. As "an illiterate, nonwhite, non-Christian native", Thorpe (*Wa-Tho-Huk*, "Bright Path") was the ideal candidate.¹⁰

Finnish researchers have usually approached amateurism as a method of social control by sports organizations such as SVUL in the context of the early twentieth century and the interwar period.¹¹ In this doctoral dissertation, I have focused on the postwar decades during which amateurism slowly gave way to more professional practices, but shamateurism still characterized the lives of elite athletes. The focus is not on the organizations that enforced amateurism, but on the objects of amateurism, the athletes. The problematic position of athletes can be

⁸ Researchers have later rightly questioned this explanation, emphasizing instead the IAAF's and the IOC's will to make an example of Nurmi, the brightest star in international athletics and the best known shamateur, in a battle to protect amateurism. Kokkonen 2008, 178–182.

⁹ "Ja eikö olisi kansainvälisen urheiluliikkeen johdon auktoriteetille mitä suurin kolaus, jos se nyt ensin julistaa Nurmen kilpakelvottomaksi ja vasta sen jälkeen ryhtyy pohtimaan niitä periaatteita, joiden perusteella se on sen tehnyt, jolloin mahdollisesti voi käydä ilmi, että on erehdytty. Ja mikä korvaamaton loukkaus se olisi ennen kaikkea Nurmea kohtaan, jolta näin ollen riistettäisiin tilaisuus, jota [sic] ei ehkä enää koskaan tule uudelleen." "Nurmi-asia viimeisessä vaiheessaan. Olisiko Nurmen ammattilaiseksi julistamispäätös ennenaikainen." [The case of Nurmi at last stages. Would the declaration of Nurmi as a professional be premature?], *Suomen Urheilulehti* July 28, 1932, as cited in Lavikainen 2011, 95.

¹⁰ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 48–49.

¹¹ See, for example, Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 13.

summarized in the manner of sprinter Voitto Hellsten, who gave a rare interview about the amateur question to the magazine *Viikkosanomat* in 1960:

Many athletes had to take unsalaried leave from their work or find a substitute in order to take part in last autumn's international meets against France and Hungary. I was on unsalaried leave and had to pay 8,800 marks to my substitute. It was not enough that I did not receive wages, I had to pay to be able to participate.¹²

I analyze the article and its repercussions more thoroughly in the articles I and III, but the citation itself displays the undemocratic and unfair conditions that amateurism had created for athletes. Voitto Hellsten, an Olympic bronze medalist in Melbourne 1956, was one of the stars of Finnish athletics during an era when the Olympic Stadium in Helsinki was regularly filled with crowds of 50,000 in athletics meets. It is not an exaggeration to claim that many of these spectators paid for their entrance tickets specifically to see Voitto Hellsten run. Yet even a crowd magnet like him had to “pay to be able to participate” and seek possible profits in undercover negotiations with meet organizers.

During the Cold War, justifications for Olympic amateurism weakened further when the Soviet bloc entered the Olympic fray with nominally amateur elite athletes, who were able to train full-time in sinecures arranged for them by the Soviet authorities. In the West, the commercialization and commodification of sport provided athletes with new sources of under-the-table income, for example from the manufacturers of sports equipment such as running shoes and skis.¹³ Despite growing demands to modernize the amateur rules or remove them altogether, the amateur enforcers in the strongest bastions of amateurism, the IOC and the IAAF, were able to prolong the inevitable until the turn of the 1990s when the Olympic Games were finally opened to professional athletes of all sports disciplines.¹⁴ In Finland, most sports authorities viewed this change in a negative light. Professional sport was no longer opposed because it was considered degenerate, pre-scripted circus – as it was often described in the early twentieth century¹⁵ – but because it was seen as being commercially unsustainable and educationally suspect in a country of Finland's size and traditions. In the mid-1980s, these rationales featured often in the speeches and writings of sports leaders such as Jukka Uunila, who was the president of both SVUL and FOC:

¹² “Viime syksyn Ranska- ja Unkari -maaotteluiden ajaksi monet joutuivat ottamaan palkatonta lomaa ja hankimaan sijaisen. Minäkin olin palkattomalla lomalla ja maksoin sijaiselle 8800 markkaa. Ei riittänyt, että oli ilman palkkaa, vaan lisäksi piti vielä maksaa, että sai olla mukana.” “Meidän ei kannata olla amatöörejä” [We cannot afford to be amateurs], *Viikkosanomat* December 9, 1960.

¹³ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 110–115, 146–161.

¹⁴ Ibid., 188.

¹⁵ Lavikainen 2011, 39–41, 69.

SVUL will not take part in efforts to develop total professionalism in our country. (...) Our resources are simply not enough for professionalism that sustains dozens of sports disciplines and thousands of professional athletes. This kind of activity for the Finnish sports model, which is based on voluntarism, could be unpredictable and disastrous. The current model in which great talents in motor sports, ice hockey, and football (...) move abroad, is fine with us. After all, such a group is quite small, and will not endanger the broader objectives [in sport].¹⁶

The reluctance of Jukka Uunila and other Finnish sport leaders to support open professionalism in the context of the Olympic movement stemmed in part from ethics – that it would be educationally irresponsible to allow the Finnish youth to pursue a career as short and precarious as professional sport – but there were also pragmatic reasons involved. Uunila, among others, in all likelihood realized that maintaining ostensible amateurism in elite sport would give Finland better prospects for sporting success than an openly professional context, which has since been proven to be a correct assessment.¹⁷ Another common argument was related to the harmful effects that excessive commercialization might have on sport. Proponents of amateurism often compared concessions to professionalism and commercialism to the opening of floodgates – if one concession was made, everything would soon be allowed. Even though I have taken a fairly critical approach to the policies with which amateurism was enforced in elite sport, the recent history of international sport has provided ample evidence in support of the “floodgate theory” and for the researchers who have questioned and criticized the “unholy alliance” [*epäpyhä allianssi*] between sport and market forces.¹⁸ Once international sports federations joined up with major corporations in pursuit of money, commercial logic quickly penetrated all high-level international sport. Unrestrained commercialism has generated extravagant incomes for the most powerful associations, such as the IOC and FIFA, as well as lining the pockets of power brokers, elite athletes, and agents and causing detrimental societal side-effects that even the most vehement apostles of amateurism could not have imagined – the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar being a prime example. This has, in

¹⁶ “SVUL ei ole mukana totaalisen ammattilaisuuden synnyttämisessä maahamme. -- Resurssimme eivät kerta kaikkiaan riitä kymmeniä urheilumuotoja ja tuhansia ammattilaisia elättävää ammattilaisuutta varten. Tällaisen toiminnan uhkatekijät myös vapaaehtoisuuteen nojautuvan suomalaisen urheilujärjestelmän kannalta saattavat olla arvaamattomat ja tuhoisat. Nykyinen malli, jossa suuret lahjakkuudet, kuten autourheilijat, jääkiekkoilijat ja jalkapalloilijat -- hakeutuvat ulkomaille, sopii meille. Kyseinen joukko on sittenkin kovin pieni, eivätkä suuret tavoitteet täten vaarannu.” J. Uunila Juhlapuhe SVUL:n Varsinais-Suomen piiri 2.3.1986, Puheet 1962–91 19.5, SVUL’s archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture’s archive, as cited in Lavikainen 2022, 378.

¹⁷ Koski and Lämsä 2015, 438.

¹⁸ Heinilä 2018, 39–40.

turn, inspired renewed nostalgia towards amateurism and the version of sport it promulgated – sport uncorrupted by greed.¹⁹

The Finnish sports model was poorly equipped for the coming of professionalism. Despite Finland's rapid change from an agrarian country to a modern, urbanized welfare state, and the birth of the consumer society, the socioeconomic position of elite athletes had changed little by the turn of the 1990s. Sport was not considered a legitimate profession, there was no social security for athletes, and various kinds of under-the-table payment were still in circulation.²⁰ In the course of the 1990s, the professionalism of elite athletes was embraced as the starting point for elite sport without fully addressing these issues. The task of this research is to display and analyze this difficult transition from the perspective of the athletes.

1.2 Former research

1.2.1 Finnish research

Finnish research on questions of amateurism and professionalism in sport have originated from both the fields of history and sociology. There is no general history of amateurism in Finnish sport, but scholars have investigated the social origins and values of amateurism in particular, and its practical effects on Finnish sport. The pioneering work in this sense is Antero Heikkinen's research *Ammattilaisesta amatööriksi. Suomen hiihtourheilun ensi vaihe* [From professionals to amateurs. The first period of Finnish skiing sport], published in 1977. Heikkinen's social historical approach to amateurism provided a lasting point of reference for further research – this dissertation included. Heikkinen demonstrated that professionalism characterized Finnish skiing sport as early as the 1890s and connected the demise of that culture to the arrival of amateurism in the first decade of the twentieth century.²¹ Erkki Vettenniemi has later shown that small monetary rewards were also commonly given to athletes in sports such as wrestling and athletics before the amateur era.²²

In addition to Antero Heikkinen, Leena Laine investigated the early effects of amateurism in her study *Vapaaehtoisten järjestöjen kehitys ruumiinkulttuurin alueella Suomessa* [The development of voluntary associations in the field of body

¹⁹ Nostalgic reimagination of the amateur era tends to present an embellished view of the past by neglecting the long-term presence of shamateurism behind the façade of amateur sport. See, for example, Heinilä 2018, 18–19.

²⁰ Lavikainen 2022, 432.

²¹ Heikkinen 1977, 205–240.

²² Vettenniemi 2007, 131–144.

culture in Finland], published in 1984. According to both Laine and Heikkinen, the amateur rules increased SVUL's power in relation to athletes and were thus useful for a federation that aimed to be the sole organizer of Finnish sport.²³ When SVUL was founded in 1906 and its amateur rules came into effect the following year, loosely organized professionalism was swept aside, and membership of sports clubs and acceptance of amateurism became preconditions for participation in competitive sport. This was also the starting point of my master's thesis, in which I highlighted SVUL's efforts to enforce amateurism between 1907 and 1932. Initially, professionalism proved to be a problem for SVUL, especially in skiing and wrestling. In the latter sport, SVUL publicly declared nearly thirty elite wrestlers professional athletes between 1907 and 1932 – most of them in the 1910s – which made them ineligible to participate in sports events organized by SVUL's member clubs.²⁴

During the interwar period, the question of amateurism was dominated by shamateurism in athletics, to which SVUL itself also contributed by arranging sinecures and broken-time payments for elite athletes before the Olympic Games, which was blatantly against its own amateur rules.²⁵ Leena Laine was the first Finnish researcher to analyze the dynamics of this phenomenon, focusing particularly on the suspension of Paavo Nurmi.²⁶ The evidence, arguments and motives of Nurmi's suspension were later uncovered in detail by Heikki Roiko-Jokela and Nurmi's biographers Paavo Karikko and Mauno Koski, who dismantled the myth of Swedish jealousy behind Nurmi's treatment.²⁷ An important contribution to the research in shamateurism in Finnish athletics was Ossi Viita's academic biography of Hannes Kolehmainen, the star of the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm and the first Finnish runner who was accused of shamateurism internationally. Hannes and his brother Viljam (aka William) embarked on running tours together in the 1910s, Hannes running in amateur and Viljam in professional events. By studying their joint running diary and other original source materials, Viita opened a new window not only on their training methods and mentalities, but also on their monetary rewards, which the brothers had marked in the diary.²⁸

In the social sciences of sport, Pauli Vuolle's doctoral dissertation in 1977 can be regarded as a pioneering work that, despite its age and somewhat different scientific background, contains notions relevant to this dissertation. Vuolle's dissertation was focused on the careers of elite-level Finnish athletes in individual and team sports, with the emphasis on time-expenditure and the relationship between training,

²³ Heikkinen 1977, 172–178; Laine 1984, 388–395.

²⁴ Lavikainen 2011, 108–113.

²⁵ Ibid., 75–80.

²⁶ Laine 1989, 306–326.

²⁷ Roiko-Jokela 1997, 59–77; Karikko and Koski 2006, 114–135.

²⁸ Viita 2003, 181–184, 199–200.

work, studies, and family-life. The data for the study was collected as a mail inquiry sent to hundreds of Finnish athletes who had practiced sport in the Olympic years of 1956, 1960, 1964, 1968, and 1972. Eventually as many as 451 athletes replied. The material thus enabled a statistically valid analysis of the careers of Finnish elite athletes between 1956 and 1972. Vuolle's main conclusion was that, based on the fact that the majority of the sample group practiced sport while working full-time, Finnish elite athletes could mostly be regarded "as fairly pure amateurs, if the question of amateurism is examined only in terms of time spent on work and sport".²⁹ However, somewhat contradictorily, more than 90 percent of the sample group regarded their sporting activities primarily as work for which a salary should be paid, just like in any other job, and considered the ideal of amateurism outdated in elite sport. Vuolle's research thus confirmed that elite sport in Finland had also diverged from purely leisurely activity and play to become more like work in which, "rather than amateurs subjected to education [by the authorities]", athletes resembled "entertainment workers".³⁰

More recently, Kalervo Ilmanen and Hannu Itkonen, in particular, have researched the history, effects, and values of amateurism in sport. Itkonen has connected amateurism to the concept of the "good narrative of sport" [*urheilun hyvä kertomus*] that Finnish sports authorities constructed in the first decades of the twentieth century. The narrative emphasized the positive qualities of sport, such as integrity, honesty, and hard work. The discourse about "altruistic" amateur sport could be accommodated into this narrative well. Elite sport was seen as achieving its national significance through the ethical and educational values of amateur sport, instead of individualistic and commercialized professional sport. According to Itkonen, sports federations such as SVUL harnessed amateurism as a method of social control to socialize athletes into these values.³¹ Ilmanen, in turn, has studied the divergent moral foundations of amateurism and professionalism. During the nineteenth century, competitive sport drew internationally from the values of both amateurism and professionalism. When the IOC committed to amateurism, it sought to regulate elite sport according to a single moral basis, amateurism, which did not reflect the realities of sport even in 1894, when the IOC was founded.³²

The weakening of amateurism in Finland and the coming of professionalism have received less attention than the formative period of amateurism and the organizations that enforced it – probably because the latter period is located further in the past and is more accessible to researchers in terms of archival source

²⁹ Vuolle 1977, 175.

³⁰ "(...) edellä oleva kehitys kuvastaa urheilun irtautumista leikki- ja vapaa-ajantoiminnoista ja sen lähentymistä työtoimintoihin, joissa urheilija on paremmin viihdetyöntekijä kuin kasvatuksen kohteena oleva amatööri." Ibid., 16.

³¹ Itkonen 1997, 206–215; Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 13.

³² Ilmanen 2012, 178–183.

material. The lack of research is highlighted by the fact that, until recently, the most relevant Finnish research about the professionalization of Finnish sport could be found in the general histories of the Olympic movement and Finnish sports culture, as well as in histories written about sports disciplines and sports clubs. These are valuable works in themselves, but in the context of general histories, thorough analysis of individual phenomena is not possible. Most of the presently available research is focused on ice hockey, the sport that is often considered the engine of professionalization in Finnish sport.³³ Especially influential early research was conducted by Seppo Aalto in 1992 on the history of the ice hockey club Jokerit. Aalto sees the transformation of Jokerit in the 1970s in terms of commercialization and professionalization, which propelled ice hockey towards semi-professionalism, the first team sport in Finland to do so. He also highlights the role of the Finnish tax authorities in the deterioration of the culture of brown envelopes in the late 1970s and 1980s.³⁴ An even more relevant work for this dissertation is Hannu Itkonen's chapter in the history of the Olympic movement in Finland, titled "Towards professional Olympic sport", in which Itkonen analyzes how the FOC responded to the gradual acceptance of professionalism within the IOC in the 1980s and 1990s.³⁵

Kalevi Heinilä's theory of the "totalization" of sport deserves a special mention here. A pioneer in the field of sociology of sport, Heinilä elaborated his theory throughout his long career as a researcher. In his 1984 article, "The Totalization Process in International Sport" he presented twenty-five theses grouped under three categories about the totalization of sport and its effects on the historical and future development of international sport.³⁶ Heinilä recognized the increasingly professional, commercial, and workmanlike environment in which his contemporary elite athletes practiced sport, explaining that these were largely the result of the demands of the international sports "System" that had gradually emerged during the Cold War. A number of his theses are connected to the professionalization and commercialization of sport. For example, Heinilä correctly stressed that:

Public interest has brought commercialism with its associated businessmen and sponsors into top-level sport. Since the public's primary demand is success in competition the producers of the moments of success – athletes/teams – naturally want to get their share of the increasing streams of money in top level sport. No rules or pool agreements can prevent this "grey" money from flowing into athletes'

³³ See, for example, Mesikämnen 2002, 103–120; Lavikainen 2018, 198–205; Backman 2018, 219–276; Isotalo 2021, 114–130.

³⁴ Aalto 1992, 140–142. See also, Linnakangas 1984, 348.

³⁵ Itkonen 2007, 270–309.

³⁶ Heinilä 1998, 123–140. Heinilä's most notable research articles were compiled for the 1998 publication, *Sport in Social Context by Kalevi Heinilä*, edited by his colleague Pauli Vuolle.

pockets. Even sports organizations increasingly use this financial incentive as a stimulus to succeed in competition and employers and home towns – in some countries also the state – who share in the success reward the achievements of their heroes[sic] with certain privileges.³⁷

Erkki Vettenniemi later critically analyzed Heinilä's totalization theory, and particularly his nostalgic reading of amateurism in elite sport.³⁸ I will contribute to this discussion in chapter 5, especially in light of the findings of article III.

Lately, professionalization has received increasing attention from Finnish researchers. Fairly recent research includes, for example, my articles about the professionalization of Finnish skiing sport and ice hockey, and Mihaly Szerovay's doctoral dissertation in which he compared the professionalization of football in Finland and Hungary.³⁹ While I was finalizing this dissertation in August 2022, the Finnish Society of Sport Sciences published the first Finnish research dedicated specifically to the professionalization of team sports in Finland. The research was conducted by Outi Aarresola, Jari Lämsä, and Hannu Itkonen, and it examined the professionalization of organizations in five sports disciplines (football, ice hockey, *pesäpallo* ["Finnish baseball"], floorball, basketball) based on the results of a survey of Finnish sports clubs, answered by ninety-one clubs. The end report discusses professionalization in the context of the long historical background of amateurism in Finland and presents different categories of and theoretical approaches to professionalism in sport.⁴⁰ The results provide valuable data on the current status and future dimensions of professional sport in Finland, and the conceptual analysis of professionalism is also useful for this dissertation. However, because the focus is on the team sports organizations from which the primary source material was collected, the research does not discuss in detail the changing role of athletes, especially in individual sports.

1.2.2 International research

An often-presented claim among historians of sport is that amateurism has not been researched as much as its significance in sports history would merit. One of the reasons is that, as Llewellyn and Gleaves have remarked, it can easily be assumed that amateurism has already been thoroughly researched.⁴¹ However, theirs was the first historical monograph about amateurism in its most obvious context, the Olympic Games. *The Rise and Fall of Olympic Amateurism* filled an

³⁷ Heinilä 1998, 127.

³⁸ Vettenniemi 2010.

³⁹ Lavikainen 2017, 151–172; Lavikainen 2018, 198–205; Szerovay 2015, 109–127.

⁴⁰ Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 5–35.

⁴¹ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 6.

important gap in international sports historical research, but there are many more gaps left to fill. Amateurism and its opposite, professionalism, can be approached through a multitude of perspectives, sources, topics, and time frames in the contexts of nations, sports disciplines, competitions, associations, and individual athletes, from social, economic, and biographical perspectives, which this dissertation represents, to histories concerned more with the ideology itself.⁴²

For a long time, academic research about amateurism was conducted by treating it as an abstract and unchanging moral or philosophical category, rather than in historical and sociological terms.⁴³ After the turn of the 1980s, researchers took an interest in the social origins of amateurism in particular, as well as its popularization in Victorian Britain, its multi-faceted, contradictory moral content, and the enforcement of the amateur code throughout the twentieth century.⁴⁴ Historians have also been interested in early nineteenth-century professionalism in British sport and its conflicts with the amateur ethos in the second half of the century.⁴⁵ One especially significant piece of research was David C. Young's *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics* (1984), in which Young severed the alleged link between amateurism and ancient sports by showing that amateurism was a thoroughly modern, British invention.⁴⁶ Young's research shattered the longstanding perception about amateurism's long historical roots, which had unusual practical consequences for academic research: "Young's demythologizing of amateurism and his exposure of flawed scholarship led by classicists E. N. Gardner and H. W. Pleket eroded the IOC's historical justification for preserving the ideology."⁴⁷ Later in the 1980s, British historian Wray Vamplew showed in his classic monograph *Pay up and play the game: Professional sport in Britain 1875–1914* that "amateur sport was far from being pristine pure" even in its home country, with English cricket in particular becoming "the home of shamateurism" as early as the 1870s.⁴⁸ Another classic of British sports history, Richard Holt's *Sport and the British*, investigated tensions between amateurism and professionalism in the late Victorian era, particularly by examining the various ways in which the authorities responded to the perceived threat of working-class professionalism in British football, cricket, and rugby.⁴⁹

A valuable – although, due to the language barrier, often overlooked – contribution to the study of amateurism is Karin Wikberg's doctoral dissertation

⁴² Fairly recent example of the latter is Lincoln Allison's *Amateurism in sport: an analysis and a defence* (2001).

⁴³ Gruneau 2006, 560.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Holt 1992; Polley 2000; Baker 2004; Holt 2006; Gruneau 2006; Riordan 2006.

⁴⁵ Eisenberg 2011.

⁴⁶ Young 1984, 7–27.

⁴⁷ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 182.

⁴⁸ Vamplew 1988, 7.

⁴⁹ Holt 1989, 98–117.

Amatör eller professionist? Studier rörande amatörfrågan i svensk tävlingsidrott 1903–1967, in which Wikberg investigates the effects of amateurism in Sweden from the perspective of the central sports organization RF between 1903 and 1967. Wikberg reveals the complicated aspects of amateurism within a Swedish context and provides analysis of the most important amateur conflicts in Sweden, including their repercussions and interpretations in both bourgeois and working-class newspapers.⁵⁰ Torbjörn Andersson in turn investigated the tensions between amateurism and professionalism in his cultural history of Swedish football, introducing the concept “rational amateurism” [*rationel amatörism*] to describe the compromise system that emerged in Swedish football as a response to the arrival of amateurism in the early twentieth century.⁵¹

Recently, shamateurism, end of amateurism, and professionalization have been touched on by researchers in various countries and within diverse contexts. In addition to *the Rise and Fall of Olympic Amateurism*, the most pertinent research for this dissertation is Joseph M. Turrini’s *The End of Amateurism in American Track and Field* (2010). Turrini’s chief argument is that athlete resistance played a key role in the downfall of the amateur system in the United States and internationally. Supported with a wealth of oral history interviews, Turrini analyzed the transformation of athletics from shamateurism to open professionalism in terms of the power struggle between athletes and sports organizations. According to Turrini, the decision-makers of the most powerful amateur sports federations – TAC in the United States, and the IOC and the IAAF internationally – were forced to release their grip on amateurism at the turn of the 1980s because athletes were able to force the change after receiving financial resources from the international shoe giants Adidas, Nike, and Puma.⁵² Lavish under-the-table sponsorship, the founding of athlete organizations, and the rapid commercialization of road running enabled North American long-distance runners to pursue a professional running career outside the Olympic movement, which they used to their advantage. Turrini’s interpretation of the role of athletes has since been challenged by Duckworth, Hunt, and Todd in particular.⁵³ Similarly, Llewellyn and Gleaves, as well as Krieger, have stressed that, rather than athletes and their associates, it was the power brokers in the IOC and the IAAF and their corporate partners who controlled how and when professionalism was introduced to athletics in particular and to the Olympic movement in general.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Wikberg 2005.

⁵¹ Andersson 2002, 255.

⁵² Turrini 2010.

⁵³ Duckworth, Hunt and Todd 2018, 145–163.

⁵⁴ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 175–186, Krieger 2021, 142–168.

1.3 Research goals and questions

I have chosen to approach the professionalization of Finnish sport primarily through two sports disciplines: athletics and football. Both sports shared a tradition of conveying gate money to athletes, albeit in athletics these were significantly better for most of the twentieth century because of the higher number of spectators. In athletics, rewards were based on participation and/or results in meets, whereas in football, they were usually based on points won in matches [*“pinnarahat”* in Finnish]. Football’s professionalization sped up in the 1990s when the number of full-time players in the highest men’s tier in Finland gradually increased.⁵⁵

Athletics is a self-explanatory choice for this dissertation, since it was the sport that was most closely associated with shamateurism throughout the twentieth century and in which Finnish athletes gained an international reputation early on as prime examples of shamateurism. The professionalization of Finnish football, in turn, is a topic on which little research has been done so far – in contrast to the much better researched ice hockey. The income levels, mentalities, and work conditions of Finnish football players in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s are largely uncharted territory, which has reinforced the conception that Finnish players playing in the highest men’s tier in Finland during these decades were mostly or completely genuine amateur players. One of my aims is to critically analyze whether this perception has merit, as well as to propose a more nuanced interpretation about the position of Finnish players between full amateurism and full professionalism.

The main goal of my research is to highlight the effects of professionalization on the careers of Finnish elite track and field athletes and football players from the postwar decades to the turn of the millennium. I will examine the anatomy of shamateurism in Finland, the forces that set it in motion, the actors that benefited from it and used it to their advantage, as well as discussing the forces that shattered this system from the 1980s onwards, paving the way for openly professional sport. By focusing on athletes rather than organizations, I discuss the dynamics of power in sport from the side of its objects and highlight the athlete’s perspective on the long process during which nominally amateur athletes became openly professional in Finland.

In athletics, I also investigate the differences between genders, which perspective I have excluded from the analysis of football. Even though the career paths of female Finnish football players would be an important and interesting topic as such, they are not as relevant for this dissertation because, in all likelihood, practices such as under-the-table payments and shamateurism did not characterize women’s football in Finland during the research period. Female Finnish football

⁵⁵ Szerovay 2018, 60–61.

players who played in the formative decades of the women's game in Finland deserve their own research, which would chart and analyze the pathways and experiences of players, but within other contexts than that of this dissertation.

My research questions are as follows:

- 1) How did veiled professionalism or shamateurism manifest in Finnish elite athletics and (men's) football?
- 2) What did shamateurism mean for the athletes in practice; what financial and sporting opportunities were related to it, and how did athletes seek to fulfill them?
- 3) What sources of income did track and field athletes and football players have during their careers, and how did these change during the transition towards open professionalism? How did athletes' income levels compare to average national earnings in Finland?
- 4) How did mitigations to the amateur code on the one hand, and professionalization on the other, impact athletes' career pathways and opportunities?

Professionalization is a complex, continuous, and gradual process without a clearly defined start or an end. Even though the governing bodies of sport have largely set amateurism aside, its values and practices characterize junior, veteran, fitness, and to some extent also elite sport, mingling and mixing with those of professionalism.⁵⁶ Within a Finnish context, it is impossible to define an exact year when athletics, football, or any other sport became fully professional. Internationally, such periods often began when professional leagues in team sports, especially in men's football, were founded, but in Finland, such milestones are not as clear-cut.⁵⁷

I have decided to place the time frame of this research roughly between the 1960s and the 1990s. There are various reasons for this choice. The social change of Finland during the 1960s and 1970s turned the sparsely populated, agricultural country into an urbanized, industrialized, middle-class state. By the 1980s, the agrarian Finland had disappeared, and in its place was a welfare society engulfed in a casino-style, commercialized and commodified economy. The deregulation of the financial market fueled domestic investment and consumption, ensuing in the expansion of credit largely based on foreign debt. In the old, agrarian Finland, the social relationship with money was reserved and quiet, whereas in 1980s Finland, earning money and ostentatious spending was an accepted, if sometimes frowned

⁵⁶ Aarresalo, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 20–21.

⁵⁷ This also applies to Finnish men's ice hockey. When the men's national Championship series was reformed and rebranded as *SM-liiga* in 1975, the league was not openly even semi-professional. Even though the league's best foreign and Finnish players were already, in reality, full-time ice hockey players, their incomes were disguised as costs compensations or broken-time payments. Backman 2018, 226.

upon, part of society. The commercial interests of television, newspapers, and business enterprises provided new opportunities for athletes. This societal change created the conditions for commercialized and professionalized elite sport which had hitherto been absent in Finland. At the same time, opposition to professionalism among sports leaders gradually weakened. These developments were, however, largely stalled and even reversed in the early 1990s, when Finland plunged into the deepest recession experienced in the country since the 1930s.

The social change provides one framework in which I examine and interpret the working mechanisms and actors in the (sham) amateur system of elite sport in Finland, and its gradual transition towards an openly professional model. Additionally, I analyze the primary source material collected for this research within the contexts of Lämsä et al.'s periodization on professionalization of Finnish team sports and Eric Dunning's categories of sports professionalism.⁵⁸ It is also important to consider the effects of the erosion of amateurism within international sports federations. In the sports that are closely connected to the Olympic movement, such as athletics, the amateur rules had to be adhered to because it was a precondition for participation in the Olympic Games; this rationale applied until the early 1990s.

1.4 Structure of the research

This dissertation consists of three articles and the summarizing report. The original articles were published in international peer-reviewed publications between 2021 and 2023 and are included as attachments to this summarizing report. The summarizing report contains an introduction to the research topic and descriptions of the sources, concepts, and methods, with special attention given to the ethical aspects of oral history. Chapter 5 contains the key results of the articles and chapter 6 the overall conclusions and suggestions for further research.

Articles I and II discuss the career paths of athletes in athletics and football, respectively, from a similar perspective, although in football's case, I have also included the 1990s within the time frame. Both articles are based on oral history interviews and a variety of written contemporary sources. Article III differs from the other two in discussing shamateurism in athletics within a significantly longer time frame, which spans the early twentieth century and the interwar period, and by drawing upon recently digitalized contemporary newspapers as primary source material.

The history of amateurism in Finnish sport has not been written. Therefore, even though the research as such is focused on the period between the 1960s and 1990s,

⁵⁸ Aarresola, Itkonen, Lämsä and Nevala 2020, 78–81; Dunning 2001, 115–116.

I have included a chapter about the formative period of amateurism in Finland. The amateur question and the practices of shamateurism did not originate from the 1960s or 1970s but had roots that reached into the nineteenth century. In chapter 4, I describe the origins of amateurism in Britain, its international diffusion, and its connections to the Olympic movement and to the emergence of modern sport in Finland. To provide historical context for the experiences of athletes in the articles, I will also show how the amateur policies of SVUL eradicated the cultures of professionalism that emerged in Finland in the late nineteenth century, and how SVUL enforced amateurism in its first decades. The chapter also describes how professionalization and commercialization gradually penetrated international sport during the Cold War.

2 Sources

This dissertation draws from a variety of source materials and employs methods of both history and social science of sports. Its primary sources consist of oral history and written contemporary sources ranging from archival documents to newspapers and magazines. Methodologically, the research combines methods of oral history with the rigorous study and contextualization of original sources. Each source type entails distinct methodological and research ethical problems. In what follows, I describe the nature and content of each source type, as well as explain the practical, ethical, and methodological choices I made while collecting and analyzing them.

2.1 Oral history

The focus of this research is on athletes, which necessitates primary source material that reflects their perspective. Therefore, the research would have been very difficult to accomplish without using interviews of former athletes as sources. The focus is not so much on ways of remembering, but on the actual phenomena of shamateurism and professionalization, to which the recollections of former athletes bring an invaluable perspective. Therefore, this dissertation falls into the traditional category of “explanatory” oral historical research where oral history complements the gaps in written contemporary sources and highlights the actors’ perspectives that are hidden from other source types.⁵⁹

Historical research can never reconstruct a complete picture of the past. The result is always an interpretation that is inexorably tied to the choices made during the research process.⁶⁰ With regard to oral history, there are numerous methodological, practical, and ethical problems to address. A suitable interview method needs to be selected, a set of questions prepared, contact information for each interviewee found, and interview times – and in the case of face-to-face interviews, places – agreed with the interviewees. Finally, interviews need to be successfully conducted, recorded, and (possibly) transcribed. I pondered, for instance, the following questions: would a written email survey sent to potential

⁵⁹ Fingerroos and Haanpää 2006, 32–36.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 36–40.

interviewees in addition to or instead of interviews suffice, or should I just contact each interviewee directly? Face-to-face interviews or telephone interviews? Structured, semi-structured, or non-structured interviews? How should I contact the interviewees in the first place to gain their trust?

I commenced by crafting a list of potential interviewees. I defined only loose criteria for the interviewees because I could not be sure who would agree or decline, and who would eventually provide me the kind of material that I sought. Primarily, I was interested in former athletes who had had long careers in Finland during the research period, and who had also gained enough success to – hypothetically – benefit from it financially. In football, this meant in practice former players who had played at least a decade in the highest tier of Finnish football, and in athletics, athletes who had represented Finland at major international events, and preferably won medals in them as well. After devising a list of potential interviewees, I asked the FAF and the FA of Finland for their contact information. Both associations replied promptly and provided me either a phone number or an email address, or sometimes both, for most of the people on my list. Those whose contact information were missing or false I simply replaced with others. My initial target was to conduct ten interviews in each sport, which I nearly accomplished. In total, I interviewed seven former track and field athletes, and eleven former football players. In the latter case, I interviewed one person twice, so the total number of interviews in the article II is twelve. In addition to long active careers as athletes, some interviewees had also worked – or still worked – in other roles in sports, for example as coaches and sports directors, which positively affected the content of the interviews, as they were also able to discuss the topic based on their experiences in those roles.

Organizing interviews proved to be time consuming, often rewarding but sometimes frustrating, and nearly always problematic in one way or another – it is not an easy task to ask questions such as “how much money did you earn during your career or in this or that year” on the telephone with people you have never met, and it is even more difficult to get exact answers. It is important to highlight this openly because the interaction and the mutual dynamic between the interviewer and the interviewee affect the content and nature of the produced material so much.⁶¹

I always sent the first message to the interviewees by email if an email address was available. In that message, I presented myself and the research purpose and suggested alternative times for the interview; if an email address was not available, I called the interviewee and gave the same short presentation in words. Most of the people whom I contacted agreed to participate in the research. There were some who were reluctant to participate or were too busy to do so immediately but agreed

⁶¹ Savolainen and Taavetti 2022, 19.

after I had called them a second time, and a few who did not respond to the message or the ensuing call. In total, only three people declined straight away. At the beginning of the interviews, I explained the purpose and methods of the research to the interviewees again, provided information about the future use of records, and asked for their consent, which all of them provided for this dissertation. Five of the interviewees also allowed their interviews to be used in further academic research.

As an interview method, I opted for a semi-structured, thematic interview, which in my opinion best suits this kind of research. I prepared an identical basic set of questions for each interviewee and additional questions that were based on the personal characteristics of the interviewees' careers. The questions were similar but not identical to the research questions, and in most cases, I asked a lot of additional questions spontaneously during the interviews. As Savolainen and Taavetti have emphasized, questions asked during the interviews should not be confused with research questions, and researchers should not expect to find answers to their research questions directly from the interviewees' answers.⁶² Another guideline for me was Susan K. Cahn's observation that a withdrawn and distant researcher, dressed in the cloak of objectivity, may not inspire the kind of trust that is needed to create the right kind of interaction. According to Cahn, the tension between the interviewer and the interviewee often boils down to language: a lack of trust can manifest itself, for example, in euphemisms and talking about things on a speculative or abstract level.⁶³ Even though I aimed for relaxed, conversational interviews, such a manner of speaking also came up in some of my interviews. Sometimes the interviewee did not want to talk about things that would have been most relevant for this research and was only willing to discuss the subject at hand on a general level. At best, however, the interviewee quickly understood my intentions, and trusted me enough to recount his/her career in detail from the perspectives of incomes, training, and the relationship between sport, studies, and work.

I conducted one interview face-to-face, and eighteen interviews as telephone interviews. The primary reason for the large number of telephone interviews was the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, which made face-to-face interviews practically impossible for over two years. By the start of the pandemic, I had only conducted the first three interviews for article I. However, telephone interviews proved to be an efficient method for obtaining relevant material. Meeting all interviewees in person would have been needlessly time-consuming given that they live in different regions of Finland, and eventually, nearly all the interviews were successful in terms of giving me the kind of material

⁶² Ibid., 20.

⁶³ Cahn 1994, 606–607; see also Ukkonen 2006, 185.

that I sought. The length of each interview can be found below in the references section; most lasted between twenty and forty minutes. To facilitate the writing process, I listened to the recording immediately after each interview and made extensive notes about the interviewees' comments. I decided not to try to collect any written material with questions sent by email because of both my own and other researchers' negative experiences from such attempts.⁶⁴

2.2 Archival sources, newspapers, and magazines

I complemented oral history with various written contemporary sources. In the context of this dissertation, such material presents both practical and methodological problems. First, the archives of the central organizations (SVUL and FOC) and governing bodies of athletics (FAF) and football (FA of Finland), located in the archives of TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture (formerly the Sports Museum of Finland), are extensive, which in practice makes it difficult to find relevant material, that is, sources that would reflect the athletes' perspectives, such as contracts, letters, and diaries. With regard to athletics, I was able to find letters written by athletes and their representatives regarding the use of the FAF's trust fund in the 1980s; board minutes that cover the establishment of the FAF's stipend system in 1970; and letters by the FOC's and the FAF's leaders to the IOC's Eligibility Commission – the IOC's chief enforcer of amateurism – in the 1970s. Not surprisingly, the museum's archive does not contain the personal archives of former athletes whose active careers would have been dated so close to the present day.

The problem with archives of sports clubs is that they are usually only partially preserved. Documents that would, for example, contain numerical data about the incomes of athletes in different years, seasons, or competitions are usually absent from the club archives that have survived. Even rarer are any references, let alone evidence, about hidden payments to athletes. If there were any written agreements in the first place, the evidence for under-the-table payments was usually later destroyed – and with good reason, as I will demonstrate in chapter 5 and article III. There were two exceptions that I was able to uncover for this dissertation. The first is the partially hand-written material in the archives of athletics club HKV, which contains explicit markings of “unofficial rewards” paid to athletes at the Helsinki World Games in the 1970s. The second one is the archive of football club Ilves

⁶⁴ It seems to be easy to ignore such inquiries. For example, a short questionnaire that I and Ossi Viita sent to 55 recipients during our book project about the history of Finnish handball was only answered by 16 people, and some of the replies were very short. Lavikainen and Viita 2019, 174. Similarly, Tuikkanen received replies from only five clubs of the twenty-two in the men's Veikkausliiga and women's Kansallinen Liiga when collecting material for his master's thesis. Tuikkanen 2021, 40.

Tampere, which contains player and coach contracts from the 1980s and 1990s. The latter archive is restricted to academic research, and its use requires the permission of the current club president, with an obligation to anonymize all personal data, which permission I was granted in 2021. Despite the presence of some relevant documents, both of these archives unfortunately also highlight the general problem that archival material poses for this dissertation. In both archives, the material that has survived is fairly sporadic. For example, Ilves' archive contains complete player contracts of the club's first team from only two seasons (1988 and 1989) from the period between 1979 and 1996 during which Ilves played continuously in Finland's highest tier.

One of the interviewees in article II, a former player and club official, had player contracts of his club in his personal possession and provided me with numerical information about them during our telephone interview – without mentioning the names of players in the contracts, as we had agreed. As with oral history in general, I discuss the ethical problems that arise from the use of such documents in chapter 2.3. It is likely that my interviewee is not the only former club official in Finland who has similar documents in his/her private custody. In the future, such material could open up new research topics and viewpoints if they become more accessible to researchers. The same applies to the archive of the Football Players' Association of Finland, which, at the time of writing, is currently being donated to the archives of TAHTO.

I have used newspapers and magazines mostly as complementary sources, apart from article III, in which newspapers play an important role as primary sources. In that article, I use recently digitalized newspapers to highlight the dynamics and actors of shamateurism in the interwar period athletics by examining one of the most well-known shamateur scandals of the era. The "Roschier controversy", as the case is usually referred to in Finnish histories, involves one of the few written proofs about under-the-table payments in Finnish athletics. Digitalized contemporary newspaper material, which can be accessed and searched with key words in the online Digital Collections Service of the National Library of Finland, enabled an in-depth analysis of the case and new interpretations about its context and key players. At the moment, the service contains nearly all newspapers and magazines published in Finland during the interwar period.

The digitalization of newspapers and archival material continuously opens up possibilities for new topics and viewpoints. For example, the postwar editions of the biggest newspaper in Finland, *Helsingin Sanomat*, can be accessed and rudimentarily searched with the online *Aikakone* service, an opportunity I utilized. With regard to other newspapers in the postwar period, I had to be careful which to pick for closer inspection. These included the sports magazine *Suomen Urheilulehti* in particular; I browsed the issues from the 1960s to 1980s manually, searching for articles related to under-the-table payments, and to the amateur question and its

implications for Finnish athletes. For article III, I also manually browsed the issues of *Suomen Urheilulehti* from 1932 to 1933, because they are, unfortunately, not yet available as digitalized versions in the Digital Collections Service of the National Library.

I searched for other newspapers and magazines only if I had attained clues from the previously mentioned newspapers about potential articles elsewhere. This method admittedly has its shortcomings, but sometimes gave me intriguing new sources for further analysis. A prime example is the in-depth multi-page reportage of the magazine *Viikkosanomat* and the articles that were published immediately after it in the winter of 1960 and 1961, detailing the complicated position that the amateur rules had caused for Finnish athletes, as well as actual sums that had been paid to Finnish athletes in various athletics disciplines at the time. *Viikkosanomat* took up the same theme again in 1971, which enabled further analysis and comparison. However, such newspaper articles, which reflected and sometimes explicitly expressed the athlete's perspective on amateurism, were quite rare.

Because my research purpose is closely associated with athletes' rewards, the information I gained from sources was often numerical, such as figures in former Finnish marks (FIM). I converted these figures into 2022 euros with the Bank of Finland Museum's online Money Value Converter,⁶⁵ or displayed their contemporary worth in other ways, for example, by comparing them to the monthly or yearly average salaries in Finland with the help of Statistics Finland's [*Tilastokeskus*] annual wage statistics.

2.3 Methodological and ethical perspectives

A characteristic feature of historical research is that documents produced by those in power dominate the source materials used by researchers, even though they do not necessarily reflect the values and goals of subjects. According to Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen, this is partly caused by the fact that this material is readily available in the archives. Researchers should have "historical empathy" [*historiallinen empatia*] to consider alternative sources that would better reflect the perspectives of subjects.⁶⁶ For the researchers of near history, one method to achieve this is to use oral history as either primary or complementary source material. Sports history contains similar problems in terms of archival material. The topic of this dissertation, hidden professionalism, was based on the agency of athletes, which the archives of the governing bodies of sport rarely reflect. As Jorma Kalela has

⁶⁵ The Bank of Finland Museum. Money Value Converter. <https://app.rahamuseo.fi/calculator?lang=ENG> (accessed January 10, 2023).

⁶⁶ Vainio-Korhonen 2017, 44.

emphasized, a historian must assess whether existing histories present their subjects in justified contexts.⁶⁷ In my opinion, the position of athletes needs to be corrected in this respect.

Much as Pirita Frigren has described, I turn athletes “from the objects of control to subjects and actors”⁶⁸ in this dissertation. How did athletes promote their career paths – either in sport or elsewhere – when professionalism was against the rules of sport? In Frigren's words, “what means did individuals have at their disposal in their limited world of possibilities? What could they do to improve their circumstances, what could they appeal to or threaten with?”⁶⁹ These questions are at the heart of the perspective that I have taken in this dissertation. Elite athletes were obviously not a persecuted group of people in any way, even if some of them at times liked to pose as oppressed in the media. Athletes were not allowed to receive their rewards openly, but some of them made decent earnings under-the-table. Moreover, even those who did not make much from sport usually benefited from their athletic abilities in other ways, for example through organized jobs, apartments, and study places. The amateur rules clearly limited their “horizon of opportunities” [*toimintamahdollisuuksien maailma*]⁷⁰, but many of them found ways to carve out space for themselves in society, nonetheless.

By placing the focus on individual actors, most of whom are still alive, the researcher must address multiple ethical questions. First, there is the legislation regarding the protection of privacy that places limits on the collection and the use of personal data in research. In general, efforts must be made to limit the collection of such data to the themes that are necessary for the research. In addition, research subjects have to actively give their consent to the use of the material, and it must not be used in ways that offend the subjects or their relatives. However, much is left to the researcher's own discretion. As Riikka Miettinen has stated, the researcher must consider case-by-case – sometimes even source-by-source – how to observe the ethical requirements of science, such as openness and honesty. Doing justice to the subjects while also reserving the right to question them is not always easy.⁷¹

During the interviews, the researcher must not only be open and honest about his/her intentions, but also be aware of the effects that the research can have on the lives of the group of people being researched. This refers to the ethical responsibility for the consequences of research [*seurausettinen vastuu*].⁷² When the research is

⁶⁷ Kalela 2017, 93.

⁶⁸ “(...) ”kääntää henkilöiden asema kontrollin ja toimenpiteiden kohteesta, objektista, subjektiksi, toimijaksi.” Frigren 2017, 65.

⁶⁹ “(...) millaisia keinoja yksilöllä oli käytössään alisteisesta asemastaan tai rajatusta toimintamahdollisuuksien maailmastaan huolimatta. Mihin hän saattoi vedota, millä uhata, tai mitä tehdä tilanteensa ja asemansa parantamiseksi?” Ibid., 65.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Miettinen 2017, 152–158.

⁷² Frigren 2017, 70.

published, its results – or often, anecdotes in it – can emerge in various publications disconnected from their original context. This is especially relevant for this dissertation because both active and former athletes are often subjects of sensational stories in the tabloid press. It is essential to inform the interviewees about the future use and location of the interview records after the research has been published. If the interview records are, for example, donated to an archive after the research, the interviewees need to consent to that. In that case, it is usually necessary to restrict the use of records.

One way to fulfil ethical responsibilities is to anonymize the research subjects completely or partially. Anonymization is especially pertinent in the study of recent history in which the subjects are usually still alive. Especially in social sciences, complete anonymization is a fairly common practice which historians have also applied when doing research on sensitive matters. Anonymization is, however, a complex matter. Firstly, the demands of science and the protection of privacy are not always compatible; full anonymization would best protect the privacy of the individuals but is not an ideal solution in terms of the transparency of research. Secondly, as Pasi Saarimäki has remarked, things perceived as sensitive usually change over the course of time.⁷³ Thirdly, one of the goals in the “histories from the bottom up” is usually to give a voice to marginalized, persecuted, or silenced groups of people, but will this purpose be fulfilled if a voice is given only to anonymized people? While researching the lives of prostitutes living in Turku in the early nineteenth century, Kirsi Vainio-Korhonen ended up naming the women because that way they would be treated with dignity and given equal status with their contemporaries.⁷⁴ Admittedly, athletes are not the kind of group that would have to be named for these reasons. Most of the subjects of this dissertation received more than their share of publicity throughout their active careers, and even beyond.

The topic of this dissertation touches upon phenomena that went against both the laws of sport and society at large, but it is clear that the topic is not as sensitive as many others studied by historians of today. I do not write about matters such as people’s ethnic origins, sexual orientations, political or religious beliefs, or health conditions. Elite athletes who pocketed under-the-table rewards were guilty of tax evasion, but even during their active careers, this was not seen as a major crime. A common expression in Finland, “the worker deserves his wages” [*työmies on palkkansa ansainnut*⁷⁵] is sometimes used to refer to those athletes who had to take their pay in secret because of the amateur rules. Admitting to taking brown envelopes does not damage anyone’s reputation in Finland today. Consequently,

⁷³ Saarimäki 2017, 80.

⁷⁴ Vainio-Korhonen 2017, 45.

⁷⁵ The saying is originally biblical. *Raamattu* 1992, Luukkaan evankeliumi 10:7 [The Finnish Bible 1992, Gospel of Luke 10:7].

quite a few former athletes have spoken about their rewards not only anonymously to researchers but also openly to the media.

The overall impression I got from my interviewees was that most of them did not consider my questions about brown envelopes – or their sources of income in general – too sensitive, and were happy to talk about them. There were even those who were clearly proud to have reached an athletic level at which rewards could be earned in the first place. Many interviewees considered the whole system unfair for athletes and compared it to today's elite sport, where sport is a recognized profession in which earnings do not require secretive under-the-table dealings. There was some tendency to downplay the amounts available and compare them to how much (star) athletes in elite sport earn today. In particular, the former football players I interviewed for the article II tended to compare their earnings in Finland to the much greater rewards that were already available in foreign professional leagues during their active careers. However, even those interviewees who were willing to discuss the topic openly displayed a certain reluctance to reminisce about their rewards in specific numbers. One interviewee did not want to talk about under-the-table rewards at all – even anonymously – and a couple of others emphasized that such payments were only costs compensations [*kulukorvaukset*]. And, as noted before, three potential interviewees declined to participate in the research altogether, although for reasons that might not necessarily have anything to do with the sensitivity of the topic. As far as the reliability of the information from the interviews is concerned, I sought to inform the interviewees as well as possible about my intentions before the interviews, so as to give them a chance to refresh their memories about the topic beforehand. Afterwards, I compared the information obtained from the interviews to written contemporary sources and former research, which was especially important regarding numeral information, as it can be easily misremembered.

The sensitivity of brown envelopes as a research topic can be compared to the use of performance-enhancing substances. Doping is a by-product of professionalization, just like money, and it is quite likely that some of my interviewees used performance-enhancing drugs in their professional endeavors, which provided them pathways towards not only better results but also higher earnings and a better standard of living. By admitting to the use of doping, however, athletes risk losing their reputation even if the “crime” itself were as outdated as receiving brown envelopes. Even if, in my opinion, there is a connection between the use of doping and professional sport, I decided early on to exclude doping from this research. Doping is not directly related to the athletes' socioeconomic status even though it can help athletes attain better results, and thus, rewards. If a thorough research on the history of doping in Finnish sport is ever carried out by interviewing former athletes, it should probably be carried out with completely anonymized interviewees.

In addition to anonymization, researchers need to consider what happens to the data gathered during the research. TENK [*Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta*, Finnish National Board on Research Integrity] recommends that researchers make data such as interviews available for use in further research. This not only enables the critical evaluation of research results but also “reduces the need to gather the same type of data unnecessarily”, particularly from “small population groups”.⁷⁶ However, TENK also acknowledges that in some cases, the data cannot be made available for legal or ethical reasons. TENK’s previous guidelines, published in 2009 and in effect when I commenced this dissertation, note that if the data contains identifiers, is sensitive, and cannot be anonymized, “the datasets should be destroyed after the study has been completed”.⁷⁷ These instructions are particularly valid in the context of this dissertation because most of the interviewees are, even today, nationally well-known personalities who are difficult to anonymize. While writing articles I and II, I had to be careful not to include any direct identifiers in the text, nor any other information based on which the anonymous interviewees could be identified. Moreover, as I was conducting interviews, it became apparent to me that some of the interviewees were not comfortable with the idea that their interviews would be stored somewhere and potentially used by someone else in the years to come. This attitude, which I also encountered while interviewing former ice hockey players in 2017 for my article on the history of Finnish ice hockey,⁷⁸ likely stems from the longstanding relationship that athletes have had with reporters, and experiences of their comments being taken from their original contexts and used somewhere else for sensationalistic purposes.⁷⁹

These facts motivated me to only partially make the data from the interviews available for further research. This data consists of the five interviews in article I in which the interviewees consented to be identifiable in the research and for their interviews to be donated to the archives of the Sports Museum of Finland (at present TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture) after the research had been completed. When the interview records are donated to the museum, I will also notify the interviewees about this. As far as the anonymous interviewees are concerned – two in article I and all eleven in article II – the course of action is, at

⁷⁶ “The ethical principles of research with human participants and ethical review in the human sciences in Finland.” Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK guidelines 2019. https://tenk.fi/sites/default/files/2021-01/Ethical_review_in_human_sciences_2020.pdf (accessed January 26, 2023), 15–16.

⁷⁷ “Ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences and proposals for ethical review”. National Advisory Board on Research Ethics. Helsinki 2009. <https://tenk.fi/sites/tenk.fi/files/ethicalprinciples.pdf> (accessed January 26, 2023), 13.

⁷⁸ Lavikainen 2018.

⁷⁹ Kimmo Isotalo encountered a similarly cautious mentality when conducting interviews for his dissertation about the growth of ice hockey in Finland. Isotalo 2021, 26.

present, straightforward. I am not able to share this material because the interviewees consented only to their interviews being used in this dissertation. I will keep the records for these interviews in my possession for five years so that the research results can be verified within a reasonable time and delete them afterwards.

The question of anonymization is not only related to oral history but also concerns archival material. First, there are various restrictions that legislation places on the use of archival documents that contain personal information.⁸⁰ And then there is the wider ethical question related to the use of sources such as private correspondence and diaries, which were not intended to be used in contexts such as historical research. As for legislative restrictions, I have not used the kind of archival material in this dissertation that the legislation would categorize as confidential. Some of the material, namely the archive of football club Ilves, contained restrictions that the administrator of the archive (TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture) has placed upon the use of the archive, which I obliged by not mentioning any information in the text based on which the subjects could be recognized. With regard to other archival material, I mostly ended up naming the athletes who appear in them. In my opinion, anonymization would have been irrelevant in these cases considering the nature of the information in the documents, and how I wrote about them in the articles.

Ultimately, there are few universal rules regarding research ethics that would apply as such to all topics. As Ville Kivimäki has summarized, research ethical considerations are not about adhering to a rigid list of norms but about continuous, case-by-case negotiation between ethics and the demands of research.⁸¹ In my opinion, honesty, fairness, and transparency are essential guidelines in these considerations. The ethical choices must be justified, and they must be written openly in the research. There is no reason to be afraid of tackling difficult and sensitive topics, or of using sources that contain such information, but the people who are the subjects of research must be treated with respect, whether they are still alive or not. The context of their thinking must be made understandable to the reader, even or perhaps especially when the researcher ends up presenting interpretations that differ from their opinions.

⁸⁰ Saarimäki 2017, 77.

⁸¹ Kivimäki 2017, 199.

3 Conceptual framework

The concepts of amateurism, shamateurism, and professionalism form the framework for my analysis. Before proceeding to define them more closely, there are a few linguistic issues that need to be addressed. This is especially important considering the scant amount of Finnish research written in English about amateurism and professionalism in sport, as well as the diverse meanings of these concepts in academic and popular literature and in the media.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines amateurism as “the quality or condition of being amateurish; amateur conduct; (also) the practice or status of being an amateur, as distinguished from a professional (esp. in sport)”. A shamateur is defined as “a sportsman who is classed as an amateur but behaves like a professional, esp. one who makes money out of his performances”; and professionalism as “a professional quality, character, or conduct; a professional system or method (...) the characteristics of a particular profession (...) the competence or skill expected of a professional (...) “the practice or status of a professional, as distinguished from an amateur”.⁸² In Finnish, amateurism translates as either *amatörismi* or *amatööriys*, shamateur as *sala-ammattilainen*, and professionalism either as *ammattilaisuus* or *ammattimaisuus* the latter of which refers specifically to the mental aspect or the ethos of professionalism.

In academic and popular literature and media texts, amateurism, professionalism, and their variations are often used in contrasting ways in English and Finnish. This linguistical complexity can be seen, for example, when translating the three sub-categories of professional sport that Aarresola, Lämsä, and Itkonen recently defined: *julkiammattilaisuus*, *sala-ammattilaisuus*, *valtioammattilaisuus*.⁸³ *Julkiammattilaisuus* translates literally as public professionalism, by which Aarresola, Lämsä, and Itkonen refer especially to the transparency of salaries in professional leagues such as the NHL, MLB and NBA, and the legal status of professional athletes regarding, for example, social security.⁸⁴ *Sala-ammattilaisuus*, however, translates as shamateurism, which, linguistically,

⁸² Oxford University Press (n.d.), “amateurism”; “shamateur”; “professionalism,” Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/> (accessed November 15, 2022).

⁸³ Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 17–20.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

categorizes it more as a false form of amateurism than as a category of professional sport. *Valtioammattilaisuus* (literally state professionalism), encompasses both overt and covert models of state-sponsored professional sport. However, the most well-known of such models, sports systems in the socialist countries during the Cold War, is commonly referred to in English as state amateurism – another false form of amateurism rather than a category of professional sport.

3.1 Amateurism

The origin of the English word *amateur* is in French (*amateur*) and Latin (*amatores*), in which it signified a lover of someone or something. In late seventeenth-century French, amateur referred to a “non-practicing enthusiast of the fine arts”, and in the mid-eighteenth century, a “non-professional practitioner of an art or a science”. After passing into English, *amateur* attained a strong connotation with sport, and by the end of the nineteenth century, often signified a non-professional sportsman.⁸⁵ It was this sense of the word that gave birth to the words *amateur sport* and *amateur athlete*. The word *amateurism* appears in English original sources throughout the nineteenth century, and towards the end of the century, usually in connection with sport.⁸⁶

Dunning and Sheard have defined amateurism as a “distinctly modern ideological ‘ethos’ that emerged to articulate and to promote the world view of nineteenth century ‘public school elites’”, and the rules and policies with which sports organizations and individuals promoted and safeguarded this ethos from the nineteenth century Britain onwards.⁸⁷ The values inherent to this ethos can be defined, for example, in the manner of Kalervo Ilmanen: 1) the joy inherent in sport is the chief motivator for participation in sport; 2) voluntarism (of both athletes and officials); 3) the process is more important than the outcome; 4) internal and external normative control; 5) the principle of fair play; 6) sport’s purpose is to nurture and to educate; 7) authorities of sport regulate sport [as opposed to, for example, market forces].⁸⁸ Amateurism manifested in the mentality that these values should apply to the entire field of sport, high-level elite sport included, and that they should be regulated and enforced by the sports authorities.

⁸⁵ Oxford University Press (n.d.), “amateur,” Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/> (accessed November 15, 2022).

⁸⁶ Oxford University Press (n.d.), “amateurism,” Oxford English Dictionary, <https://www.oed.com/> (accessed November 15, 2022).

⁸⁷ Dunning and Sheard 1979, as cited in Gruneau 2006, 560.

⁸⁸ “Urheilu itsessään tuottaa iloa (...) urheiluun hakeudutaan vapaaehtoisesti (...) prosessi lopputulosta tärkeämpi (...) sisäinen ja ulkoinen normikontrolli (...) reilun pelin periaate (...) urheilu on keino kasvattaa ihmistä (...) urheiluorganisaatio säätelee.” Ilmanen 2007, as cited in Ilmanen 2012, 182.

For most of the twentieth century, amateur sport was understood as the “true” version of sport in Finland and in other Nordic countries. Professional sport was considered alien, and the commercialism that sustained it detrimental to the individual and to society. Athletes who transgressed the boundaries of national amateur sport and became openly professional athletes – which usually involved moving abroad – were considered individual(istic) athletes, whose achievements benefited only themselves, not the nation as a whole.⁸⁹ This was not merely rhetoric: for example, in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, football players who moved to foreign professional leagues to ply their trade were not selected for their national teams from the 1920s to 1950s, even though the rules of FIFA would have allowed this.⁹⁰ The Finnish take on amateurism was more pragmatic in this respect, even if the FA of Finland treated Aulis Rytönen – the first Finnish professional football player – similarly before and during his professional career in France in the 1950s.⁹¹

Practical differences between amateur and professional athletes can be viewed in terms of sporting level, time devoted to training, training ethos, lifestyle choices, and incomes. Professional training can be defined as regular, goal-oriented, holistic, and scientific, whereas amateurs train in an irregular manner, based on personal experiences and feelings rather than science. This is not to say that amateur athletes are incapable of training professionally. Many of them do – in all age groups, from juniors to veterans. The opposite is also true: professional athletes can train and live like amateurs, and in fact, by the standards of the twenty-first century, most of them did throughout the twentieth century. For the purposes of this dissertation, I define amateur, professional and semi-professional athletes according to their sources of income. Amateur athletes gain their livelihood from working full-time in jobs that are not connected to their lives as athletes; professional athletes gain their income directly from sport; and semi-professionals occupy the wide middle ground with around equally important shares of income coming from sport and from other sources, such as part-time jobs.

A common way to provide compensations to amateur athletes were – and sometimes still are – broken-time payments that are given to cover the loss of earnings incurred for taking part in sporting activities such as training camps or competitions. Even though the amateur apostles of old considered even such payments as professionalism, a distinction should be made between them and

⁸⁹ See, for example, the citation of Jukka Uunila in chapter 1.1.

⁹⁰ Tikander 2020, 42; Lavikainen 2020, 51.

⁹¹ The FA of Finland prevented Rytönen’s professional move to France before the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki. He was selected for the national team once in 1953 while he was a professional player in Toulouse, but only featured in the national team once more in his career, after returning to Finland in 1960. Tikander 2020, 42. There were also reasons related to taxation as to why the FA was reluctant to select the few Finnish professional players for the home games of the national team in the 1950s and 1960s. Lavikainen 2020, 57.

openly paid salaries. Broken-time payments are paid for the time that athletes are away from their actual work, but in professional sport, sport is the actual work. From the athletes' perspective, an important feature of professionalization is that *compensations* change into *earnings* that are directly paid for sporting activities.

Even if the ideology of amateurism has become almost extinct in international elite sport, it has by no means disappeared from sport as a whole. Professional sport is only the tip of the iceberg in all global sport. Most of junior, fitness, leisure, and veteran sports are based on the voluntarism of athletes and organizers, and are driven by people who practice sport themselves,⁹² whereas most people involved in professional sport are spectators. However, because of the increased professionalization and commercialization of Western society as a whole, many of amateur sport's sub-cultures also exhibit the values and practices of professionalism. Professional sport could not survive without the existence of amateur sport, which provides it a continuous supply not only of athletes but also of sports-enthused spectators, many of whom have been or still are practitioners of the sport that they watch from the stands. Whether or not amateur sport could exist without professional sport is a point of debate. Some researchers consider the relationship between amateur sport and professional sport mutually beneficial and thus symbiotic,⁹³ but others regard it more as parasitic – that professional sport exploits and corrupts amateur sport, which could very well survive on its own at local, regional, and even national levels.⁹⁴

3.2 Shamateurism

Aarresalo, Lämsä, and Itkonen have described shamateurism in the following way:

Shamateurism of sport is about breaking both the norms of sport and society. Above all, shamateurism was about not adhering to the amateur rules. In terms of the norms of the society, covert payments and 'giving brown envelopes' promoted practices related to the black market economy, by which paying taxes was avoided.⁹⁵

As Aarresalo, Lämsä, and Itkonen point out, shamateurism was also related to the work conditions of athletes. Elite amateur athletes had to have jobs, and these

⁹² Ilmanen 2012, 183–184.

⁹³ Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 21.

⁹⁴ Heinilä 2018, 148–149.

⁹⁵ "Urheilun sala-ammattilaisuudessa on kyse sekä urheilun että yleisemminkin yhteiskunnan normistojen rikkomisesta. Sala-ammattilaisuus merkitsi ennen kaikkea amatöörisääntöjen noudattamattomuutta. Yhteiskunnan yleisempien normistojen kannalta pimeiden palkkioiden maksaminen ja "ruskeiden kirjekuorien jakaminen" synnytti harmaan talouden käytäntöjä, joilla kierrettiin veroja." Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 18.

were often arranged for them as sinecures that required little or no work effort. Because of the close connection between these two forms of shamateurism – there have also been plenty of athletes in Finland who both “worked” in a sinecure and received brown envelopes – I use the concept of state amateurism in connection with shamateurism, rather than as an aspect of professionalism, as Aarresalo, Lämsä, and Itkonen did in their research. By state amateurism, I refer to the methods used by the socialist countries to circumvent the amateur rules during the Cold War. Elite athletes were assigned jobs in various departments within state socialist systems, for example in the army, the police, and the trade unions, which enabled them to be portrayed as amateur athletes while at the same providing them full-time training conditions and professional medical support, including state-controlled use of performance-enhancing drugs. As I will demonstrate, the Finnish sports system contained similar arrangements, even if they were unofficially organized rather than the result of direct control by the state or other authority. It should be noted that overt, state-sponsored models of elite sport are common in many countries even in the present day.⁹⁶ These, however, largely fall outside the research purpose of this dissertation.

Different forms of shamateurism can be elaborated with the help of Eric Dunning’s typologization, which draws on the methods of figurational sociology. Dunning’s categories are based on the transparency and legitimacy of sports professionalism and the nature and sources of financial support provided to athletes. The categories should not be understood as rigid; sports systems usually have features from more than one type, since financial support for athletes can come from various sources. I use the typology as a tool for understanding various forms of covert and overt professionalism that appeared in Finnish sport throughout the twentieth century. Of the nine categories, the first four represent hidden professionalism:

- 1) A type of sports professionalism in which nominally amateur sportspersons are supported by the state via sinecures in the military, police, or civil service. Examples: the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe before the break-up of the Soviet ‘Empire’.
- 2) A type where financial support for sportspersons is provided through jobs, often sinecures, in private commercial and industrial firms or through an administrative/organizational job in the sport per se. Examples: Rugby Union until 1995 and English country cricket until the 1960s.
- 3) A type in which sportspersons are subsidized by means of university scholarships. Example: college football and other sports in the USA.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 20.

In some ways, the former (?) practice in Oxford and Cambridge colleges of recruiting students more for their sporting prowess than their intellectual abilities approximated to the parameters of this type closely.

- 4) A type in which nominally amateur sportspersons gain financially by being given 'boot money'; that is, are clandestinely paid from money taken at the gate or from funds provided by rich patrons, the mass media, commercial sponsors or from advertising revenues. Example: Rugby Union in Britain prior to its becoming openly professional in 1995.⁹⁷

As a result of the acceptance of amateurism in the early twentieth century, and the agency of athletes who resisted the rules of amateurism, Finnish elite sport displayed examples especially of types 1, 2 and 4 throughout the century, which I will demonstrate in chapter 5. The categories also reveal that shamateurism/non-legitimate professionalism is not only related to circumventing the amateur rules. Tax evasion and hidden payments are part of professional elite sport even in the present day.⁹⁸

Finally, it can be easily forgotten that athletes were not only the only actors in the underground labor-relations system⁹⁹ inside which networks of shamateurism functioned. It is also pertinent to highlight the roles of officials, journalists, organizers of competitions, and various middlemen who became involved with the system. I elaborate on these roles in the context of interwar Finnish athletics in chapter 5.

3.3 Professionalism

There are various professions in the sports industry. Many of them have peculiar traits compared to professions in other walks of life, and the most peculiar of these is the one that this dissertation is focused on: the athlete's profession. Athletes usually become professionals at a young age after training for it throughout their childhood and youth, and their careers often end at an age when those of other professions are just beginning. Athletes' professional careers are not only short, but lack the "occupational control" that, according to Eliot Freidson, characterizes the "ideal type" of professionalism. Freidson argues that professionalism exists when "an organized occupation gains the power to determine who is qualified to perform

⁹⁷ Dunning 2001, 115.

⁹⁸ Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 18.

⁹⁹ According to Turrini, labor-relations in athletics were transformed when "track athletes forced the governing bureaucracies to jettison the amateur rules (...) discarding an unreliable and limited underground labor-relations system that left them susceptible to selective career-threatening punishment, in favor of a greatly expanded and open labor-relations system." Turrini 2010, 2

a defined set of tasks, to prevent all others from performing that work, and to control the criteria by which to evaluate performance.” Professionalism is fulfilled when “the organized occupation creates the circumstances under which its members are free of control by those who employ them” – such as the consumers or buyers of labor in the market, or managers of business enterprises.¹⁰⁰ Professional athletes rarely, if ever, have this kind of freedom. Athletes are specialized into their work after a long-term, standardized period of “education” – systematic training lasting for years – they earn a living from their work, and can influence their working conditions to some extent through athlete organizations, but do not have control over the criteria by which their work is evaluated. The logic of professionalism in sport is inexorably tied to the market that sustains and funds it.

Even if the athlete’s job should perhaps be seen more as an occupation than a profession, I have chosen to follow the commonly used, broad definition for professionalism in sport, which also encompasses its early forms in the nineteenth century. The historical development of professionalism from the nineteenth century to the present day varies from sport to sport, but some general factors can be discerned. The concept of *professionalization* could be described as a multifaceted, complex process from amateurism to professionalism, which resembles a self-feeding cycle in which causes and effects are difficult to distinguish. Often one of the root causes is the increased interest of the general public in spectator sport and the ensuing interest of business enterprises, which causes a period of growth. Organizers of sport channel the increased financial resources into athletes’ salaries, which turns them into semi- and full professionals.¹⁰¹ At the same time, sports infrastructure and methods of coaching are developed, and a change in mentalities occurs; systematic, goal-oriented, and rigorous methods are applied to gain an advantage amid an increasingly competitive environment. Professionalization should not, however, be seen as a one-way road from amateurism to professionalism, but rather as an unstable and unpredictable process that is constantly affected by societal trends and upheavals.¹⁰² In Finland, one such upheaval was the recession in the early 1990s, which had a comprehensive influence on the professionalization of sport.

Lämsä et al. have demonstrated that professionalization takes place on different levels and have devised a periodization for the professionalization of Finnish team sports. According to them, the first period took place in the 1970s and 1980s, involving “the professionalization of individuals” [*yksilöiden ammattilaistuminen*], that is, of athletes and coaches. In the 1990s, a second period

¹⁰⁰ Freidson 2001, 12.

¹⁰¹ Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 23–24.

¹⁰² Ibid., 21.

involving the professionalization of organizations [*organisaatioiden ammattilaistuminen*], such as elite clubs in major team sports, took off. The last period, “the professionalization of systems” [*systeemien ammattilaistuminen*], began in the 2010s. Rather than being fixed, the periods are intertwined with one another, and do not apply as such to all sports disciplines.¹⁰³ In this dissertation, I am mostly interested in the professionalization of individuals. Specifically, I focus on the transition of the athlete’s job towards a paid profession – not so much on the shift in mentalities or the changes in the quality and quantity of training, for example.

For the athletes, professionalization reaches its culmination when sport has turned into a full-time job, including a salary for which taxes are paid, and pensions and social security are comparable to other professions in society. In addition to money, professionalism is related to athletes’ status and rights as employees (or entrepreneurs). Professional athletes’ salaries, work conditions, benefits, and obligations are defined in legal contracts of employment, and their interests are promoted by athlete organizations that act like trade unions. Professionalization changes the relationship between athletes and sports clubs and other stakeholders; unwritten favors and oral contracts are replaced with rights and obligations based on written contracts that are bound by the law. In the active labor market of professional sport, athletes can create their own career paths – within the limits imposed on them by the legislation of society and the rules of sport.

Eric Dunning’s five categories of overt/legitimate sports professionalism include:

- 5) A type of sports professionalism in which financial support is provided by wealthy individual patrons. Example: cricket in eighteenth-century England.
- 6) A type where financial support is provided from money taken at the gate. Examples: touring/peripatetic sports teams such as William Clarke’s ‘All England (cricket) XI’ in the 1850s; professional soccer in Britain up to the 1960s.
- 7) A type where financial support is provided by the fund-raising activities of supporters/members. Examples: soccer, Rugby Union and Rugby League in Britain today.
- 8) A type where financial support is provided by commercial and industrial advertisers and sponsors. Example: soccer in Britain today.

¹⁰³ Lämsä et al. 2020, 78–81.

- 9) A type where financial support is provided by the media in payment for the broadcasting/telecasting of matches and events. Examples: the contemporary Olympic Games, the soccer World Cup and most top-level sports in the majority of Western countries.¹⁰⁴

A significant omission in Dunning's typology is the kind of sports professionalism where financial support is provided by stipends or grants awarded by the state – a traditional way to create professional conditions for athletes in Finland – which I would add as the tenth category. Moreover, even if the categories help to outline different forms of professionalism, they do not take its degrees into account. Dunning's typology must thus be expanded by considering different degrees of professionalism – such as *semi-professionalism*, which refers to athletes for whom sport is a part-time activity in terms of time and income. A semi-professional would be, for example, an athlete in Dunning's second category, for whom working in the private sector is only partially nominal. In that case, the athlete would also have work responsibilities outside of sport, which, however, would be subordinate to training and other sporting activities. This kind of athlete could also be categorized into Dunning's third category because the recruitment of such athletes is usually motivated by athletic prowess, not work-related competence.

The professionalization of sport is closely connected to the processes of *commercialization*, *corporatization*, and *commodification*. Historians of sport have often used the concepts of commercialization and commercialism in particular when describing commercial or professional activities in sport, without, as noted recently by Wray Vamplew, defining what these concepts actually mean. Vamplew's proposed definition of commercial activities in sport covers nineteen categories, including, for example, the existence of professional sportspersons, commercially produced sports equipment and costumes, paid admission of spectators, sponsorship of events or athletes, gambling, advertising, tourism, and media involvement.¹⁰⁵ For the purposes of this dissertation, it is important to note that professionalism, particularly that of athletes, can emerge – and usually has emerged – before large-scale commercialization of organizations and systems in elite sport. For example, in Beech and Chadwick's model of sport's transition towards entertainment and business (2013) – as cited by Aarresola, Lämsä, and Itkonen – professionalization precedes commercialization. One sign of commercialization is increasing dependency on outside investors that seek to use sport for their own ends.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Dunning 2001, 115–116.

¹⁰⁵ Vamplew 2023, 391–392.

¹⁰⁶ Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 24.

Corporatization has manifested especially in team sports, in which elite sports clubs have turned into organizations similar to business enterprises in terms of ownership, structure, and operational methods. The North American sports system is a prime example of this. The closed leagues of American football, basketball, baseball, ice hockey and association football (soccer) are governed by private corporations (NFL, NBA, MLB, NHL, and MLS) that own the teams and the players in the leagues. The leagues are thoroughly commercial ventures, which is evidenced by the fact that participation is determined not by sporting factors such as promotion or relegation, but by the logic of the market. Moreover, financial prospects also determine the location of the teams.¹⁰⁷

The North American sports system differs from the European model in many ways. In Europe, the dominant principle of team sports is free competition. Even if the first team(s) of professional clubs in Europe are usually organized as separate private companies, they are closely connected to their non-profit parent clubs, as well as to their local communities. In Finland, corporatization and commercialization have progressed furthest in men's elite ice hockey, which already incorporated features from the North American sports model into a Finnish context while the *SM-liiga* was formed in 1975. These eventually led to a closed league system governed by a limited company that is owned by the league's clubs.¹⁰⁸ Finnish men's ice hockey also provides an example of the common international development of professionalization, in which gate money has been replaced by corporate sponsorship and payments for broadcasting rights as the primary source of funding of professional clubs.¹⁰⁹

A by-product of professionalization is that elite sport has become separated from the rest of sports culture. The financial base of professional sport is tied to the logic of the market, so its values are the opposite of those of amateur sport. According to Kalervo Ilmanen, the values of professional sport include: 1) external incentives as motives; 2) sport is a profession and a job; 3) the outcome, ergo, victory, is the most important goal; 4) the norms and ethics of the working life; 5) maximal pursuit of profit; 6) does not aim to educate; 7) regulation by the market.¹¹⁰ Professional athletes can thus be equated with artists whose task is to entertain the crowds for whom the show is arranged. From an ethical point of view, the values of professional elite sport are questionable when they are applied to high-level, goal-oriented youth

¹⁰⁷ Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 17–24.

¹⁰⁸ Backman 2018, 222–223, 272–276.

¹⁰⁹ Although, as shown by Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen, sponsorship revenues have surpassed the importance of match day revenues also in other team sports in Finland. Aarresola, Lämsä and Itkonen 2022, 57–60.

¹¹⁰ "Motiiveina ulkoiset kiihokkeet (...) urheilu on ammatti ja työ (...) lopputulos eli voitto tärkein (...) työelämän normit ja etiikka (...) maksimaalinen voiton tavoittelu (...) ei tavoittele kasvatusta (...) markkinat säätelevät." Ilmanen 2012, 182.

sport. The media visibility of professional star athletes, who receive the highest salaries, offers the lure of social climbing for children and their parents. As a result, children are subjected to the competitive environment of elite sport at an early age. At worst, this can lead to grotesque practices such as the use of growth hormones by junior athletes with the approval of their parents.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Sirén, Vesa. “Brassipojat halutaan hormonin voimin huipulle” [Brazilian boys to the top with hormones], published on January 25, 2013 in Hs.fi. <https://www.hs.fi/urheilu/art-2000002608581.html> (accessed January 3, 2023).

4 Amateurism in Finnish sport – roots and effects

To understand the historical context of amateurism, professionalism, and shamateurism in Finnish elite sport, it is necessary to discuss the roots of amateurism, and its connections to the aims of the bourgeois and working-class sports movements in Europe. During the nineteenth century, modern sport developed in connection with the modern, industrialized society in Europe. Sport was organized nationally, regionally, and locally, and specialized and standardized competition and rule systems were created to ensure the quantifiability of results and records.¹¹² The organizers of sport mostly came from the urban, middle-class intelligentsia, who used sport as a vehicle for wider political goals. Body culture controlled from above gave the authorities of sport and society the opportunity to strengthen the spirits and bodies of the lower social classes, the aim of which was to give emerging nation-states a strong military base. Despite its nominally non-political ideology and rhetoric, bourgeois sport developed close and mutually beneficial connections with state entities.¹¹³ After the turn of the twentieth century, the potential of sport was also recognized in the working-class movement, which had its own social and political goals. Sport became a potential weapon in a class conflict against the bourgeoisie.¹¹⁴

Modern competitive sport was introduced to Finland during the late nineteenth century based on influences that Finnish sports authorities drew especially from Sweden, Germany, and Great Britain.¹¹⁵ However, Finland's social, political and geographical peculiarities gave the emerging sports culture nuances that were not found in these countries. In contrast to Continental Europe and Great Britain, industrialization and urbanization had not yet properly taken off, which was reflected in the small size of the urban working class and urban middle class. Most

¹¹² According to Allen Guttmann's classic definition, characteristics of modern sport include secularism, equality, bureaucratization, specialization, rationalization, quantification, and records. Guttmann 1978, 15–55.

¹¹³ Hentilä 1982, 28–29.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 34–39.

¹¹⁵ Kokkonen 2015, 33–37.

of Finland's population lived in the countryside and made their living from rural occupations. Politically, Finland's position as an Autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia was unstable, and conflicts between the speakers of Finnish and Swedish, as well as the bourgeoisie and working class, were common features in domestic politics. Despite these factors, the small urban intelligentsia – most of whom spoke Swedish as their mother tongue – adopted similar goals to their continental counterparts. The nation had to be civilized, educated, and trained to defend itself in order to gain independence amidst growing Russian repression. One method for this was civic activity, in which sport played an important role. Sports clubs – and other associations that took sports into their programs such as abstinence, working-class, and youth associations – provided effective means to reach people in a sparsely populated, poor, and agrarian country.¹¹⁶ In the process, bourgeois sport attained a strong nationalistic, masculine, and militaristic character.¹¹⁷

At the turn of the twentieth century, sports ideologues in Finland were broadly divided between those who accepted specialized training in pursuit of records and rewards, and those who favored versatility and balanced training of the body. The former supported sports culture based on competitions, whereas the latter preferred mass gymnastics.¹¹⁸ The struggle between the advocates of competitive sport and mass sport – or sport and gymnastics – characterized the development of both bourgeois and working-class sports movements in Finland at the turn of the twentieth century. Despite the continued importance of mass sports phenomena such as women's gymnastics, competitive sport emerged victorious on both sides.¹¹⁹ One of its ideological cornerstones was amateurism, a British import that was heavy-handedly glued on top of previous sports traditions such as monetary prizes.

4.1 An invented tradition from Victorian Britain

Amateurism is one of the invented traditions of the nineteenth century – a modern creation shaped by the conditions and needs of the period of its birth. The cradles of amateurism were British public schools, in which the scions of the Victorian upper and middle classes were socialized into the values and duties of their classes. In the Victorian era, public schools fostered the ideal of sport as a rational and civilized activity that nurtured attributes vital to the development of the body and mind. The ethical code of team sports such as football and rugby was devised to

¹¹⁶ Hentilä 1982, 30–32.

¹¹⁷ Kokkonen 2015, 47–51.

¹¹⁸ Laine 1992, 117–123.

¹¹⁹ Kokkonen 2015, 28–29.

instill a healthy spirit of competition into the youth, motivate them to develop themselves, and teach them a sense of duty and group spirit towards their peers.¹²⁰

At the core of the ethos of Victorian sport was the ideal of a gentleman amateur, who would not compete for rewards or victory, but for sport's sake, with proper conduct and fair play. From the onset, the ideal was connected primarily to how sportsmen should conduct themselves on and off the field. However, it soon became entwined with the question of who could participate in sport.¹²¹ Inherent to it was the elitist perception that civilized, gentlemanly sport could not be taught to “primitive” working-class masses, whose motives for sport were limited to coarse entertainment and pursuit of the outcome. Proponents of this view questioned whether the conditions for fair competitions could be achieved if manual workers, who gained a physical advantage from their occupations, were allowed to compete with gentlemen in the same events.¹²² This mentality represented a distinctive break from the past. The early nineteenth century sports culture in Britain had been comparably pluralistic, without distinction or barriers between amateur and professional sport. During that time, noblemen often competed against members of lower social classes in the same events. Moreover, upper class sports clubs, which sponsored and organized sports events, did not restrict participation to specific societal groups or prohibit small-scale commercialism such as betting and monetary prizes.¹²³

The amateur ethos was codified into the rules of British and North American sports organizations from the 1850s onwards. Membership in amateur sports clubs was restricted to “gentlemen”, and working-class athletes were barred from competitions organized by such clubs.¹²⁴ The motivation to exclude the working class from sports arenas stemmed in large part from fear. Rapid urbanization and industrialization on the one hand, and the reforms that reduced the working hours of the industrial proletariat on the other, increased tensions between social classes in the late Victorian era.¹²⁵ This societal change manifested in the most popular spectator sports, football and rugby, which began to function under commercial logic based on betting, advertisements, paying spectators, and professionalism of athletes, clubs, and leagues. By the end of the nineteenth century, professionalism had also appeared in cycling, boxing, athletics, and even in traditionally upper-class sports such as golf and tennis. The values of this new sports culture did not include competing just for the joy of participation; its dominant logic was feverish and

¹²⁰ Gruneau 2006, 564–567; Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 17.

¹²¹ Holt 1989, 98–99, 116–117.

¹²² Gruneau 2006, 570.

¹²³ Gruneau 2006, 564–565; see also, Eisenberg 2011, 197–217.

¹²⁴ Gruneau 2006, 570.

¹²⁵ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2014, 98.

systematic training for money, glory and records.¹²⁶ As a result, the formerly pluralistic and comparably open British sports culture disappeared; under these volatile circumstances, upper class patrons were “less inclined to sponsor sporting competitions likely to include large crowds of people who they viewed as their social inferiors”, and upper class athletes “less likely to want to compete against such people”.¹²⁷

It was against this background that amateurism was constructed, and the reason why it gained such popularity among the British upper and middle classes. “Amateurism represented a refined, moderate, and exclusive model of organized competition—an alternative to the violent, socially disruptive, and commercially driven spectator sports of the industrial masses.”¹²⁸ To combat the kind of sport that threatened the established order in society, proponents of amateur sport emphasized sport that offered moral and bodily improvement; “fair play, decency, honesty, self-control, respect for opponents and officials as well as graciousness in both victory and defeat.”¹²⁹ These virtues were only achieved in competitions that were civilized and regulated. It should be noted, though, that quite a few “gentlemen” who took part in these competitions fell short of the amateur ideal themselves. For example, “the greatest Victorian amateur of all”, the cricketer William Gilbert Grace not only demonstrated a considerable work ethic and a will to win while practicing and playing, but also “accepted large testimonials and organized his own paying-tours while remaining an amateur in name”.¹³⁰

The importance of competitions was added to the moral canon of amateurism by the middle-class industrialists who drove the Empire’s economy. The old aristocracy had not needed to compete to gain their position in society, and viewed the idea of social mobility through competitive sport as a threat to the established hierarchy. The capitalist middle class, however, firmly espoused the idea of career progression through effort, ability, and merit.¹³¹ Competition was seen as a vital component of the societal standing of their class and the fuel that ensured the global hegemony of the British Empire. Competitive amateur sport enabled the middle class both to distinguish themselves from the working class and to pursue the social prestige of the old aristocracy.¹³²

The legitimacy of amateur sport was strengthened by historical roots that allegedly reached to antiquity. The claim that amateur sport had flourished in

¹²⁶ Ilmanen 2012, 176–177.

¹²⁷ Gruneau 2006, 566.

¹²⁸ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2014, 99.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Holt 1989, 101–102.

¹³¹ Richard Holt has challenged the notion that public schools had a key role in the popularization of amateurism in Britain, emphasizing instead the changing work ethos and body culture of the British middle class in the second half of the nineteenth century. Holt 2006, 8–23.

¹³² Baker 2004, 8.

Ancient Greece was later perpetuated by the Olympic movement: the IOC's presidents from Pierre de Coubertin to Avery Brundage advocated the idea that the Ancient Greeks had shared "a deep, genuine love of sport for sport's sake, as an appropriate activity for praising their gods".¹³³ The argument that amateurism should be preserved because it represents the original, pure, and incorrupt version of sport persisted until 1984, when David C. Young demonstrated that amateurism had not existed in ancient sport.¹³⁴ In the context of classical antiquity, amateurism is an anachronistic concept that the athletes of that time would not have recognized. On the contrary, lucrative monetary prizes and the potential for social climbing was one of the chief motivators in ancient sports events. Moreover, competitors trained for these events with the help of coaches and specific diets, which was far from the effortless, untrained excellence that the proponents of amateurism promulgated in the nineteenth century.¹³⁵ Later research has added to Young's findings by revealing that sport in the antiquity was not "pure" by any definition; on the contrary, it contained many of modern sport's by-products, such as performance-enhancing drugs, match-fixing, and gambling.¹³⁶

Amateurism was never an immutable or easily defined ideology. Paradoxically, it was precisely the ambivalent nature of amateurism that ensured its success. Amateurism could be combined with a variety of political systems and targets: it could be justified as part of a socialist or a capitalist system; it could be used to reinforce or undermine social hierarchy; and in all contexts, it increased the power of the dominant sports organizations. Because the commercial and cultural network of the British Empire covered most of the world and national sports elites usually consisted of members of the privileged Anglophile, bourgeois middle class, amateurism was already supported by most leaders of the sporting world by the time the IOC was founded at Sorbonne, Paris, in 1894. As Llewellyn and Gleaves have aptly put it, "in most instances a small coterie of colonial, Anglophile elites – wielding an inordinate amount of power through the sporting bureaucracies, clubs, and colleges they governed – implemented amateur legislation in opposition to both popular sentiment and established professional sporting structures."¹³⁷ Professional sports structures had by this time emerged in, for example, football, rugby league, and cycling in Europe, and American football, baseball, and basketball in North America. Later, these sports successfully challenged the hegemony of amateurism that characterized the development of major sports in the Olympic movement, such as athletics.

¹³³ Pope 1997, 18.

¹³⁴ Young 1984, 7–106.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 115–146.

¹³⁶ Gruneau 2006, 564; Pope 1997, 19.

¹³⁷ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2014, 100.

The “father of the modern Olympics”, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, welcomed amateurism into the Olympic movement for pragmatic reasons.¹³⁸ Coubertin knew that amateurism was a prerequisite for gaining the support of Anglo-Saxon sports elites for the project to revive the Olympic Games, and thereby did not see alternatives to its inclusion within the IOC’s governing principles. However, his interpretation of amateurism was never as socially exclusive as that of his British counterparts: he welcomed members of all social classes to the Olympic Games as long as they had never accepted monetary rewards or participated in professional competitions.¹³⁹ There remained, however, nearly limitless variations on how an amateur athlete was defined and even more opinions as to how it should be defined. At the 1894 International Athletics Congress in Paris, the congress, after much debate, passed the following definition that applied to the athletes competing in the first of Coubertin’s modern Olympics in Athens, 1896:

[An amateur is] Any individual who has never participated in a competition open to all comers, nor competed for a cash prize, or for a prize of any amount of money regardless of its source, specifically from admissions to the field – or with professionals – and who has never been, at any time in his life, a teacher, or paid instructor in physical education.¹⁴⁰

The definition did not apply to traditionally upper-class sports such as horse racing, shooting, and yachting, because of “deep-rooted practices of awarding financial prizes” in these sports, and soon after, paid fencing instructors were also allowed to participate. Even more problematic than the need to immediately make exceptions that benefited the privileged few was the fact that the IOC or the national organizers of the Olympic Games could not enforce the amateur code in any meaningful way. This resulted in amateur violations and shamateurism from the start in Athens in 1896, and especially at the disorderly Games in Paris and St. Louis during the World Fairs of 1900 and 1904.¹⁴¹ The IOC left the task of devising more detailed amateur rules to national Olympic associations, which resulted in even greater variation. Tellingly, national governing bodies in Britain drafted twenty-four different definitions of amateurism soon after.¹⁴² The question of amateurism was further complicated after the establishment of international governing bodies for sports disciplines. Some of them – such as the IAAF, founded in 1912 – became staunch supporters of amateurism, but others – such as FIFA, founded in 1904 – went in the opposite direction. In the late 1920s, FIFA’s motivation to found a

¹³⁸ Ibid., 99–101.

¹³⁹ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 26.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 26–30.

¹⁴² Ibid., 35.

separate World Cup in which professional players could also participate stemmed from the IOC's decision not to allow broken-time payments for athletes.¹⁴³

The IOC's decision to embrace amateurism paved the way for shamateurism but gave national sports elites a lasting rationale to commit to amateur sport. This proved to be especially pertinent in the Nordic countries. Coubertin's acceptance of amateurism stemmed partly from his vision of amateur sport as "a social stimulant that promoted class cohesion" and "holistic development" of the citizenry.¹⁴⁴ Coubertin's paternalistic impulse to educate the "lower rungs of the society"¹⁴⁵ with amateur sport resonated with Nordic elites, who had similar aspirations. Nordic sports culture was built on the voluntary activity of non-commercial associations many of which had wider societal goals than merely sporting success. In Finland, neither working-class nor bourgeois sports authorities had to debate whether sport should be based on amateurism or not – it was self-evident. However, in order to fulfill the vision of the kind of amateur sport that would benefit the nation as a whole, the professional sports cultures that had appeared in Finland at the turn of the twentieth century had to be eradicated first.

4.2 Professional sports cultures in Finland before the amateur era

During the Age of Autonomy, modern competitive sport inspired both enthusiasm and opposition in Finland. Despite criticism from the proponents of gymnastics, sports competitions were organized to an increasing extent from the 1880s onwards. Many practices in these events were adopted from horse racing – for example, selling entry tickets in return for a place in the stands.¹⁴⁶ Paying spectators, individual donations, and fundraisers provided the economic basis for cash prizes, which were common in various sports in the late nineteenth century. According to Erkki Vettenniemi, significant early examples of sports events that featured monetary prizes were the exhibitions of professional runners, or "skill runners" [*taitojuoksijat*], which were a fairly regular feature in Finnish cities in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁴⁷ In exchange for a monetary reward, runners – who often came from Central Europe – strove to beat a specific time limit on a predetermined distance, or an opponent on foot or horseback. In the second half of the nineteenth century, challenge runs for small sums of money were also organized at folk

¹⁴³ Itkonen and Nevala 2007, 13.

¹⁴⁴ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 24.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Vettenniemi 2008, 106.

¹⁴⁷ Vettenniemi 2006, 76–82, 91–92, 97–111.

festivals. Cash prizes also appeared in many other sports disciplines that were later grouped under the umbrella of athletics.¹⁴⁸

Especially in skiing, monetary prizes inaugurated an era characterized by professionalism. In the 1890s, the city of Oulu and its surrounding region became the center of Finnish skiing, with monetary prizes that attracted participants from all over the country.¹⁴⁹ The annual Oulu ski races, organized for the first time in 1889, boasted prizes of up to FIM 150. A working man's hourly wage at the time was FIM 0,24,¹⁵⁰ which yielded daily earnings of about two marks and monthly earnings of FIM 50. The winner's prize was thus comparable to three months' wages for a manual worker. Significantly, monetary rewards were also given to lower-ranked skiers.¹⁵¹ Skiers could expect – or at least hope – to cover the costs of traveling with prize money, which proved to be an efficient attraction: hundreds of participants included skiers from all over the country, which was not self-evident considering Finland's geographical size, harsh conditions during winter, and limited means of transportation. The competition frenzy of skiers and spectators also drew public criticism, but this was rarely connected to monetary prizes as such.¹⁵²

The most successful skiers increased their incomes significantly through monetary rewards. Rewards were mostly based on local fundraising and private donations, as the sale of entrance tickets yielded only a comparatively low portion of revenues.¹⁵³ Even though no skier turned fully professional in the sense of gaining a full livelihood from the sport,¹⁵⁴ Finnish skiing of the 1890s can be regarded as an example of the sports professionalism described in Dunning's categories 5 (a type of sports professionalism in which financial support is provided by wealthy individual patrons) and 6 (a type where financial support is provided from money taken at the gate). In addition to financial profits, skiers received lavish catering and celebrity treatment as nationally known and admired athletes when they traveled from one competition to another.¹⁵⁵ Their lifestyle displayed both differences from and similarities with professional athletes of the twentieth century. As an example of the latter, skiers had close ties with the emerging ski business; many of them advertised and manufactured skis and ski waxes to supplement their

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 145–147, 219–221.

¹⁴⁹ Heikkinen 1977, 35–38; Laine 1984, 84–85.

¹⁵⁰ The Bank of Finland Museum. Money Value Converter. <https://app.rahamuseo.fi/calculator?lang=ENG> (accessed January 10, 2023).

¹⁵¹ For example, skiers whose final positions were between 20 and 30, were awarded FIM 5, which was usually enough to cover the costs of traveling. Claudelin 1939, Attachments, 5.

¹⁵² In addition to condemnations of competitive sport in general, the criticism was often religious in nature, caused by the practice of organizing the ski races on Sunday. Heikkinen 1977, 41–45, 60.

¹⁵³ Heikkinen 1977, 18–19, 109.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 88.

¹⁵⁵ Kirjavainen 1938, 53

incomes, and after their active skiing careers, earned a living from such work.¹⁵⁶ Like shamateur athletes in postwar Finland, skiers sometimes had to deal with unwanted attention from tax collectors, but by maintaining good relations with them, paying taxes could be avoided.¹⁵⁷ However, there were also features from the era of pre-modern sport. One such was that skiers did not train specifically for competitions but gained strength and endurance from their actual work in the forest industry, as well as by traveling to and from competitions by skiing.¹⁵⁸

The seeds of professional sport also sprouted in wrestling. The popularity of wrestling was boosted by foreign professional wrestlers who arrived in Finland in the 1890s. Wrestlers such as the Pole Ladislaus Pytlasinski gave wrestling lessons and fought against Finnish opponents for monetary rewards in circuses. The inspiring influence of foreign strongmen and the rewards of hundreds of marks awarded to those who managed to beat them attracted both competitors and large crowds. For example, when Pytlasinski was looking for an opponent in Helsinki during the winter months of 1896 and 1897, trialists were offered a daily wage of FIM 100, paid for the duration of the visit, as well as free housing, food, and a potential reward of FIM 300 for winning the contest.¹⁵⁹ The offer was accepted by well-known strongman Verner Järvinen, a railroad worker by trade. The result of the contest is not known, but more important here is the fact that Järvinen was able to cash in on his physical abilities – and not only in wrestling. According to Erkki Vettenniemi, Järvinen earned about FIM 50 from discus throwing and high jumping events in his home city, Tampere, in the summer of 1897, which equaled two months' regular wages for him.¹⁶⁰

At the dawn of the amateur era in Finland, wrestling, skiing, and to some extent athletics provided talented athletes opportunities to increase their incomes through monetary prizes, and even provide for themselves with these profits for part of the year. In Europe and North America, there were countless athletes such as Verner Järvinen, who had competed against professionals and received monetary rewards from such contests, but participated in the Olympic Games anyway. Järvinen himself won two Olympic medals in the 1906 Intercalated Games in Athens and one more in the 1908 Olympics in London.

¹⁵⁶ Heikkinen 1977, 160–161, 229. Skiers also supplemented their incomes by selling commodities awarded as prizes. Kirjavainen 1938, 187.

¹⁵⁷ Kirjavainen 1938, 173, 187.

¹⁵⁸ Heikkinen 1977, 62–63, 88–90. Elite skiers of the era reminisced on their careers to Jussi Kirjavainen for his book *Suomalaiset suurhiihtäjät Aappo Luomajoesta Jussi Niskaan* [Finnish ski kings from Aappo Luomajoki to Jussi Niska], published in 1938.

¹⁵⁹ Vettenniemi 2007, 131–135.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 143–144.

4.3 SVUL and governing bodies of sports disciplines as guardians of amateurism in Finland

After the turn of the twentieth century, Finnish sport was organized under national central organization, SVUL, founded officially in 1906. The umbrella of SVUL initially covered not only bourgeois sports clubs, but also most Finnish-Swedish and working-class sports clubs, as well as most sports disciplines practiced in Finland. Of the sports that remained outside SVUL, the most significant were football and bandy, which were organized by the FA of Finland, founded in 1907 – a bourgeois association that largely shared SVUL's societal goals, as well as the principle of amateurism. The FA incorporated the amateur rules into its national rules of competition soon after the association was founded. After the Finnish Civil War in 1918, working-class athletes and clubs that had sided with the socialist Reds were expelled from SVUL, which led to the establishment of TUL in 1919 and the division of Finnish sport into two factions from a national to local level. Despite their mutual hostility, both sides committed to amateurism: TUL assimilated SVUL's amateur rules in its founding congress in 1919.¹⁶¹

The national amateur rules of SVUL came into effect on June 1, 1907. The rules were based on local amateur rules that had been effect in Helsinki since 1903. According to the rules, an amateur athlete was forbidden to compete for prize money or agreed compensation such as appearance money, or to teach sport for a fee, except for teaching in schools and associations. It was also forbidden for an amateur to participate as a competitor, a referee, or an assistant in competitions with professional athletes unless it was an exhibition match without prizes, although an exception could be applied for. Converting prizes into money through sale or other means was prohibited. Violations resulted in losing amateur status for at least one year. Athletes were allowed to receive reasonable travel allowances to cover the expenses caused by traveling to and from competitions. The task of monitoring the rules was given to the five-man executive committee of SVUL.¹⁶²

The amateur rules were regularly updated in the 1910s and 1920s based on practical experiences and rule changes in the international sports federations. For example, the exception that was initially made for schoolteachers and instructors was dropped from the rules. The duration of the loss of amateur status was particularly often the subject of change. In the rules of 1911, it was mentioned that amateur status would be lost forever should any violations occur, except if it could be shown that it was caused by ignorance or thoughtlessness, in which case the executive committee could restore it after one year. According to the rules of 1924,

¹⁶¹ Hentilä 1982, 86.

¹⁶² Lavikainen 2011, 14.

an amateur violation resulted in a ban of five years, after which amateur status could be restored, although only for national competitions. In addition to competitions, the loss of amateur status prevented working in sports associations in any role – apart from as a professional coach.¹⁶³

SVUL's general amateur rules applied to all its sports disciplines, which differed from the amateur rules in neighboring Sweden. The Swedish Sports Confederation RF gave the national governing bodies of sports disciplines permission to make additions and exceptions to the general amateur rules. According to Karin Wikberg, RF refrained from forcing its interpretation of amateurism onto the federations in order to secure a hegemonic position in Swedish sport. As a result, the amateur rules in Sweden were more heterogeneous than the ones in Finland.¹⁶⁴ SVUL did not make similar concessions, likely because it did not have to: SVUL was able to successfully replace or assimilate separatist central associations in the sports that it governed. Rather than separate organizations, sports disciplines were led by the sections of SVUL.¹⁶⁵ National governing bodies for sports disciplines were formed from the sections of SVUL only in 1932 after which they were also given the right to devise and monitor the amateur rules in their sport. In athletics, the chief authority regarding amateurism was henceforth the FAF.

SVUL's founding was a landmark in the organization and codification of modern sport in Finland,¹⁶⁶ and enforcing amateurism was an integral aspect of this process. One of SVUL's most important tasks in its early years was to eradicate rogue practices such as monetary rewards, which were usually available in competitions in which neither organizers nor competitors were members of sports associations.¹⁶⁷ All events, associations, and athletes whose conduct did not comply with the rules were forced to fall in line or stop taking part in organized sport. The motivation to commit to amateurism thus stemmed partially from the power that it provided to the sports authorities. Moreover, the educational values of amateurism aligned well with the wider societal targets that governing bodies such as SVUL, TUL and FA of Finland and most of their member clubs had for sport, not to mention other associations that organized sporting activities, such as abstinence and youth associations.

The best example of how SVUL used amateurism as a sports political vehicle is related to skiing and particularly to the fate of the nascent professional culture that had emerged in Oulu. After the turn of the twentieth century, Oulun Hiihtoseura (formed in 1902) and the "Association for the Promotion of Skiing"

¹⁶³ Ibid., 15.

¹⁶⁴ Wikberg 2005, 106–107, 131.

¹⁶⁵ Lavikainen 2011, 89–90.

¹⁶⁶ Itkonen 1996, 218–219.

¹⁶⁷ Heikkinen 1977, 172–173.

(*Hiihdonedistämislitto*), established in 1907, took on the mantle of organizing skiing in the region surrounding Oulu, becoming counterforces to the amateurism of SVUL for some years. Whereas SVUL sought to clean Finnish sport of all professional influences, the Association for the Promotion of Skiing attracted skiers with generous travel allowances and also organized events for professional skiers.¹⁶⁸ Since the amateur rules not only prohibited cash prizes, but also competing with those who had received them, there were hundreds of skiers in Finland who could be identified as professionals. Those of SVUL's member clubs that organized local skiing events were faced with an impossible task: to somehow ascertain that skiers who had received monetary rewards – or, to use a contemporary expression, had been infected with “the bacteria” of professionalism¹⁶⁹ – did not take part in competitions, or take the risk of disqualification or other repercussions from SVUL's executive committee or its regional authorities.¹⁷⁰

The Association for the Promotion of Skiing ultimately did not have enough organizational or financial muscle to compete with the more powerful SVUL. Finnish skiing bent under SVUL's amateur policy; when the practice of giving monetary rewards ended, so did the “professional plague” that had afflicted skiing. Henceforth, skiers officially received only compensation for travel and living expenses from their clubs.¹⁷¹ In some competitions, organizers tried to circumvent the amateur rules by disguising monetary rewards as travel grants – by awarding the highest travel grants to the skiers who finished the highest – which was soon noticed and prohibited by SVUL.¹⁷² The time of “professional” skiers was over.

SVUL's stance on professional wrestling was equally strict. In *Suomen Urheilulehti*, circus wrestling was portrayed as a hoax in which the contestants did not compete seriously but only strove for the spectacular with the aim of generating profits from the cheated audience. The negative coverage of professional circus wrestling in particular and professional sport in general displayed similarities to the British media discourse in the sense that professional sport was seen as promoting “idle and morally damaging spectatorship”¹⁷³ as the only form of participation in sport. Wrestlers who “succumbed to professionalism” [*antautua ammattilaiseksi* in Finnish] in circuses or elsewhere were publicly declared professional and

¹⁶⁸ Laine 1992, 126; Heikkinen 1977, 225–226.

¹⁶⁹ There were some skiing enthusiasts who thought that allowing small money rewards would be the best solution, and petitioned SVUL to do so, to no avail. “Me käännyimme teidän puoleenne, että te päästäisitte meidät tuosta hiihtourheilulle kuolettavasta pakteerista, että voisimme vapaasti harjoittaa meille rakkaaksi käynyttä urheiluamme.” [We turn to you that you would release us from this bacteria which is deadly to skiing sport, so that we could freely practice the sport that has become dear to us], as cited in Lavikainen 2011, 22.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 20–27.

¹⁷¹ Heikkinen 1977, 227–230.

¹⁷² Lavikainen 2011, 27.

¹⁷³ Dunning 2001, 118.

ineligible to participate in national and international amateur sports events. Sometimes, sports clubs helped SVUL's executives by reporting their own wrestlers for amateur violations. In 1913, the major wrestling clubs Helsingin Jyry and Helsingin Atleettiklubi even petitioned the authorities to place limits to how professional wrestling events could be organized because of their detrimental effect on amateur wrestling.¹⁷⁴

SVUL's control measures pushed many of Finland's most successful amateur wrestlers towards professional arenas, but there were also pull factors. The professional wrestler's workplace was usually a circus, and his sources of income included prize money from matches, shares of gate money, and sometimes even a regular wage. Finnish circus wrestlers of the era can thus be seen as examples of Dunning's sixth category of professionalism, where athletes are supported by the money taken at the gate. For example, Ivar Böhling – a light heavyweight silver medalist in the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm who turned professional in 1916 – reminisced afterwards that he had been paid a daily wage of 100 Swedish crowns for a month when he wrestled in a circus in Gothenburg, Sweden. Nestori Tuominen, in turn, received a reward of FIM 1,000 for his victory against Taavi Kolehmainen in 1912.¹⁷⁵

At the beginning of the 1910s, wrestlers had plenty of job opportunities in Finland, but generally, their careers were internationally oriented. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, professional Greco-Roman wrestling experienced a golden age in Europe: championship belts were competed for and large cash prizes awarded in front of huge crowds in the cities of Continental Europe.¹⁷⁶ Finnish wrestlers such as Iivari Tuomisto, Kaarlo Lehto, Alex Järvinen and Armas Laitinen, who turned professional and/or were declared as such by SVUL, usually started their professional careers in Finland or in neighboring Sweden, Estonia, or Russia, and continued them in Continental Europe and the United States. Like later professional athletes, some of them became wrestling coaches after their professional careers had ended because of age or injury.¹⁷⁷ What was also similar was the perennial uncertainty involved in professional sport. Turning professional did not necessarily result in a better standard of living, and some wrestlers eventually applied to SVUL to reinstate their amateur statuses.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Lavikainen 2011, 35–39.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 91, 38.

¹⁷⁶ Kanerva and Tikander 2012, 272–273.

¹⁷⁷ Eino “M-O-N-I” Soinio recounted the life stories of elite Finnish wrestlers in his book *Suomalaisia mestaripainijoita Carl Allénista Väinö Kokkiseen* [Finnish champion wrestlers from Carl Allén to Väinö Kokkinen], published in 1939. On the professional careers of Tuomisto, Lehto, Järvinen and Laitinen, see Soinio 1939, 63–66, 114–123, 110–113, 203–211.

¹⁷⁸ For example, Yrjö Saarela, a gold medalist in the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, successfully applied for his amateur status to be reinstated in 1924 after a disappointing professional career. Lavikainen 2011, 54.

As the 1910s progressed, opportunities for Finnish professional wrestlers diminished due to the World War in Europe, the 1918 Civil War in Finland, and the founding of Soviet Russia after the 1917 revolutions. After the Civil War in Finland, many working-class wrestlers immigrated to North America, which resulted in an extension to the culture of professional wrestling that had developed in Finland. In the late 1910s and 1920s, a lively regional sports culture based on the cooperation of amateur and professional wrestling emerged in the areas inhabited by Finnish immigrants in Canada. At Lakehead, Ontario, Väinö Ketonen, Henri Karhunsaaari, and Arvo Linko in particular created successful careers as professional wrestlers. This was made possible by the comparably positive stance of Canadian-Finnish workers' sports associations towards professionalism. Clubs such as Jyry of Port Arthur and its successors Nahjus and Isku tolerated professionalism to the extent that the clubs hired professionals as coaches and let them use their facilities for training and matches.¹⁷⁹ In interwar Canada, working-class sports organizations successfully challenged the hegemony of bourgeois amateur sport,¹⁸⁰ unlike in Finland, where TUL embraced amateurism as thoroughly as SVUL.

After SVUL had successfully stifled openly paid monetary rewards in skiing and in other sports, and professional wrestling in circuses had withered, the question of amateurism became connected to under-the-table payments in competitions. Shamateurism became a longstanding and wide-reaching question specifically in athletics because of the vast cadre of Finnish athletes who reached the Olympic podiums in the 1920s and 1930s, and the large crowds of paying spectators that these star athletes attracted to athletics meets. In team sports such as football, shamateurism did not pose a similar problem for the authorities because crowds were smaller, and there were no international star athletes whose participation would have to be ensured by paying them significant portions of gate money. Nevertheless, in the early 1930s, amateurism briefly became a topic of debate in Finnish football as well. The debate was caused by the FA's suggestion in January 1931 that the top-tier competition of Finnish football [*Mestaruussarja*], which had been established in 1930 to replace the cup competition that had determined the national champions between 1907 and 1929, should be changed into a format in which each team would play twice against every other team, instead of just once.¹⁸¹

Without delving into the debate further, it reveals interesting contemporary perceptions regarding amateurism and professionalism in the context of Finnish football, which are useful to highlight here. According to the FA's President Erik von Frenckell, an increased number of matches could prove to be an unwanted step

¹⁷⁹ Hatton 2012, 49–75.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁸¹ "Kaksoissarjan kaatuessa" [If/when the double series collapses], *Helsingin Sanomat* January 27, 1931.

towards professionalism because the clubs would have to start to pay players compensation to ensure their availability. Some of the representatives of football clubs considered von Frenckell's assessment exaggerated given the amateurish conditions under which clubs had to play, but he also received support: "the necessity to play more matches will surely lead to giving compensations [to players], and the leading clubs will step into professionalism," one representative commented. Some club representatives also mentioned the developments in Swedish football and compared them to Finland; this was, and still is, a perennial feature of Finnish football discourse. In Sweden, professionalization had allegedly reached a level where "good athletes are attracted with good jobs", and about 150 football players were actually semi-professionals, rather than amateurs.¹⁸² This description was largely true. By this time, Swedish elite football had indeed taken its first steps towards covertly organized professionalism [*"smyggprofessionalism"*] in which players received various unofficial benefits and compensations from their clubs.¹⁸³ It had, for example, become common for industrial enterprises, under which some of the elite clubs operated, to recruit players for their footballing abilities and give them opportunities to train in work time,¹⁸⁴ which would eventually also become one way to organize semi-professional conditions for football players in Finland. Importantly, Sweden's example was presented as a negative one and not as something that Finnish football should emulate. Notwithstanding these arguments, the suggested reform was eventually carried out for the 1932 season.

It should be noted that, among sports leaders, Erik von Frenckell was not a particularly strong proponent of amateurism. On the contrary, as a board member of FIFA between 1927 and 1932, he suggested that the lines between amateurs and professionals in football should be completely removed.¹⁸⁵ Soon after, to the consternation of his future colleagues in the IOC, he presented a similar suggestion regarding the Olympic Games.¹⁸⁶ Von Frenckell's reluctance regarding professionalism in the context of Finnish football seems to have been largely pragmatic. "They might even make the competition taxable," he remarked,¹⁸⁷ rather

¹⁸² "Kaksoissarjan aiheuttama ottelupakko johtaa varmasti korvauksen antamiseen ja etupään joukkueet astuvat ammattilaisuuteen" (...) Ei tarvitse mennä pidemmälle kuin Ruotsiin, missä esim. hyvillä työpaikoilla houkutellaan hyviä urheilijoita." Ibid.

¹⁸³ On the tensions between amateurism and professionalism in the interwar period Swedish football, see Andersson 2002, 414–447.

¹⁸⁴ Sund 2007, 49–50.

¹⁸⁵ "Amatöörikäsitettä ei urheilussa ole enää olemassa" [The concept of amateur does not exist in sport anymore], *Liitto* November 11, 1931.

¹⁸⁶ Kokkonen 2007, 120.

¹⁸⁷ "Ammattilaisuuden vaaralta on joka tapauksessa koetettava jalkapallourheiluamme varjella. Saattavatpa pian panna kilpailut veronalaiseksi!" "Kaksoissarjan kaatuessa" [If/when the double series collapses], *Helsingin Sanomat* January 27, 1931.

farsightedly. In the late 1970s and 1980s, the Finnish tax authorities took an active role in curbing under-the-table payments, which caused financial troubles for both the payers of under-the-table rewards, clubs, and the recipients, athletes.¹⁸⁸

4.4 Professionalization, commercialization, and politicization of sport during the Cold War

During the postwar decades, the amateurism of the Olympic movement steadily eroded due to a number of political, societal and economic causes. After the introduction of the Soviet Union to the Olympic Games in Helsinki 1952, sport became one of the venues for the Cold War conflict between the Western and the Eastern bloc. The increased motivation to convey state resources into sport fueled the professionalism of athletes, coaches, and entire systems on both sides of the Iron Curtain.¹⁸⁹ The Soviet Union and later the GDR gained a reputation early on as efficient cultivators of state amateurism, but similar state-supported models of shamateurism also appeared in Western countries. These included, for example, the state-supported sports system of the FRG, which, as has later been revealed, much resembled the GDR in terms of the politicization and centralization of sports structures and scientific methods employed in pursuit of sporting success,¹⁹⁰ and the system of athlete scholarships in the United States, a prime example of Dunning's category three of covert sports professionalism.

Traditional forms of shamateurism, namely illicit cash payments and invented jobs, gained new momentum in the 1960s when corporate sponsors, advertisers and television exerted growing influence on the Olympic movement. Sport became a platform for a cold war of another sort as major manufacturers of sports equipment competed for star athletes with lavish under-the-table rewards as boons. The market for running shoes and winter sports equipment grew as the popularity of fitness and leisure sports, especially running, boomed in the United States and many other Western countries. The fierce competition between the shoe manufacturers Adidas and Puma – led by the Dassler brothers Adi and Rudolf, respectively – saw the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico escalate into a “shoe war” where both companies tried to buy as many athletes as possible from the team that represented the largest market for running shoes in the world, the United States. In total, both companies spent roughly \$300,000 during the Games in athletes' under-the-table rewards.¹⁹¹ Similarly to the Summer Olympics in Mexico, the 1968 Winter Games in Grenoble encapsulated the new commercial era with star athletes who

¹⁸⁸ Linnakangas 1984, 12.

¹⁸⁹ Donnelly and Harvey 2011, 59.

¹⁹⁰ Balbier 2009, 551.

¹⁹¹ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 147–152.

made their living from sources that flagrantly violated the amateur code. A particularly stinging thorn in the side of the IOC and President Avery Brundage was alpine skiing, in which athletes such as Jean-Claude Killy of France and Karl Schranz of Austria were effectively on the payrolls of ski and clothing manufacturers.¹⁹²

The IOC had finally allowed broken-time payments for athletes in 1962 – much to the consternation of Brundage who had actively tried to prevent the reform – but refrained from making further mitigations in the following years. As a result of the blatant amateur violations in the Olympic Games of 1968, the IOC set up a committee, led by the IOC's Romanian member Alexandru Șiperco – to propose reforms to the IOC's amateur code, or more specifically, to Rule 26 of the Olympic Charter, which contained the requirements that athletes would have to fulfill to be eligible for the Olympic Games. Șiperco's proposed reforms would have gone a long way towards liberalizing the amateur code but were eventually “stripped of their substance” after active interference by Avery Brundage and the IOC's Australian member, Hugh Weir.¹⁹³ Even if the word amateur no longer appeared in the Olympic Charter, the new eligibility code that came into effect in April 1971 was effectively stricter than before in terms of the limitations it placed on, for example, advertising, training camps and monetary remunerations. Soon after, Brundage oversaw the foundation of the IOC's Eligibility Commission, chaired by Hugh Weir, to monitor the amateur status of athletes, which for the first time effectively gave the IOC power over national federations in determining who was amateur and who was not. Before the 1972 Olympics in Sapporo, the IOC, on the recommendation of the Eligibility Commission, exercised this right by suspending Karl Schranz for having sold the rights to use his name and picture for commercial purposes, which caused similar international outrage to Paavo Nurmi's suspension forty years earlier.¹⁹⁴

The tightening control of the amateur status of athletes was at odds with the commercialism that gradually penetrated the Olympic Games during Avery Brundage's last years as the president of the IOC. Even if the profits that the Olympic Games generated were marginal by current standards, it is important to note that Brundage himself promoted this development, despite his earlier misgivings about commercialism.¹⁹⁵ Interestingly, the IOC's trajectory towards a commercial organization thus began before FIFA's similar development, which only began in 1974 when the Brazilian businessman João Havelange replaced Sir Stanley Rous – who was known for his anti-commercial views and affection for amateurism

¹⁹² Ibid., 152.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 155.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 155–161.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 145.

– as the president of FIFA.¹⁹⁶ The willingness of corporations to pay significant sums in return for the rights to broadcast major international events such as the Olympic Games or advertise products in them further exposed the hypocrisy of amateurism. Many in the sporting world asked why elite athletes should remain without compensation from the televised, commercial spectacle when the governing bodies and their corporate partners reaped all the profits. The IOC's long-term ally in amateurism, the IAAF, provided further proof of this mentality in 1970 by proposing that commercial agreements between corporations and the national governing bodies of sport could be permitted while maintaining that individual deals between athletes and corporations should not be allowed.¹⁹⁷

At the turn of the 1980s, commercialization gained new momentum in the Olympic movement when Juan Antonio Samaranch was elected as the IOC's president in place of Lord Killanin (aka Michael Morris), who had replaced Brundage eight years earlier. Samaranch was a progressive leader who, unlike his predecessors, acknowledged that the IOC would have to part ways with amateurism sooner or later. Under Samaranch's leadership, the IOC and its corporate sponsors turned the Olympic Games into a fully commercialized spectacle, with the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles yielding an unprecedented surplus of \$232.5 million for the IOC. The next year, to further increase television and sponsorship revenues from the Olympic Games, the IOC founded the Olympic Partner Programme (TOP), modelled after FIFA's lucrative sponsorship model, which had been engineered by João Havelange, Horst Dassler (son and successor of Adi Dassler) and Patrick Nally soon after Havelange's election in 1974.¹⁹⁸

In earlier Finnish research, Samaranch's election in 1980 and the IOC's congress at Baden-Baden in 1981 have been regarded as milestones in the eradication of amateurism in the Olympic movement, and the presence of professional athletes at the Summer and Winter Olympics of 1984 as one of sign of this.¹⁹⁹ Indeed, the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and Sarajevo saw the introduction, albeit a covert one, of professional football and ice hockey players, and openly professional athletes in a demonstrational tennis event, which the IOC quietly permitted after contested negotiations with FIFA, IAHF, and ITF.²⁰⁰ However, based on Llewellyn and Gleaves's more recent research, Baden-Baden's significance in particular looks ambiguous. The Baden-Baden congress did not result in concrete decisions that would have significantly altered the position of athletes; Rule 26 of the Olympic Charter stayed as it was, and the decision to allow the federations to devise their

¹⁹⁶ Goldblatt 2007, 517.

¹⁹⁷ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 151.

¹⁹⁸ Goldblatt 2007, 524–527.

¹⁹⁹ See, for example, Kanerva 2007, 240–243; Itkonen 2007, 281.

²⁰⁰ Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 182–183.

own amateur definitions on the condition that they were approved by the IOC only followed an initiative that had already been passed at the 1974 IOC session in Vienna.²⁰¹ There was still substantial opposition to “open Olympics” within the IOC. The socialist bloc wanted to preserve the system as it was because it gave them a competitive advantage, and among Western sports leaders, genuine supporters of amateurism shared a cause with those who used amateurism as a convenient excuse to keep elite athletes as unpaid workers in order to reap the profits of elite sport for themselves. The transition thus required political maneuvering, which prolonged the coming of professionalism until early in the 1990s. This dynamic also provided the context for Finnish track and field athletes whose careers were dated in the 1980s, which I will further discuss in chapter 5.

Athletics was ushered into the new commercial era during the presidency of Adriaan Paulen between 1976 and 1981. Paulen sought to realize his commercial vision for athletics with the help of Horst Dassler and Patrick Nally, who developed a new model for the sponsorship of the IAAF’s competitions and developmental programs, which significantly increased the IAAF’s television, advertising, and sponsorship revenues in the 1980s.²⁰² The reform bore financial fruit during the tenure of Paulen’s successor, Primo Nebiolo. Soon after Nebiolo’s election in 1981, the IAAF’s World Championships and the Grand Prix tour were founded to support the new commercial direction of world athletics.²⁰³ Nebiolo became well-known for both his penchant for luxury and his efforts to prevent athletes from receiving their share from the increased profits. The establishment of the system of trust funds from 1981 onwards, although an important step towards open professionalism, was an uneasy compromise between the interests of the IAAF and the athletes. Trust funds, in which openly paid monetary rewards from meets and sponsors could be deposited, were governed by national governing bodies but left athletes without full control of their earnings. Directly paid monetary rewards, which the athletes could access right away if they wanted to, were only allowed after the turn of the 1990s, and even then, after heated negotiations between the representatives of athletes and the IAAF.²⁰⁴

How did societal conditions in Finland relate to the politicized and commercialized setting of international sport during the Cold War? Despite being a Western country and a capitalist economy, Finland was characterized by strong political and economic ties with the Soviet Union. In the 1960s and 1970s, migration from rural areas to cities rapidly changed Finland from an agrarian country to an

²⁰¹ Ibid., 177.

²⁰² Krieger 2021, 149–150.

²⁰³ Ibid., 163–165. The first World Championships in athletics were organized in Helsinki in 1983, and the first Grand Prix tour, featuring openly paid monetary prizes, in 1985.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 166–168.

urbanized welfare state. The economic and occupational transformation into a modern, middle-class service economy changed the environment in which elite athletes and sports associations operated and created the societal preconditions for a commercialized and commodified sports industry. Wray Vamplew has pointed out, regarding the development of sports industry in Britain before 1914, that “mass markets of sport required not only spending power and time in which to spend it, but also a concentration of population and ease of access to the venues. This came with urbanization and the development of inter-town but especially intra-town transportation.”²⁰⁵ These prerequisites were gradually met in Finland only from the 1970s onwards. Urbanization took off late by international standards, and moreover, it did not result in the growth of an urban working class, as in Britain and many other regions of the world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The societal change of Finland manifested in a growing urban middle class and the rising popularity of fitness sports and team sports. Increasing numbers of participants and spectators created a demand for sports equipment and clothing similar to that in other Western countries at the same time. Ice hockey in particular capitalized on these trends by constructing indoor ice rinks around the country and developing new commercial practices, which provided elite players better incomes and eventually enabled ice hockey’s rise to become the most popular spectator sport in Finland.²⁰⁶ Until the 1990s, however, the cultural and societal significance of individual sports such as cross-country skiing, ski jumping and athletics still surpassed that of team sports.²⁰⁷

Finnish elite sport became gradually separated from the rest of the sports culture during the 1980s and 1990s, becoming increasingly tied to the interests of publicity and the market. The transition encouraged practices that were familiar in many other Western countries but new in Finland, such as dependence on paying spectators, business-like management of sports organizations, publicly paid rewards for athletes, and legal, contractual relations between athletes and clubs.²⁰⁸ In Finland, the most concrete sign of the new era took place in the early 1990s when national sports associations began to give monetary rewards to all Finnish Olympic medalists. Later, the FOC adopted a similar practice.²⁰⁹

An especially notable incident regarding the socioeconomic position of athletes took place in September 1994, when the Insurance Court of Finland [*Vakuutusoiikeus*] established a new legal precedent by ruling that the Canadian ice hockey player Gary Yaremchuk had been an employee of his club, Oulun Kärpät,

²⁰⁵ Vamplew 2016, 344.

²⁰⁶ Backman 2018, 230.

²⁰⁷ Kokkonen 2015, 212–231.

²⁰⁸ Itkonen 1996, 226–242.

²⁰⁹ Itkonen 2007, 278.

while playing in Finland.²¹⁰ Whenever the Insurance Court had ruled on similar cases in the previous decades, the decision had been the opposite – that such athletes had not been employees of their clubs – which had enabled the sports authorities to cling to the view that player contracts should not be considered legal contracts of employment.²¹¹ It is important to underline that, as late as the turn of the 1990s, the authorities of both state and sport shared the view that sport was not work and therefore did not require legal social security. After the pivotal ruling on Yaremchuk, sport quickly became a legitimate profession in the eyes of the state in Finland, which removed obstacles to developing athletes' social security and forced elite clubs in team sports to regard their players as employees. In May 1995, the first decree covering athletes' social security, pensions and insurances came into effect in Finland. Athletes who earned more than a defined amount of taxable income yearly (FIM 56,640 in 1995) were henceforth considered professional athletes who had legal contracts of employment with their clubs.²¹²

Finally, an important aspect of the professionalization of Finnish sport is globalization, which has since the 1990s changed the nature of all team sports, and particularly football, the most popular and culturally significant sport in the world. The end of the Cold War resulted in the breakdown of boundaries between the Eastern and Western bloc, which resulted in the migration of Eastern European players in football, ice hockey, basketball and volleyball in particular to the Western countries, Finland among others. Many of the players and coaches who moved to Finland in the 1990s settled into their new home country, gained Finnish nationality, and sped up professionalization by applying the rigorous training methods learned in their home countries.²¹³ A parallel development was the commercialization that gained new momentum after the turn of the 1990s when new professional football leagues and competitions were founded in various European countries with similarly commercial purposes. Particularly influential milestones were the founding of the English Premier League and the UEFA Champions League in 1992.

The barriers for foreign players to play professionally outside their home countries were lowered significantly after the Bosman ruling in 1995, which freed players from all bonds to their former clubs after their contracts had run out and gave birth to the international labor market of professional players. For Nordic

²¹⁰ Itkonen 1996, 242; Lahti 2009, 38–40, 58–61.

²¹¹ From the perspective of sports clubs, nominally amateur players are much cheaper than overtly professional players who incur many additional expenses. From the players' perspective, this solution is obviously less than ideal, as the rewards of amateur players, particularly if paid under-the-table, do not contain any kind of social security. Lavikainen 2018, 203–205.

²¹² Lahti 2009, 40–45, 62.

²¹³ In ice hockey, the effect of Russian coaches was particularly notable. Backman 2018, 235–237; Isotalo 2021, 143.

football players and clubs, this presented a distinctive break from the past. New career pathways opened up to young goal-oriented players, most of whom targeted a professional career outside their home country. Elite clubs, in turn, started to view their players as commodities, the selling of whom enabled them to claim a slice of the rapidly growing revenue streams in international elite sport.²¹⁴ These developments furthered professionalization both in the core countries of football and in the periphery, in which Finland was positioned.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Itkonen and Nevala 2007, 18–20; Andersson and Hognestad 2019, 711–712.

²¹⁵ Researchers of the globalization of football often categorize countries into three groups: the core, the semi-periphery and the periphery. Szerovay 2018, 23–25.

5 The professionalization of athletics and football in Finland – results and discussion

5.1 The anatomy of shamateurism in athletics

One of the key themes that I investigated in articles I and III was the culture of shamateurism in athletics throughout the twentieth century. In the former article, oral history and written contemporary sources provided evidence of its dynamics in the 1970s and 1980s; the latter article was concerned more with revealing its historical continuity, which extended to the first decades of the twentieth century. In terms of the findings, I will first discuss the networks, actors, and dynamics of the underground system as it developed in the interwar period before proceeding to the professionalization of athletics and football in the 1970s and 1980s in the following chapters.

The first decades of the twentieth century were a societally and politically turbulent period in Finland, which paradoxically witnessed Finland's rise to become one of the most successful nations in the Olympic Games. Athletics, and particularly long-distance running, encapsulated this great success, becoming increasingly tied to the nation-building project of the young state that gained independence from Russia in 1917.²¹⁶ As a result of the hugely successful Olympic Games of 1912, 1920, 1924, and 1928, a "star cult" of athletics emerged in Finland. Finnish star runners attracted large crowds of paying spectators wherever they performed in Finland and abroad, which enabled them to claim shares of the money taken at the gate.²¹⁷ At the same time, state support for sport grew, enabling better training conditions for elite athletes. Under the leadership of athletics coach Jaakko Mikkola in the 1920s, athletes received sinecures, compensations for lost earnings, and monthly stipends, as well as private funding from local benefactors for similar purposes.²¹⁸ All of this was essentially shamateurism and against SVUL's own amateur rules. Such arrangements usually covered the months-long training period

²¹⁶ Kokkonen 2015, 85–89.

²¹⁷ Laine 1988, 313–315.

²¹⁸ Lavikainen 2011, 75–76. On the influence and methods of Jaakko Mikkola on coaching, see, Rantala 2017.

for the Olympic Games, as well as the duration of the event itself.²¹⁹ It is no wonder then that Finland joined up with other Nordic federations in trying to effect mitigations to the IOC's amateur code in terms of partially allowing broken time-payments to athletes – as such payments were already paid to athletes in Finland.²²⁰

A dynamic emerged where SVUL circumvented the amateur rules itself and at the same time tried to prevent its athletes from touring individually to pursue under-the-table rewards, or to profit from their abilities in some other way. The curious, little-known case of long-distance runner Albin Stenroos is worth briefly recounting here. In 1920, Stenroos was stripped of his amateur status by SVUL because his prizes were found in a jeweler's shop in Helsinki. Stenroos later explained that one of his family members had pawned his prizes, and due to the difficult conditions after the Civil War, he had not been able to buy them back. After being banned for one year, he was reinstated as an amateur on application, and went on to win the Olympic marathon in Paris 1924. Neither Stenroos's ban nor his return to the amateur fold appear in any of the newspapers during the interwar period, which indicates that they were purposefully kept hidden from the media to avoid national, and likely international, controversy. Such scandals were a fairly common feature of world athletics during the interwar period. The amateur code of the IOC and the IAAF provided national governing bodies the power to monitor the amateur status of their own athletes, which ensued in contradictory decisions for similar violations.²²¹

I approached the underground culture that athletes and various kinds of middlemen participated in during the interwar period by taking the 1933 athletics scandal in Finland as a case study. The controversy, which in Finnish literature is usually named after its main "culprit", the HKV and FAF official Ossian Roschier (later Rosokivi), has occasionally been mentioned in Finnish histories, without, however, proper analysis of its context or key players, such as the infamous fixer Nicolaus von Bell. The Roschier controversy is an interesting case for many reasons, particularly because it featured a rare written proof of the existence of shamateurism, in the form of a facsimile of a warranty [*takuusitoumus*], signed on July 14, 1931, by Roschier, and published on October 6, 1933, by Helsinki-based Finnish-Swedish newspaper *Svenska Pressen*. According to the warranty, HKV would pay Paavo Nurmi 50% of the revenues of a two-day meet on August 3 and 4, 1931, provided he ran once on each day. If the Swede Edvin Wide also participated, two-thirds of the revenues would be paid jointly to Nurmi and Wide.²²² It is

²¹⁹ Lavikainen 2011, 66.

²²⁰ Wikberg 2005, 153.

²²¹ Lavikainen 2012, 200.

²²² "Document avslöjar vårt idrottsstyre!" [A document reveals our sports conduct], *Svenska Pressen* October 6, 1933.

explicitly stated in the document that the transaction would take place during the meet's second day, after which the warranty would be given back to HKV to be destroyed. The meet, however, did not go ahead, which was likely why the warranty had not been destroyed.²²³

I describe the case in detail in article III, but here it is pertinent to highlight what the case and its ramifications reveal about both Finnish and international elite athletics during the interwar period. Firstly, it shows that meet organizers were willing to pay Paavo Nurmi as much as 50% of an athletics meet's revenues, which in this case, depending on Wide's participation, would have provided Nurmi with a reward between FIM 66,700 to 150,000.²²⁴ Converting this sum into 2022 euros – it would be EUR 26,285 to 59,111 – does not properly convey its true worth at the time. A working man's average hourly wage in 1931 was FIM 8.23, which yielded about FIM 1,500 monthly, depending on his working hours. At most, Nurmi would thus have received a sum representing about eight *years'* work for an average working man. Secondly, HKV was also prepared to pay tens of thousands of Finnish marks to Edvin Wide, who was a five-time Olympic medalist but not an international star of Paavo Nurmi's caliber. Rewards of this magnitude were far above the rewards paid in Finland in, for example, the 1970s, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

The case demonstrates how and especially *why* athletes collaborated with one another, meet organizers, and outside middlemen when trying to secure rewards. There were obviously risks for all parties involved, but these were outweighed by the potential rewards available, and moreover, did not usually result in punishments for athletes. Newspaper coverage of the era tended to be in favor of the athletes, who were usually presented more as victims and objects of shamateurism than as its subjects. Middlemen such as Nicolaus von Bell and Stanisław Petkiewicz – Paavo Nurmi's rival and occasional fixer – bore the brunt of the criticism – “Petkiewicz tried to cash in at Nurmi's expense” and “Our athletes cannot get rid of von Bell”,²²⁵ to quote just two headlines in such news pieces. In this case, the main punishment was handed down to Roschier, who was banned for two years from playing any role in the FAF or its clubs, after which he returned to HKV and was later elected as the club's president.

²²³ Roschier himself explained that the meet did not go ahead because he decided to cancel the offer a day after he had signed the warranty. To do this, he had travelled to Turku to meet Nurmi in person. “Suomen Urheiluliitto tekee parhaansa amatööririkkomusten estämiseksi” [The Finnish Athletics Federation does its best to prevent amateur violations], *Helsingin Sanomat* October 12, 1933.

²²⁴ This is based on the working-class newspaper *Vapaus*'s estimation that the kind of two-day meet described in the warranty usually generated between around FIM 200,000 to 300,000. “Juoksijan palkka” [The runner's pay], *Vapaus* October 10, 1933.

²²⁵ “Petkiewicz yritti lyödä mynttiä Nurmen kustannuksella”, *Uudenmaan Sanomat* December 31, 1931; “Urheilijamme eivät pääse eroon von Bellistä”, *Turun Sanomat* 20 April, 1930.

Nicolaus von Bell, a Finnish-Swedish official employed in the police service of Helsinki and a part-time fixer, was a key actor in the 1933 scandal, as he was widely alleged to have been the source who leaked the warranty to a Finnish-Swedish reporter of *Svenska Pressen* and *Hufvudstadsbladet*, Carl-Adam Nycop. Von Bell and Nycop were associates, whose controversial dealings with Finnish athletes in the late 1920s and early 1930s were regularly covered by newspapers of the era.²²⁶ A close reading of such sources adds new insights into how underground networks in athletics functioned. Von Bell was mostly portrayed as a cheater and a villain in the media but his continual involvement with athletes, despite being banned by SVUL in 1930 from playing any role in Finnish sport, is a testament to his usefulness. From the perspective of Finnish sports authorities, characters such as von Bell were the ones who could be most conveniently blamed of, and banned for, amateur violations. The banning of athletes, whose achievements the nation needed for wider societal purposes, was generally not seen as viable in Finland. However, this view only applied to the “bourgeois” side of sport. Working-class newspapers presented von Bell as only one of many examples of corruption in bourgeois “amateur” sport and portrayed him in a comparatively favorable light.²²⁷

An interesting aspect in the Roschier controversy is its connection with Jules Ladoumègue’s running federation (usually “*Ladoumègue-liitto*” in Finnish sources). Jules Ladoumègue was a French long-distance runner who was banned for receiving under-the-table payments by the French Athletics Federation in early 1932, shortly before Paavo Nurmi’s suspension by the IAAF. After being banned from amateur athletics, Ladoumègue founded a running association in late 1932, which was aimed at directly challenging not only the IAAF’s grip on athletics but the entire system of Olympic amateurism by promising to pay compensations to athletes openly. Nicolaus von Bell and Carl A. Nycop were involved in the project as Finnish liaisons, and tasked with persuading Finnish long-distance runners to join the venture. Despite initial rumors that about fifty Finnish athletes were interested in joining the federation – Paavo Nurmi among them – eventually only experienced middle-distance runner Eino Purje (formerly Borg) participated in Ladoumègue’s professional meets. Purje’s “professional career” ended on a sorry note. After competing at four meets in France, he returned to Finland and soon after sued von

²²⁶ Von Bell and Nycop worked together, for example, when arranging professional meets for middle-distance runner Eino Purje in France in 1933, which resulted in Purje suing von Bell for having taken money from him. “Purje ja Bell käräjöivät” [Purje and Bell in court], *Suomen Sosialidemokraatti* November 19, 1933.

²²⁷ For example, “Porvarillisen urheilun surkea tila,” [The poor state of bourgeois sports], *Kansan Työ* October 15, 1933.

Bell, who had acted as his agent, for having taken nearly FIM 10,000 from him. The district court of Helsinki ruled the case in von Bell's favor.²²⁸

Article III reveals the stature of shamateurism during the interwar period athletics, not only in Finland but in world athletics generally, which contradicts the starting point of Kalevi Heinilä's totalization theory. Heinilä considered Paavo Nurmi and other "Flying Finns" as anomalies in terms of their "serious" relationship with sport, which was evidenced by their blatant shamateurism when their rivals still viewed sport "light-heartedly – in a game-like way".²²⁹ In line with Erkki Vettenniemi's arguments,²³⁰ my findings demonstrate that even though Paavo Nurmi was as peerless as a shamateur as he was on the track, Nurmi was not an anomaly but rather the embodiment of practices that were common throughout the interwar period. Among the Finns, the careers of Nurmi's predecessors, such as Hannes Kolehmainen, the star of the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, and Einari Anttila, the leading Finnish middle-distance runner of the 1910s, already displayed some level of shamateurism.²³¹ Hannes Kolehmainen's success in the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm and subsequent running tours in Britain earned him a similar reputation as a shamateur as Paavo Nurmi would later gain. This was only partially justified, as Kolehmainen's career also contained long periods when running was, at most, a secondary pursuit for him.²³²

Kalevi Heinilä's argument is largely based on the example of Great Britain, the birthplace and bastion of amateurism. However, as shown by Wray Vamplew and Richard Holt in 1988 and 1989, respectively, shamateurism already characterized many British sports disciplines in the late nineteenth century.²³³ Within this dissertation, it is not possible to analyze the extent of shamateurism in British athletics specifically, but at least from the immediate postwar period onward, "there is evidence of some within the athletics establishment finding ways around the restrictions" imposed by the national governing body, the Amateur Athletic Association.²³⁴ These practices paved the way for a similar "black economy" in British amateur athletics as in many other countries.²³⁵

Even if it is likely that no single track athlete after Paavo Nurmi has been paid *half* of an athletics meet's total revenues in Finland, not much actually changed

²²⁸ "Uusi urheiluliittoko?" [New sports federation?], *Lahti* May 13, 1933; "Eino Purje latomäkiläinen" [Eino Purje one of Ladoumeque's runners], *Aamulehti* September 3, 1933; "Purje-Bell. Manageri voitti juoksijan oikeudessa" [Purje-Bell Manager won the runner in court], *Turun Sanomat* January 17, 1934.

²²⁹ Heinilä 1998, 127–128.

²³⁰ See, Vettenniemi 2010.

²³¹ Viita 2003, 184; Lavikainen 2011, 33–34.

²³² Viita 2003, 181–182, 199–200.

²³³ Vamplew 1988, 7; Holt 1989, 102.

²³⁴ Polley 2000, 96.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 105.

between the 1920s and 1970s in terms of how the under-the-table network of meets functioned in Finland, which can be deduced from the experiences of 3000m steeplechase runner Tapio Kantanen and javelin thrower Hannu Siitonen in the 1970s.²³⁶ Even if additional rewards were not available in all competitions, Finland's short summer season contained plenty of meets at which earnings could be secured, not to mention meets in other Nordic countries, Great Britain, Continental Europe, and the United States. An additional finding was that during the postwar decades, major events from the Finnish Championships (*Kalevan kisat*) to the Olympic Games functioned as unofficial marketplaces in which athletes and meet organizers negotiated for rewards in future meets.²³⁷

Furthermore, article III highlights the long-term presence of unofficial managers in amateur athletics. Athletes negotiated with meet organizers individually, but also through middlemen of various kinds throughout the century. These could be fellow athletes, relatives, coaches, journalists, officials, or simply individuals who had extensive networks of contacts. When amateur violations became public, the most convenient course of action in Finland was to ban the manager rather than the athlete. In this sense, despite the infamous treatment of Paavo Nurmi, Finnish athletes were in a better position than, for example, their Swedish rivals. There is hardly a better example of this than the Swedish shamateur cull in 1946 and 1947 when the Swedish Athletics Federation banned more than 200 leaders and twenty-five athletes – including star runners Arne Andersson and Gunder Hägg – for amateur violations.²³⁸ At the same time, the FAF reacted to similar allegations about Finnish middle-distance runner Viljo Heino by suspending Heino's manager, which decision also satisfied the IAAF.²³⁹

Was Finland more lenient in terms of enforcing amateurism than other Nordic countries during the interwar period and the postwar decades? How did the Finnish system of shamateurism compare to those of other Nordic countries? Answering such questions adequately would require its own research. However, some reflections are possible. In Sweden, as noted before, there were certainly clearcut differences between sports disciplines in how amateurism was enforced. Interwar Swedish football, in particular, shows up in a similar light to Finnish athletics. According to Torbjörn Andersson, the rapid commercialization of Swedish football during the interwar period gave birth to a system characterized by hidden semi-

²³⁶ The interview with Tapio Kantanen on August 22, 2019; the interview with Hannu Siitonen on August 26, 2019.

²³⁷ This interpretation is based on my interviews with Tapio Kantanen and Hannu Siitonen, and on Trinidadian sprinter Mike Agostini's account about the 1960 Olympics in Rome in his article "My take-home pay as an amateur sprinter" which was published in *Sports Illustrated* on January 30, 1961.

²³⁸ Wikberg 2005, 198–239.

²³⁹ Krieger 2021, 115–116.

professionalism of players and rampant disregard for amateurism. The Swedish Football Association and the Swedish Sports Confederation RF – a much more sincere enforcer of amateurism – reached, at first, a sort of a truce regarding the question of amateurism. The Swedish FA officially accepted RF's strict amateur code, while at the same time turning a blind eye towards various benefits with which elite Swedish clubs rewarded their players, such as daily allowances and broken-time payments. These compensations and other benefits provided many players better income levels than what they would have received in openly professional leagues abroad. From the players' perspective, remaining an "amateur" player in Sweden was thus more secure and even a better option financially than moving to a foreign country to play football professionally.²⁴⁰ This logic greatly resembled the position of Finnish athletes in various sports throughout the twentieth century. In Sweden, football's transition towards full and open professionalism was stemmed and reversed when Malmö FF was relegated to the second division for amateur violations in 1934, after a much-publicized affair involving bans for both club officials and players.²⁴¹

In Norway and Denmark, the commitment to amateurism appears to have been more genuine than in Sweden and Finland. This was evidenced, for example, by the conflicts in the football relations between Sweden, Norway, and Denmark during the interwar period, many of which were caused by the Swedish FA's liberal interpretation of the amateur code. The Danes and Norwegians opposed the Swedish practice of paying daily allowances to players, as well as the Swedish FA's decision to play against the England national team, which contained professional players. There were even occasional rumors that Denmark had contemplated cutting off football relations with Sweden altogether because of the amateurism issue.²⁴² According to Allan Bennich Grønkjær, "the amateur rules permeated all parts of [Danish] football" long into the postwar era. Players who moved to foreign professional leagues were considered traitors and not selected for the national team until the 1970s. However, a certain discrepancy between rhetoric and reality also seems to have characterized Danish football. Rumors of illegal payments, gifts, and rewards given to players circulated in Denmark from the 1920s onwards. The Danish FA tried to counter the practice of under-the-table payments by revising the amateur rules in the 1960s. The new regulations allowed clubs to reward their players with consumer goods such as refrigerators,²⁴³ which is a somewhat similar approach to Finnish cross-country skiing at the time.²⁴⁴ In Denmark, the amateur

²⁴⁰ Andersson 2002, 415, 426.

²⁴¹ Andersson 2002, 433–437.

²⁴² Andersson 2002, 415.

²⁴³ Grønkjær 2023, 297–299.

²⁴⁴ Commodities such as televisions and refrigerators were commonly awarded as prizes in Finnish cross-country skiing competitions in the 1960s and 1970s. Kokkonen 2015, 231.

system became increasingly difficult to justify in the 1970s, when the commercialization and popularization of football had reached a stage where “everyone except the players made money on football”. The amateur rules were officially abolished in 1978.²⁴⁵

5.2 Professionalization of Finnish athletics in the 1970s and the 1980s

Article I explores the careers of Finnish athletes in athletics in the 1970s and 1980s, with source material that includes both oral history interviews and archival sources. By employing a sort of life historical approach, I sought to investigate athletes’ sources of income, mentalities, and work conditions during these decades of transition in Finnish sport, which resulted in findings that both reinforce previous perceptions about brown envelopes and add some new insights to them.

In the 1970s, the most lucrative athletics meets in Finland featured under-the-table monetary rewards the highest of which were between about FIM 4,000 to 6,000, which exceeded the average national monthly salary. The reportages of *Viikkosanomat* in 1960 and 1971 and the accounts of the Helsinki World Games in the late 1970s were particularly informative sources. In 1960, according to *Viikkosanomat*, athletes earned around FIM 10,000 to 140,000 in Finnish meets, depending on their level, discipline/event, and perceived market value.²⁴⁶ In 1971, *Viikkosanomat* estimated that “international level” athletes, which referred to potential or actual Olympic medalists, could ask for around FIM 3,000 and potential Finnish record breakers FIM 150 to 1,500 from meet organizers.²⁴⁷ Considering that in 1970, for example, the monthly salaries (of men) in most occupations in Finland varied between roughly FIM 1,000 and 1,500 (before taxes),²⁴⁸ even rewards of a few hundred marks – which were paid without deducting taxes – from single competitions could accumulate into decent earnings throughout the season. However, the wide range of rewards and notable differences between events indicate that “national level” athletes often had to be content with payments that just about covered travel expenses.

Archival documents about the World Games in Helsinki contain similar numbers. The World Games [*Maailmankisat*] was an international, usually two-

²⁴⁵ Grønkjær 2023, 302.

²⁴⁶ “Huippu-urheilumme palkkiojärjestelmä” [The reward system of our elite sport], *Viikkosanomat* December 9, 1960, 16.

²⁴⁷ “Urheilijoiden palkkiotaksat” [Athletes’ reward fees], *Viikkosanomat* July 8, 1971, 24–27.

²⁴⁸ Tilastokeskus December 15, 1971, Palkkatilasto 1971 [Wage statistics 1971], Tilastokeskus.fi, https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/170226/xtds_pa_197100_1971_40_dig.pdf?sequence=1&disAllowed=y, (accessed December 1, 2022), 18.

day athletics meet organized annually in Helsinki between 1959 and 1996. As one of the highlights of the Finnish athletics season, the World Games attracted a large number of spectators and Finnish and international star athletes to the Helsinki Olympic Stadium. The organizing club HKV's archive confirms that the World Games were also one of the best events at which to secure additional rewards. The archive contains a handwritten account from the 1977 World Games which includes all expense compensations and additional rewards paid to Finnish athletes that year. Of the fifty-five Finnish athletes, twenty-six received a compensation that surpassed FIM 1,000, with the best rewards of FIM 4,000 paid to javelin throwers Seppo Hovinen and Hannu Siitonen, and long-distance runner Pekka Päivärinta.²⁴⁹ Although these rewards can still be considered reasonable,²⁵⁰ their worth at the time was slightly less than the best rewards indicated by *Viikkosanomat* in 1960 and 1971. In total, the organizers of the 1977 World Games paid FIM 60,250 to Finnish athletes and FIM 194,545 to foreign athletes – whose travel expenses were obviously higher than the Finns' – which, along with the rent of the Olympic Stadium (FIM 80,276), formed the bulk of the expenditure. However, because gate receipts (FIM 472,210) surpassed total expenditure (FIM 441,761), the event was financially worthwhile to organize from HKV's perspective, even though the number of paying spectators in the Olympic Stadium was only 13,549 on the first day and 8,738 on the second day, which were much lower figures than in previous years.²⁵¹ The documents related to other years' World Games in HKV's archive are not as relevant to this dissertation as they do not contain similarly catalogued rewards for individual athletes. Among these documents, the income statement of the 1976 World Games, is, however, worth mentioning here because it contains explicit proof that most athlete rewards were indeed paid under-the-table. According to the document, FIM 31,590 was paid to foreign athletes that year as "unofficial" daily rates [*Ulkolaisten urheilij. päivärahat Epäviralliset*] and FIM 8,380 as official daily rates.²⁵²

If an athlete wanted to obtain earnings that surpassed the average national annual income, he had to actively compete in meets where additional rewards were

²⁴⁹ The untitled handwritten document contains the surnames of fifty-five Finnish athletes with two numbers written next to each name. My assumption is that the first one, usually a larger sum, represents the additional under-the-table reward and the second one, officially paid travel and/or living expenses. Hbb2 Kilpailuaineistot Maailmankisat 1976–1990, HKV's archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture's archive.

²⁵⁰ Average monthly earnings in Finland in 1977 ranged from about FIM 3,000 to 4,000. Tilastokeskus February 5, 1979, Palkkatilasto 1977 [Wages statistics 1977], Tilastokeskus.fi. https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/170242/xtds_pa_197800_1978_52_dig.pdf?sequence=1&disAllowed=y (accessed December 30, 2022), 20.

²⁵¹ Maailmankisat 77 Menot; HKV:n Maailmankisat vuosina 1959–1979, Hbb2 Kilpailuaineistot Maailmankisat 1976–1990, HKV's archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture's archive.

²⁵² World Games -76 Tuloslaskelma 9.8.1976, Hbb2 Kilpailuaineistot Maailmankisat 1976–1990, HKV's archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture's archive.

available.²⁵³ In 1963, the FAF tried to curtail the athletes' competition frenzy by introducing a license system, based on which athletes were allowed to compete at most five times a month. After vehement criticism, the system was scrapped after only two years.²⁵⁴ As a result, active participation in competitions continued much as before, and for the same reasons. Among the interviewees, for example, Hannu Siitonen competed nearly fifty times some seasons precisely because he considered under-the-table rewards his primary source of income.²⁵⁵ By modern standards, such a number of competitions during a single season is unthinkable high, especially in a discipline as physically strenuous as javelin. Although neither Siitonen nor Tapio Kantanen wanted to evaluate their earnings over a season or in specific numbers, both recalled single competitions in which they had received high or otherwise noteworthy rewards – such as their first brown envelope, which both of them recalled vividly.²⁵⁶

As to their working conditions, both Tapio Kantanen and Hannu Siitonen worked in jobs that can more or less be defined as sinecures. Kantanen worked first in the Defence Forces – without having completed the required Non-Commissioned Officer course – and later as a sales representative and product developer in the major Finnish retail chain Pukeva, and Siitonen as a municipal physical education instructor in his hometown, Parikkala. The jobs were arranged for them because of, and as a reward for, their athletic achievements, and especially in Siitonen's case, required very little actual work. Kantanen's work commitments were also quite flexible and could be easily accommodated to training – or even done during training. For example, product development of running shoes could be accomplished while doing training runs and giving feedback about the shoes afterwards.²⁵⁷

Tapio Kantanen's work as a product developer can be compared to work conditions arranged for the ice hockey players of Tappara Tampere between 1970 and 1975. Tappara's players were recruited as product developers of ice hockey sticks for the Tampere-based Finnish stick manufacturer Montreal. Montreal openly paid a monthly salary to the players for their work as product developers instead of the usual practice of giving under-the-table payments for points won in matches. The arrangement has often been viewed as a pioneering milestone of the professionalization of ice hockey and sport in general in Finland.²⁵⁸ However,

²⁵³ In addition to the Helsinki World Games, athletes could expect to be well compensated, for example, in the annual Saarijärvi Midsummer Games. Rahkonen 2001, 59–63.

²⁵⁴ Häyrinen 1987, 160.

²⁵⁵ Interview with Hannu Siitonen on August 26, 2019.

²⁵⁶ Interview with Tapio Kantanen on August 22, 2019; interview with Hannu Siitonen on August 26, 2019.

²⁵⁷ Interview with Tapio Kantanen on August 22, 2019.

²⁵⁸ Lämsä et al. 2020, 65.

compared to Kantanen's agreement with Pukeva, there is actually not much difference, other than the obvious one that in Tappara's case, it applied to the entire team, rather than to an individual athlete. Both arrangements can be regarded as examples of Dunning's category two of non-legitimate sports professionalism, in which sportsmen receive sinecures in private commercial or industrial firms. Athletes were given at least semi-professional training conditions with corresponding pay, without officially labeling them professional or semi-professional athletes, which prevented problems regarding the amateur rules and taxation. It can be safely estimated that this kind of shamateurism was not uncommon among elite athletes in other sports as well; there are known examples of similar arrangements, for example, in cross-country skiing.²⁵⁹ These examples also highlight the problem in Pauli Vuolle's interpretation that Finnish athletes between 1956 and 1972 were pretty much pure amateurs because their time during weekdays was mostly spent in work, as it does not take into account the possibility of sinecures.

800m runner Markku Taskinen presented a slightly different example compared to Kantanen and Siitonen. He did not attain similar success or rewards and considered sport more a "tough hobby" [*kova harrastus*] than a job. Even so, his superiors facilitated his training in many ways, for example by granting him salaried leave before the 1976 Olympics in Montreal. Moreover, he was able to supplement his income with under-the-table rewards, such as the FIM 5,000 that he secured from his equipment manufacturer Karhu in 1978 as compensation for an advertising poster featuring him and two other athletes, which Karhu had produced without initially compensating the athletes in any way.²⁶⁰ The compensation can be regarded as reasonable. A net remuneration of FIM 5,000 in 1978 was not far off from the monthly earnings in the highest paid professions, such as professors (FIM 7,785 on average before taxes) and executive directors (FIM 8,141 on average before taxes).²⁶¹

Taskinen's compensation from Karhu is indicative of a source of income that was gradually becoming more important for Finnish athletes – sponsorship from equipment manufacturers. In this sense, Finnish athletics had fallen behind winter sport in general and skiing in particular. In 1974, the FSA – the national governing body for cross-country skiing, Nordic combined, and ski jumping – established "a Finnish Ski Pool" [*Suomen hiihtopooli*]. As implied by its name, the purpose of the Ski Pool was to harness the commercial potential of winter sport for the benefit of

²⁵⁹ Lavikainen 2017, 164.

²⁶⁰ Interview with Markku Taskinen on May 27, 2020.

²⁶¹ Tilastokeskus December 31, 1980, Palkkatilasto 1979 [Wages statistics 1979], Tilastokeskus.fi, https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/170246/xtlds_pa_198000_1980_45_dig.pdf?sequence=1&disAllowed=y (accessed December 1, 2022), 40, 42.

Finnish skiing by pooling corporate funding and using it to develop skiers' training conditions. Equipment companies decided which individual skiers they wanted to cooperate with, invested the agreed sum into the pool, and then made written agreements directly with skiers about equipment support and training compensation. In return, companies could use skiers in advertisements and other commercial purposes, which the amateur code had not previously permitted, but which was allowed after the IAAF's 1970 initiative. For the Ski Pool's first season 1974/1975, major equipment manufacturers Järvinen, Kneissl, Fischer, and Karhu-Titan bought their way into the pool, compensating individual skiers with sums ranging from FIM 5,000 upwards, with the largest sum, FIM 30,000, paid to the most coveted skier, Juha Mieto, by Fischer.²⁶² In theory, all monetary training support from companies to skiers was supposed to be based on receipts and paid through FSA, but, as Mieto himself later revealed in his biography, notably larger sums than those in the contracts were paid under-the-table.²⁶³

Generally, article I shows that there were many differences between the incomes of track and field athletes of different levels, disciplines, personalities, and especially, genders. Turrini has demonstrated that internationally successful female track and field athletes were marginalized in the underground labor-relations system in the United States,²⁶⁴ and my research shows that it was much the same in Finland. Two of my interviewees, former sprinters Riitta Salin and Pirjo Wilmi-Rokkanen (formerly Wilmi and Häggman) ranked among the stars of the 1970s Finnish athletics but were close to genuine amateurs in terms of their incomes from sport and work conditions. Neither athlete received any profits under-the-table; on the contrary, sport resulted in loss of earnings because of the unpaid leaves that both had to take from their work regularly.²⁶⁵ Under-the-table payments circulated in networks in which women did not feature in any role, and to which women clearly did not easily gain access. Even for men, gaining profits was not self-evident; it required both extensive competing and "salesman skills" that not everyone possessed. It should be added, though, that both Salin and Wilmi-Rokkanen emphasized that the skills and achievements attained during their athletic careers had a crucial effect on their post-career lives, which, in the long run, was much more important than any financial rewards that they could have gotten from meet organizers and sponsors under-the-table. Salin stressed in the interview that she did not even think that running should have provided her with additional earnings.²⁶⁶

²⁶² Lavikainen 2017, 157–158.

²⁶³ Jussila 2000, 110–111.

²⁶⁴ Turrini 2010, 90–92.

²⁶⁵ Interview with Riitta Salin on August 27, 2019; interview with Pirjo Wilmi-Rokkanen on May 13, 2020.

²⁶⁶ Interview with Riitta Salin on August 27, 2019.

Significant milestones in the transition towards open professionalism in Finnish athletics included the establishment of the FAF's stipend system in 1970 and a trust fund in 1983. The trust fund in particular heralded a new era for the generation of Finnish track and field athletes who competed in the 1980s amid the increasingly professional and commercial environment of world athletics. A significant change in Finland was that female athletes could also better pursue professionalism and financial profits.²⁶⁷ The trust fund system enabled new legitimate sources of income for both male and female athletes. However, article I also demonstrates that elements of shamateurism still characterized athletics, which, contrary to previous decades, now also applied to female athletes. In the 1980s, the first Finnish female athletes who can be regarded as shamateurs emerged – seventy years after the career of Hannes Kolehmainen, who, as previously noted, was the first Finnish athlete to be cast as a shamateur internationally. My research thus confirms that the FAF's stipend model or even trust fund did not “harness the secret brown envelopes that were said to result in the ruin of athletics”²⁶⁸, even if that was certainly one of their goals.

Commercialization resulted in the increased importance of the agents who operated as middlemen between organizations and athletes – much to the dismay of governing bodies such as the IAAF and the FAF. The governing bodies tried to stop athletes from cooperating with agents, partly because of their own financial interests. For example, after the FAF's trust fund was founded in 1983, the FAF initially took a share of 25% from all sponsorship deals that athletes made with corporations that were not official partners of the federation.²⁶⁹ Agents such as Tor Westerberg, who represented various Finnish track and field athletes in the 1980s, helped athletes to counter this by delivering false agreements to the FAF and then making agreements with real sums directly with corporations.²⁷⁰ One of the interviewees, an athlete who mostly competed in the 1980s, achieved enough success to need the services of two agents, one of whom negotiated with meet organizers and the other with sponsors.²⁷¹ Even so, he/she made a telling remark regarding the difference between the 1980s and the following decades: “What was

²⁶⁷ Among the Finnish female track and field athletes, javelin thrower Tiina Lillak and long jumper Ringa Ropo, in particular, encapsulated the new era. The former competed in teams named after and sponsored by international corporations such as TDK and Mazda, and the latter harnessed the changing sports publicity in Finland to her benefit. “Uusi tukija yleisurheilulle” [New sponsor for athletics], *Helsingin Sanomat* January 17, 1985, 34; “Lillak huokuu itseluottamusta” [Lillak oozes confidence], *Helsingin Sanomat* April 22, 1986, 35; Kokkonen 2015, 229.

²⁶⁸ “[Stipendi]järjestelmällä saatiin kuriin salaiset ruskeat kirjekuoret, joiden oli sanottu koituvan yleisurheilun kohtaloksi”. Häyrinen 1987, 183.

²⁶⁹ Tiina Lillak, Arto Bryggare, and Martti Vainio to the FAF's board, attached to board minutes, March 16, 1984, FAF's archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture's archive.

²⁷⁰ Kanerva, Juha. ”Kenen varusteilla urheilet?” [Whose equipment do you use while training], *Suomen Urheilulehti* August 12, 2020, 14.

²⁷¹ Interview with “Anon #1”, on May 29, 2020.

coming those days and what we even fought for a bit, is today considered normal”,²⁷² he/she reminisced with a slightly bitter tone, referring to the commercial opportunities that athletes could not pursue in the 1980s but which became possible soon after. The 1980s were clearly a period of transition – a sort of no man’s land between the systems of (sham) amateurism and legitimate/overt professionalism both in Finland and in the Olympic movement.

Finally, the interviewee’s remark about fighting a bit towards what was coming refers to athlete activism, the role of which has been a debated topic in recent international research on the professionalization of athletics.²⁷³ Article I demonstrates that Finnish athletes played an important part in the establishment of the FAF’s stipend system in 1970, which significantly improved the ability to cover the costs of unpaid leaves that athletes had to take from their work, for example, to attend training camps. Even if the system did not go as far towards professionalism as the athletes would have wanted, it had a crucial effect on the professionalization of athletics by increasing the amount of time that athletes could devote to training yearly. However, Finnish track and field athletes’ failure to establish an athlete association in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s to promote their interests displays a similar tendency to what Duckworth, Hunt, and Thomas have pointed out regarding track and field athletes in the United States.²⁷⁴ Athletes tend to form cliques with their closest peers – athletes in their own event – and different cliques do not always share similar interests.

The earliest Finnish athlete association was founded in 1973 by ice hockey players after heated negotiations between the players of Finland’s national team and FICA about compensations paid for the 1973 IIHF World Championships. Negotiations paved the way for written agreements between the national team’s players and FICA about compensations and success bonuses and the founding of the Players’ Association in the autumn of 1973.²⁷⁵ In the early 1990s, the Players’ Association had a notable impact on the process that resulted in the first decree to cover athletes’ social security in Finland, which came into effect in 1995. The primary reason for the association’s important role in the transition towards legitimate, overt professionalism in Finland was the personal influence of the association’s chairman Juha Rantasila, a former elite player who is also a qualified lawyer. Due to his diverse background in both sport and the field of law, he was able to force his way onto committees which had a bearing on the athletes’

²⁷² “Aikakausihan on aivan erilainen nykyisin kuin silloin. Se mikä oli silloin tuloillaan, tai [minkä puolesta silloin] vähän tapeltiin, niin se on tänä päivänä arkea.” Interview with “Anon #1”, on May 29, 2020.

²⁷³ Turrini 2010, 154–159, 181; Duckworth, Hunt and Todd 2018, 158–159.

²⁷⁴ Duckworth, Hunt and Todd 2018, 158.

²⁷⁵ Lavikainen 2018, 201–202.

socioeconomic position in Finland, and have influence there.²⁷⁶ Rantasila's example is worth mentioning here because it is the most likely explanation for why Finnish athletes in other sports were not able to found lasting athlete associations in the 1970s and 1980s, despite occasional activism. Similarly influential former or current athletes/players with an ideal higher education and professional background simply had not emerged. Without Rantasila, it is unlikely that a functional player's association would have appeared even in ice hockey as early as it did.

5.3 Finnish football's transition from shamateurism to low-paid overt professionalism

Article II discusses the professionalization of Finnish football with a time frame that encompasses the 1990s as well. Before proceeding to the results of the article, it is worth the while to highlight the main differences between athletics and football regarding athletes' career prospects in Finland. The most significant difference is that, for most of the twentieth century, international football was based on professional leagues sanctioned by FIFA. In athletics, professional competitions mostly consisted of road running events and short-lived circuits in the United States, such as the ITA in the 1970s. Because all openly professional athletics meets operated outside the boundaries of the IAAF, a professional career effectively barred entry to most national and international athletics events. Furthermore, FIFA was never greatly interested in monitoring which players were actually amateurs and which were not, despite having amateur enthusiasts such as Sir Stanley Rous as presidents and organizing competitions in which only amateur players could participate, such as the qualifiers for the Olympic football tournaments.²⁷⁷

Article II kicks off at the turn of the 1970s, a period during which semi-professionalism was a hotly debated topic in Finnish football. By this time, ideological opposition to professionalism had eroded into a marginal phenomenon. One sign of this was related to the FA of Finland's amateur rules, which were dropped from the national rules of competition in 1978.²⁷⁸ Henceforth, the domestic rules of competition in Finnish football no longer contained regulations

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 205.

²⁷⁷ The question of amateurism soured relations between the IOC and FIFA throughout the twentieth century. There were persistent, and likely correct, claims that professional players posed as FIFA-certified amateurs while playing in the Olympic Games, for example at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne and at the 1960 Olympics in Rome. Llewellyn and Gleaves 2016, 127.

²⁷⁸ It is explicitly mentioned in the foreword of the 1978 rule leaflet that "amateur rules have been removed" [*myöskin amatöörisäännöt on poistettu*]. Suomen Palloliitto: Liiton säännöt, kilpailusäännöt, rangaistussäännöt October 1978, Hc1 Kotimaiset kilpailusäännöt 1910–2010, FA of Finland's archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture's archive.

that would have categorically prohibited players from earning monetary rewards for playing football. Subsequent rules acknowledged that some of the players were paid additional rewards, defining them at first as “non-amateurs” [*ei-amatööri*], with whom clubs would have to make written player contracts.²⁷⁹ However, the abolition of the amateur rules should not be seen as a significant development or a milestone in the professionalization of Finnish football. During the long period when the amateur rules were in effect in Finnish football, the FA of Finland was not inclined to enforce the rules by trying, for example, to prevent payments of under-the-table point money to players. After the amateur regulations were quietly dropped from the rules, the practical reality of most clubs and players was the same as before.

One of the interviewees was a player who is considered one of the stars of Finnish football in the 1970s. By focusing on such a player, I sought to examine how the socioeconomic position of a star player in football compared to those of his contemporaries in other sports. Some similarities certainly came up. For example, the interviewee reminisced that his primary source of income all his active career was football, which also applied to the period when he worked alongside playing.²⁸⁰ “It was a little bit like playing as a professional, I did not really have to worry about the job very much (...) I could train as much as I liked whenever I liked, I could rest whenever I liked, and no one ever asked me at work (...) where I had been.”²⁸¹ In general, his recollections about his sources of income, lifestyle, and working conditions during his active career resembled those of his contemporary athletes Tapio Kantanen in athletics and Juha Rantasila in ice hockey. However, because the interviewee did not want to assess his earnings in specific numbers, I was not able to compare his earnings with those of his contemporary star players in ice hockey, about which Juha Rantasila has earlier provided me with information. Rantasila’s net earnings during a season were between FIM 40,000 to 70,000 when he played in HIFK Helsinki between 1967 and 1975, which enabled and required full commitment to ice hockey.²⁸² To put these numbers into context, for example in 1975, the average monthly earnings of men in the private sector ranged from about FIM 2,500 to 3,000.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Kilpailusäännöt: Suomen Palloliitto December 12, 1993, Hc1 Kotimaiset kilpailusäännöt 1910–2010, FA of Finland’s archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture’s archive.

²⁸⁰ Interview with Anon 2 on January 26, 2022.

²⁸¹ “Se oli vähän niin kuin ammattilaiselämää, ei sun tarvinnut siitä työpaikasta hirveästi murehtia. (...) Mä pystyin harjoittelemaan niin kauan kuin halusin, pystyin lepäämään niin kauan kuin halusin, eikä kukaan koskaan kysynyt työpaikalla (...) että missähän äijä tällä hetkellä on.” Interview with Anon 2 on January 26, 2022.

²⁸² Lavikainen 2018, 200–201.

²⁸³ Tilastokeskus December 15, 1977, Palkkatilasto 1975, Tilastokeskus.fi, https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/170235/xtds_pa_197700_1977_51_dig.pdf?sequence=1&disAllowed=y (accessed December 29, 2022), 19.

Researchers have shown that in various countries, the legalization of professionalism in football was preceded by a period characterized by under-the-table payments and other practices associated with shamateurism, such as inflated expenses and invented jobs.²⁸⁴ Article II reveals that similar practices also characterized Finnish football during the long pre-professional era. Of the eleven former players whom I interviewed, everyone apart from the youngest interviewee (“Anon 11”) recalled having received part of their earnings as under-the-table payments or as questionable mileage allowances. “There were two contracts. One was for the outside, the other [included] what was really paid,” commented one of the interviewees, reminiscing particularly on the period between the early- to mid-1980s.²⁸⁵ This finding is in contrast to my earlier interpretation that increased tax investigations in the early 1980s curbed under-the-table payments in Finnish ice hockey,²⁸⁶ and Lämsä et al.’s similar finding regarding pesäpallo – that the former practice of “paying rewards from the cash register without receipts” had changed into “more professional” payment methods by the mid-1980s.²⁸⁷ It can be surmised that either the culture of covert payments was stronger in football than in other team sports or, more likely, that these practices continued longer than has previously been thought. A question remains regarding how exactly hidden rewards were paid without attracting unwanted attention from the tax authorities, which investigated sports associations with unprecedented zeal from the early 1980s onwards. Where there is a will, there is usually a way, though – payments from private benefactors or sponsors outside the budget, for example.

Most of the interviewees displayed a fairly professional mentality with regard to their earnings from football, which was reflected in their career progression. “I was in a [good] position because HJK [Helsinki] asked after me nearly every season. I asked them how much they would pay me, and then went to [club president] and [told him] that if you pay me this much, I will not go to HJK,” one interviewee summarized his tactics in the 1980s, which in all likelihood is still commonplace in Finnish football today.²⁸⁸ Most of the interviewees were reluctant to recall their reward levels in specific numbers, but some of them provided fairly detailed information about them between specific time periods or during individual seasons. One interviewee recalled that his earnings from football increased from FIM

²⁸⁴ For example, Andersson 2002, 414; Goldblatt 2007, 197; Molnar 2007, 300; Lee 2013, 604–607.

²⁸⁵ “Niitähän oli kaksi sopimusta, toinen oli ulospäin ja toinen se mitä todellisuudessa maksettiin.” Interview with Anon 4 on January 28, 2022.

²⁸⁶ Lavikainen 2018, 203.

²⁸⁷ “(...) aiempina vuosikymmeninä kukoistanut ”tanssilavojen tapa, jossa yhtyeille maksettiin lippukassasta ilman kuittia” (H4, pesäpallo), oli muuttunut jo 1980-luvun puolivälissä ammattimaisemmaksi (...).” Lämsä et al. 2020, 67.

²⁸⁸ “Mulla oli siinä mielessä [hyvä] asema, että kun HJK kysyi mua vähän joka vuosi (...) niin mä kysyin että paljon te maksatte, niin sit mä menin [seuran puheenjohtajan luokse] että tän verran kun maksatte niin en lähe HJK:hon.” Interview with Anon 4 on January 28, 2022.

30,000 to 100,000 over the course of the 1980s; one interviewee earned FIM 150,000 in 1990, and another one nearly FIM 200,000 that same year.²⁸⁹ To contextualize the sums, I compared them to the average yearly salary in Finland, which was FIM 103,600 in 1990.²⁹⁰ Based on qualitative research methods, it is impossible to estimate just how common or uncommon such earnings were in Finnish football at the time. However, one of the findings here is simply that this kind of reward level was possible even under the nominally amateur conditions of Finland, and that the gap between Finland and Sweden in terms of player rewards was not yet as wide as it is in the present day. For example, one interviewee, who moved from Finland to Sweden in the mid-1980s and returned to Finland at the turn of the 1990s, earned more after his return to Finland, which would be unlikely today.²⁹¹

I used player contracts in the archive of Ilves Tampere to demonstrate the variance of rewards within a single club in the late 1980s, and to compare them to the information obtained from the interviews. Most of the archival material that I used as sources were dated from the seasons 1988 and 1989, when the final position of Ilves in the highest tier of Finland was eighth and sixth, respectively. The club can be regarded as a mid-table team that likely was neither the best nor the worst payer of player rewards in the league. The three most valuable contracts in seasons 1988 and 1989 provided the players in question a basic compensation in the region of FIM 100,000, but most of the player contracts contained significantly lesser sums. For example, in 1988, one player earned a basic season compensation of about FIM 100,000, four players FIM 40,000 to 50,000, and nine players FIM 10,000 to 25,000. All players also received point money in addition to the season fee – FIM 500 per point – and there were three players who were only paid point money.²⁹² Additionally, one important finding was the salary of a foreign professional player who played for the club in the mid-1980s. He initially earned a monthly salary of FIM 7,000 between April and October – during which period the season was played – that later increased to FIM 11,000. His earnings for seven months of playing football professionally in Finland would have then been initially FIM 49,000 and later FIM 77,000, which was not notably better than what the highest-paid Finnish amateur players earned. However, his contract also included a free apartment, a benefit that was usually provided only to foreign players.

²⁸⁹ Interview with Anon 6 on January 28, 2022; interview with Anon 4 on January 28, 2022; interview with Anon 8 on March 2, 2022.

²⁹⁰ Average national monthly salary in 1990 was FIM 8,631. Tilastokeskus December 1991, Palkkatilasto 1989/1990 [Wages statistics 1989/1990], Tilastokeskus.fi, https://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/168028/xpal_1991_42_dig.pdf?sequence=1&disAllowed=y (accessed January 2, 2023), 32.

²⁹¹ Interview with Anon 4 on January 28, 2022.

²⁹² Pelaajasopimukset 1988; Pelaajasopimukset 1989, 5.3:1 Sopimuksia 1977, 1988–1998, FC Ilves's archive, Ilves's archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture's archive.

Moreover, his salary was paid regularly, unlike the rewards of Ilves' Finnish players, which were paid in four batches over a season.²⁹³

In addition to the players, I approached professionalization from the perspective of clubs. HJK, in particular, stood out from the rest, even though a couple of the interviewees also mentioned Haka Valkeakoski and Mypa Myllykoski as early examples of Finnish clubs that could realize nearly or fully professional conditions for players in the early to mid-1990s – mainly because of the generous support that the clubs received from their local paper factories. HJK's player rewards for the seasons 1991 and 1999, as well as the recollections of the players who played for the club those seasons, were particularly informative. In 1991, the average monthly salary in the club was FIM 10,000, in addition to which the players were compensated for training by paying them costs compensations for each training session.²⁹⁴ The latter method of compensation again demonstrates that clubs tried to circumvent tax legislation to pay players better rewards. In the player lists published in the media, the players of HJK that season were identified as either students or workers of various kinds of mostly manual jobs,²⁹⁵ but in reality, most players already received their income primarily from football, and in terms of their use of time, focused on football much more than on studies or other work.²⁹⁶ However, even clubs such as HJK were hit heavily by the recession that Finland plunged into between 1991 and 1994. The effect of the recession on the players and on Finnish football in general was aptly summarized by one of the interviewees, who, in the 1991 season, earned enough to play football full-time, but was forced to become a part-time player next season when HJK offered him a contract that was a third smaller than the previous one. To maintain his level of earnings, he accepted an offer from another club that included a part-time job in a sports equipment store. As a result, he had two sources of income that yielded similar total earnings than earlier at HJK.²⁹⁷ HJK's player rewards for the 1999 season showcase the club's post-recession recovery and the effect of the previous year's qualification for the UEFA Champions League. Thirteen first team players earned more than FIM 100,000 (2022: EUR 23,739), with the highest salary of FIM 427,000 (2022: EUR 101,365) already resembling the income level of the highest paid players of the club in the present day. Additionally, free apartments and sponsored cars were provided to ten of the first team's players.²⁹⁸

²⁹³ Eläketurvakeskuksen päätös September 3, 1993, 5.3:1 Sopimuksia 1977, 1988–1998, Ilves's archive, FC Ilves's archive, TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture's archive.

²⁹⁴ Interview with Anon 1 [interview 1] on March 8, 2022.

²⁹⁵ See, for example, the untitled catalogue of Futisliiga's players in the season 1991, published in *Suomen Urheilulehti* on April 18, 1991.

²⁹⁶ Interview with Anon 9 on March 3, 2022.

²⁹⁷ Interview with Anon 8 on March 2, 2022.

²⁹⁸ Interview with Anon 1 [interview 2] on March 8, 2022.

In sum, article II demonstrates the complexity of the professionalization of Finnish football in the 1980s and 1990s and presents trends that former research has not discussed much. Firstly, even if most interviewees were ostensibly amateur footballers in the sense of having either full- or part-time jobs or study places during their active careers, football was an important source of income for them. One interviewee, for example, reminisced fondly about the period between the early to mid-1990s when he worked as a physical education teacher while at the same time playing in Veikkausliiga – because he had two sources of income, both of which surpassed Finland’s average national salary. Moreover, his teacher’s job was ideal for football because it provided three months of summer vacation.²⁹⁹ His example encapsulates the paradox of professionalization in the context of Finnish football. When the number of full-time football players in Veikkausliiga rose over the course of the 1990s, the change was not necessarily financially beneficial to the players, because most of them did not have a notable second source of income. In the absence of a sustainable commercial model that would have generated professional salaries for players, the earnings of players in Veikkausliiga remained at a comparably low level – apart from the highest paid players and elite clubs such as HJK.

I argue that professionalization should be seen more as a gradual process and a generational change than in terms of specific milestones, such as the founding of the new league structure in 1990, known as Veikkausliiga from 1992. When older players, who had always worked alongside playing football, retired, they were gradually replaced by younger players, who were no longer granted day jobs by default, and who did not usually even want them. This development reached its peak at the turn of the millennium when more than 80% of Veikkausliiga’s players defined themselves as full-time football players.³⁰⁰ However, two milestones in particular were crucial for Finnish players – the Bosman ruling and the decree covering the athletes’ social security, both of which came into effect in 1995. “I was a national team player and merchandise for HJK (. . .) My contract was quite good, I did not need to do anything else than play football and in fact it was not even possible, because it had professionalized so much,” reminisced one interviewee regarding his circumstances in the mid-1990s.³⁰¹

Article II concludes at the turn of the millennium, with some considerations on the “systemic professionalization” of Finnish elite football and its similarities and differences with other Nordic countries. Although Finnish and Swedish football

²⁹⁹ Interview with Anon 6 on January 28, 2022.

³⁰⁰ Kanerva and Wallén 2007, 28.

³⁰¹ “Mä olin A-maajoukkuepelaaja ja HJK:lle kauppatavaraa ja sopimuksen tasot olivat jo varsin hyvät, että siinä ei tarvinnut enää muuta kuin pelata, eikä itse asiassa pystynytään, koska se oli ammattimaistunut jo niin hemmetisti.” Interview with Anon 3 on March 3, 2022.

show some similarities in the “immature” commercialization of club football after the turn of the 1990s,³⁰² Finnish elite football has since been left far behind its Nordic neighbors in terms of systemic professionalization in general and player rewards in particular. However, a better way to gauge this than Veikkausliiga’s average salary of slightly over EUR 20,000, which is an often-referred marker in the Finnish media, would be to use the median salary, or to consider the significant differences in salaries between players and clubs in some other way. One way to accomplish this was the survey conducted for the 2016 FIFPRO Global Employment Report, the respondents to which included 192 players who played in either Veikkausliiga or the first division in Finland. 26% of the respondents earned a monthly net remuneration of less than 1,000 dollars, 32,3% 1,001 to 2,000 dollars, 26% 2,001 to 4,000 dollars and 15.1% more than 4,001 dollars.³⁰³

Finally, article II reveals the many-faceted aspects of the concepts amateur, shamateur, semi-professional and professional. How, for example, should we define a player who works a full-time job and plays football in his spare time on the early evenings and weekends, but earns about 50% of his income from football? What if his job is flexible enough to allow nearly full commitment to football or if his job is in fact a sinecure in which the player effectively does not have to work? Or the opposite; what if his job actually takes most of his time and energy, and he considers football a leisure activity even if it yields notable incomes? Based on the definitions I have chosen to use in this dissertation, such players would be categorized as either semi-professionals or shamateurs. While conducting interviews, it became apparent that there are differences between how former players speak about themselves when reminiscing on their careers, and how I, as a researcher, categorize them. Most of the interviewees thought of themselves simply as amateurs or professionals and were reluctant to use the concept semi-professional even if about half of their incomes had come from football.

³⁰² See, Andersson and Carlsson 2011.

³⁰³ Koukiadaki and Pearson 2016, 184–185.

6 Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

The starting point of this dissertation was to chart and analyze Finnish elite sport's transition from (sham) amateurism towards legitimate professionalism throughout the twentieth century, with a particular focus on athletics and football. Instead of the professionalization of organizations or systems, my aim was to highlight the athlete's perspective, which has often been touched upon in Finnish literature and by the media, but has not been specifically researched before in a dissertation or a monograph. By focusing on the lives and careers of individual athletes and analyzing their experiences, recollections, and viewpoints within wider societal and international contexts, I sought to reveal the practical realities that athletes had to address during their sporting careers – how to make a living in the present and in the future, and how to respond to the overlapping demands of sport, work, and studies. There was often a discrepancy between these realities and the official policies of sports organizations and public media discourse.

The presence of shamateurism behind the façade of amateurism in Finnish sport is not exactly a novel revelation. However, the findings of this dissertation underline its longevity, scale, and internal logic both in Finland and internationally. Shamateurism was not born of increased competition between nations or systems during the Cold War, but had much deeper roots. Neither was it connected only to international star athletes in individual sports. As I have shown, there was never a period of true amateurism in elite competitive sport at a national level in Finland. Small-scale professionalism and commercialism characterized Finnish sport before the amateur rules came into effect in Finland in 1907, and immediately afterwards, athletes, clubs and middlemen of various kinds sought to circumvent the amateur code for their own benefit, not to mention officials in the central sports organization SVUL itself. It looks thus questionable whether it is possible to organize any kind of competitive sport in popular sports disciplines in a capitalist society without professionalism eventually appearing at the elite level in overt or covert forms.

In Finland, as well as in other capitalist Western societies, shamateurism required not only reaching a certain sporting level but also entrepreneurship, that is, the willingness and ability to “sell” one's own – or someone else's – sporting abilities and achievements in return for monetary benefits. One of my research

purposes was to examine how Finnish athletes sought better earnings, and how their sporting development corresponded to these earnings. As the examples in this dissertation demonstrate, quite a few Finnish athletes showed this kind of career progression while competing ostensibly as amateurs, and received earnings that surpassed what most of their contemporaries in Finland earned. Such athletes included not only Olympic medalists, but also, for example, ice hockey and football players playing at the national level in Finland in the 1970s and 1980s. Most athletes negotiated for their rewards individually but some of them used middlemen as managers, a practice which the authorities viewed with disdain. Another common form of shamateurism was associated with sinecures in which work conditions suitable for full-time or part-time training were arranged for the athletes. In many cases, athletes did not have to find these jobs themselves, but received them as rewards for their athletic prowess with the help of their coaches and clubs, or had them offered directly to them by sports-enthused employers. The prevalence of such jobs both in the public and private sector throughout the twentieth century highlights Finnish society's favorable stance to sport, and shows that Finland's (sham) amateur sports model contained characteristics of both sides of the Iron Curtain. The dissertation thereby also demonstrates that Finland dealt with the ideal of amateurism somewhat more pragmatically than other Nordic countries. In the present day, however, such sinecures are no longer widely available, which has considerably altered the socioeconomic position of elite athletes.

In considering the implications of this dissertation, there are a number of limitations that need to be taken into account. One is related to the fact that "generalization should be used with caution in qualitative research."³⁰⁴ The athletes who appear in this dissertation do not form a representative sample of all elite athletes in their discipline. It was entirely possible, even at the elite level, to practice sport without partaking in the under-the-table practices described in this dissertation – as demonstrated, for example, by the female star sprinters of the 1970s. Some of the athletes whom I interviewed, despite having profited from under-the-table payments themselves, dismissed them as something that provided significant monetary benefits only to the very best of international star athletes, an opinion that also emerged in some written contemporary accounts. Even though my conclusion about the overall reach of the phenomenon is different, this pattern should not be ignored. The number of professional and semi-professional athletes in Finland in 2023 is likely larger than the number of archetypal shamateur athletes in any given year of the twentieth century. The exact extent of shamateurism is next to impossible to uncover, however, nor was this one of my purposes here.

³⁰⁴ Cresswell 2009, 193.

With regard to athletics, this dissertation reveals that the professionalization of individual athletes and coaches was already underway by the interwar period in Finland. In addition to earning under-the-table profits from meets, elite Finnish track and field athletes were provided with sinecures, state support for training, and professional coaching. As far as the postwar decades are concerned, my findings generally support Heinilä's theory of totalization and Lämsä et al.'s similar findings. During the Cold War, professionalization gained further impetus both in terms of athletes' sources of income and their use of time. "Total training" of athletes, which was one of the underlying motives for the FAF's stipend system in the 1970s, was a response to the increasingly competitive environment in international sport – and in many ways, an effective one. Professionalization picked up even more speed in the 1980s when over-the-table financial earnings were allowed in athletics and generally within the Olympic movement. How the circumstances of elite Finnish track and field athletes changed in the openly professional era from the 1990s onwards is a topic which I have left for further research.

The commercialization of elite sport in the 1970s and 1980s gave shamateurism new aspects compared to the interwar period. One such were the covert rewards and official training support that equipment manufacturers awarded to athletes. There is still much to be clarified regarding the role that equipment manufacturers played in the remuneration of amateur athletes. In this sense, skiing would be a particularly interesting topic for further research, as evidenced by the effects of the FSA's Ski Pool from 1974 onwards. As I have demonstrated in this dissertation, the gradual emergence of written contracts and other legally valid practices in the 1970s and 1980s did not mean that under-the-table practices ended instantly. Written contracts were at times used as smokescreens to mislead sports authorities and tax officials while under-the-table transactions continued much like before, with gradually increasing sums in play. Generally, further research is needed to understand the process by which cross-country skiers, Nordic combined skiers, and ski jumpers became openly professional athletes towards the end of the twentieth century – nearly a century after the initial era of professionalism in skiing was cut short by the arrival of amateurism.

Shamateurism is usually associated with athletes in individual sports, but it is an equally relevant concept in team sports. As I have shown in this dissertation, under-the-table payments and orally made, hidden contracts between clubs and players were commonplace at the national elite level of Finnish football throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. Nearly all Finnish players playing in the highest tier of football in Finland during these decades were considered amateurs and portrayed in the media as such, while in reality some of them were closer to being semi-professionals from the perspective of their sources of income and use of time. By the turn of the 1990s, some of the league's Finnish "amateur" players were full-time football players in all but name. Covert arrangements were gradually replaced by

legally valid practices and over-the-table salaries in the 1990s, which could, however, only partially sustain professional football in Finland. Even if the commercial basis of clubs was precarious, especially during and immediately after the recession, and there were still elements of shamateurism in the form of questionable mileage allowances, the 1990s brought groundbreaking changes in terms of players' legal status and career prospects. Finnish players whose careers took off in the early to mid-1990s received opportunities which their predecessors had not had. After a century of football in Finland, it was finally possible to become an openly professional footballer just by playing in Finland, or to pursue a professional career abroad, which became significantly more accessible after the Bosman ruling in 1995 – albeit still only for men.

There remains a lot of room for further research on the professionalization of sport. Comparative analysis of Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and Iceland could yield interesting findings about the similarities and differences between the Nordic countries in the ethos and practice of amateurism and professionalism. Further research topics could include macro-level analysis of leagues and systems or more specific studies of organizations, coaching, and youth sport, as well as club- or player/athlete-based approaches similar to the one used in this dissertation. How did, for example, salaries in elite men's ice hockey rise to the levels that significantly surpassed all other team sports in Finland amid the general trend of professionalization in the 1990s? Particularly interesting clubs in this sense would be the most successful ice hockey clubs of the 1990s, Jokerit Helsinki and TPS Turku, which can be regarded as pioneers of fully professional and commercial elite sport in Finland. How did players' salaries in these clubs compare to the earnings of the football players of HJK Helsinki, which I have uncovered in this dissertation?

Professionalization is obviously not only related to the earnings of elite male athletes but also covers training methods, organizational practices, and mentalities, and it is as pertinent a topic in women's sport as it is for men, although one that has developed along different currents, and which would have to be researched with a slightly different approach compared to this dissertation. Research on women's football could, for example, be focused on female Finnish football players who have played in foreign amateur, semi-professional, or professional leagues from the 1980s to the present day, and discuss the professionalization of women's football within a wider international context. Generally, the agency of athletes is a perspective that holds a lot of potential for further research. Similarly to Pauli Vuolle's research in the 1970s, such research could be based on an extensive gathering of data from mail inquiries and/or oral history interviews from athletes who practiced sport in different periods from the late twentieth to the early twenty-first century. This would provide a fresh perspective on the turbulent near history of Finnish elite sport.

Throughout the twentieth century, Finnish elite sport was characterized by the dynamic between ostensible amateurism, which characterized the elite level of sport, and genuine amateurism, which existed, and still exists, on lower levels. A significant number of elite athletes transgressed the boundaries of amateurism during this time, becoming more or less shamateurs. However, even if many of these shamateur athletes attained the conditions to be essentially full-time athletes, they were far from being professional athletes in a legal sense, or from society's perspective. There are a number of problems associated with non-legitimate payments even when they are large enough to enable full-time training and leave savings for investment, as well as with the practice of arranging sinecures for athletes – non-existent social security, insufficient cover for injuries, and the void which often awaits such athletes after the end of their active careers, to name only a few.

One of the purposes of historical research is to better understand the present day. Finnish elite sport's long and arduous journey towards legitimate professionalism explains why professional athletes plying their trade in Finland today still encounter so many defects compared to more established professions. From a historical perspective, practices taken for granted in other professions, such as openly paid salaries, legal contracts of employment, social security, and associations that guard and promote the interests of employees, are very recent developments in Finnish sport. In many respects, Finnish sport is still affected by the nearly century-long period during which amateurism, whether genuine or ostensible, was the norm.

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Uc1 Yleisurheilu-lehti 1954–1989

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Hc1 Kotimaiset kilpailusäännöt 1910–2010

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Fh3 KOK:n lähtevä ja saapuva kirjeenvaihto 1967–1974

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Interviews

Article I

Tapio Kantanen August 22, 2019 on the telephone, length: 39:28.

Hannu Siitonen August 26, 2019 on the telephone, length: 26:12.

Riitta Salin August 27, 2019 in person, length: 21:35.

Pirjo Wilmi-Rokkanen May 13, 2020 on the telephone, length: 30:54.
Markku Taskinen May 27, 2020 on the telephone, length: 34:04.
Anon 1 May 29, 2020 on the telephone, length: 30:58.
Anon 2 December 17, 2020 on the telephone, length: 37:42.

The records of the first five interviews are preserved in the archives of TAHTO Center for Finnish Sports Culture. They can be used in academic research according to proper research ethical conduct. The interview records of “Anon 1” and “Anon 2” are in possession of the author.

Article II

Anon 1 on March 8, 2022 on the telephone [Anon 1, interview 1], length: 24:19.
Anon 1 on March 8, 2022 on the telephone [Anon 1, interview 2], length: 7:03.
Anon 2 January 26, 2022 on the telephone, length: 17:58.
Anon 3 March 2, 2022 on the telephone, length: 19:03.
Anon 4 January 28, 2022 on the telephone, length: 22:32.
Anon 5 January 26, 2022 on the telephone, length: 21:00.
Anon 6 January 28, 2022 on the telephone, length: 38:57.
Anon 7 February 23, 2022 on the telephone, length: 10:00.
Anon 8 March 2, 2022 on the telephone, length: 18:27.
Anon 9 March 3, 2022 on the telephone, length: 32:39.
Anon 10 February 28, 2022 on the telephone, length: 26:22.
Anon 11 March 9, 2022 on the telephone, length: 20:02.

The identifiers for the interviewees are based on their ages, with “Anon 1” the oldest and “Anon 11” the youngest interviewee. The interview records are in possession of the author.

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