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## A Study of the Opinions of LDS Athletes Concerning Excellence in Gospel Living Contributing to Excellence in Sports

Robert L. Cummings  
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A STUDY OF THE OPINIONS OF LDS ATHLETES CONCERNING  
EXCELLENCE IN GOSPEL LIVING CONTRIBUTING  
TO EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS

A Thesis

Presented to the L2

Department of Church History and Doctrine  
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Religious Education

by

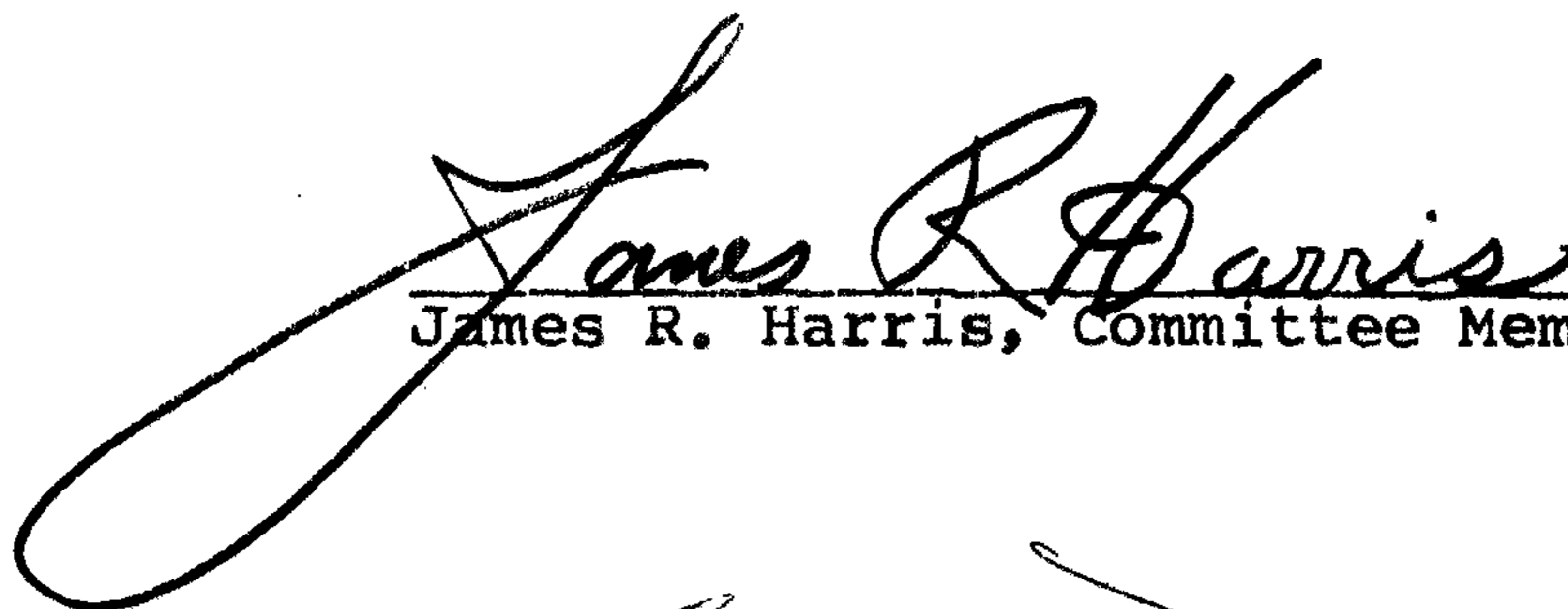
Robert L. Cummings

August 1973

This thesis, by Robert L. Cummings, is accepted in its present form by the Department of Church History and Doctrine of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for a degree of Master of Religious Education.



Walter D. Bowen, Committee Chairman



James R. Harris, Committee Member

July 25, 1973  
Date



Lamar C. Berrett, Department Chairman

Typed by Sharon Bird

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To a glorious and kind Heavenly Father goes deepest gratitude and thanks.

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH DESIGN

#### INTRODUCTION

There is a need to assess the value sports play in the lives of our Latter-day Saint youth. There is controversy and misunderstanding about sports, especially today with the great emphasis on professionalism and the worldwide news coverage given to sports activities. Spencer W. Kimball says:

Man is a dual being. There is the body and the spirit. Together they compose the soul of man. Each is dependent on the other for completeness. The spirit is the life, the body the tabernacle.<sup>1</sup>

It is thought by some people that because the body affects the spirit, our bodies ought to be exposed to good things which are uplifting and strengthening. The spirit, because it affects the body, ought also to be exposed to good things.

There is a great deal of interest in sports not only in the United States, but throughout the world. The Olympics, as well as professional sports, have done much toward increasing this interest. Television has brought sports into nearly everyone's home. In addition to this, both Presidents

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<sup>1</sup>Spencer W. Kimball, "The Spiritual and Physical Aspects of Man" (address delivered at Brigham Young University, March 19, 1946), p. 2.



Eisenhower and Kennedy became interested in the physical fitness of the American people and organized national conferences to promote physical fitness in the United States.<sup>2</sup> Their interest was prompted by some research which began in 1953. At that time Doctor Han Kraus and Ruth P. Hirschland published an article discussing the deficiencies of American youth in contrast with European young people. This article became a turning point in the physical fitness program in the United States. The Kraus-Weber tests were then given to American and European youth to determine the exact deficiencies if there really were some. The results were startling. The tests showed that the children in the United States between the ages of six and nineteen were inferior in meeting the minimum muscular fitness test in comparison to the European children.<sup>3</sup>

Sports play an important part in the physical fitness of many people and have come under much scrutiny in recent years. With all this interest and with all the publicity that sports receive, there have been some questions arise. One question is: Is there value in sports? On one side is this picture:

A great deal of guessing has been going on for many years in regard to the academic quality of athletes. It has been common among many, including teachers, to

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<sup>2</sup>Anthony Paplauskas-Ramunas, Development of the Whole Man through Physical Education (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: University of Ottawa Printing Press, 1968), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

downgrade athletes' scholastic efforts and abilities. It is often assumed that participation in athletic endeavors is either an invitation to low quality performance or that it attracts individuals who do not succeed academically.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand there are those of a more positive attitude.

More research is needed to establish and define the exact relationship of physical activity, motor skills, and health to academic achievement, but the evidence to date firmly establishes the fact that a close affinity exists. Indeed, the kind of physical and health education programs which lead to improved physical and social fitness and health are vital to education and academic achievement of every boy and girl.<sup>5</sup>

There must be some value in sports activity. Otherwise, there would be serious question as to the reason for the great athletic program in the LDS Church and encouraging our young people to participate. If a young man must leave his religion behind to do well, should we have such a program? On the other hand, if in living his religion a young athlete can do better academically, physically, socially and spiritually, there would be some value in actively supporting such a program in our schools, communities, and in the Church.

National reports indicate that if youth are not given something constructive to do they will find things of their

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<sup>4</sup>Russell M. Eidsmoe, "The Facts about the Academic Performance of High School Athletes," Journal of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, November, 1961, p. 20.

<sup>5</sup>Charles A. Bucker, "Health, Physical Education and Academic Achievement," National Education Association Journal, May, 1965, p. 38.

own.<sup>6</sup> A recent ABC news documentary gave examples of vandals destroying a library in San Francisco, walls of city buildings, University property, derailed railroad cars, destroyed National Park property, defaced National monuments, and this last year over one hundred deaths were caused from missiles being thrown at or dropped on cars in the United States. The article stated that cemeteries are favorite targets for vandals and the estimated damages are in the thousands of dollars. Schools are also popular targets. Losses from school vandalism in fifty-six cities were estimated at \$16.6 million.<sup>7</sup> The author closes with this statement:

What it comes down to is that those of us who like things the way they are try to keep them that way. Those who are dissatisfied try to destroy them. In ancient Rome, the vandals won. Here, the battle rages.<sup>8</sup>

Activity that is wholesome must be provided for the youth. Because of the great potential sports have, it could be one of the answers to the problems of the day if it were a part of the development of the whole person.

The purpose of this thesis will be to see if, in the opinions of LDS athletes, excellence in gospel living contributes to excellence in sports.

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<sup>6</sup>L. Patrick Gray, Uniform Crime Reports (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, August 29, 1972), pp. 14, 18, 25, 29, 34.

<sup>7</sup>Andrew A. Rooney and Harry Reasoner, "The Vandals Ride Again," Reader's Digest, May, 1973, pp. 184-186.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 186.

### Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this study to show by use of the opinions of LDS athletes who have excelled in sports whether or not excellence in gospel living contributes to excellence in sports.

### Hypothesis

This study was based on the hypothesis that those who participate in sports credit, in part, their excellence in sports to excellence in gospel living. Excellence in gospel living does contribute to excellence in sports.

### Definition of Terms

Athlete. A participant in sports activities who has lettered in a college or university sport.

Sports. In this study sports will refer to football, basketball, wrestling, and track.

Excellence in sports. Those qualities in sports which help the participant excel. In this study they were obtained from thirty college coaches.

Excellence in gospel living. Those qualities possessed by LDS people as set forth by the first presidency in the temple recommend book.

Latter-day Saint (LDS). A member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Lettered. This denotes an athlete who played in a certain number of games during a year. The required number is determined by each college and a college letter is given showing that the athlete participated in at least the designated number of games.

### Limitations

This study covered a sampling of LDS athletes from Brigham Young University, University of Utah, and Utah State University who participated in a particular sport at least three years in college and lettered in that sport and were selected by their coaches or coach's representatives as being an outstanding athlete. The sampling included participants of the period from 1960 to 1972, inclusive, among whom were athletes still active in sports as well as those who had retired from active participation. When the questionnaires were returned, it was found that a great majority of those who responded were active in the Church and the results reflect this.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

A questionnaire was formulated to gather information from the opinions of athletes as to the effect the gospel standards had on the fourteen athletic qualities coaches felt were most important. The questionnaire was pretested by five coaches to check for accuracy and validity. It was then sent to athletes who had participated in football, basketball, wrestling, and track on the college level between 1960 and 1972, inclusive.

The questionnaire was divided into three basic areas: (1) general information about the athlete and his Church activity along with the particular sport in which he participated, (2) the effect the gospel standards had on the fourteen athletic qualities, (3) overall questions designed to check for inconsistencies in the other two areas.

The questionnaire and responses were handled through the mail. The questionnaire was sent to 114 athletes who now live in many areas throughout the United States and even in other countries. A letter of introduction and explanation of the study accompanied each questionnaire with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to encourage a greater percent of responses. There was a 47 percent return from the first mailing. Follow-up letters were sent to those who had not responded. The total return of all questionnaires mailed was 67 percent. Copies of the original letter, follow-up letter, and the questionnaire are included in the Appendix of this thesis.

#### ORGANIZATION OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1 contains the introduction, a statement of the problem, the hypothesis, delimitations of the study, definitions of terms, along with the research design and organization of the chapters of this thesis.

Chapter 2 includes a review of literature and presents the research pertaining to this study. This includes early background, physical fitness in a modern society, international aspects of sports, harmful effects, positive on sports, and a conclusion.

Chapter 3 contains an explanation of the usage of excellence in sports and how it was obtained. It also explains how excellence in gospel living was obtained.

Chapter 4 analyzes the data obtained from the athletes.

Chapter 5 presents a summary of the research in which the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are reported.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

John F. Kennedy saw in the fitness of people those things which he felt would help save our nation. Just before becoming President of the United States he said,

We have, as a nation, gone soft--physically, mentally, spiritually soft. With a tough test facing us for a generation or more, we seem to be losing our will to sacrifice and to endure. We are in danger of betraying our traditions. We have altered our national scale of values. The slow corrosion of luxury--the slow erosion of courage--is beginning to show.<sup>1</sup>

In this review of literature, material will be surveyed involving two of those things mentioned specifically by President Kennedy: the relationship between the spiritual and physical in man's fitness. In doing this, it is necessary to go back very early in recorded history.

### EARLY BACKGROUND

Competitive sports were important in the religious life of historic people. They had contests which involved one village against another, and which created an exciting time for the villagers as well as the athletes. The athletes prepared several weeks in advance of the contest by running

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<sup>1</sup>Arnold Hano, The Best of Sport 1946-1971, ed. by Al Silverman (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1971), p. 362.



and doing things to build endurance. Their local priest guarded them jealously, both what they ate as well as their social life. The day before the contest the priest gave the athlete a drink that had some religious significance and he was from that point on supposed to be clean and honest in his efforts as an athlete. The evening before the contest was to take place the athletes joined the villagers in their ceremonial rites and their feast. Win or lose, everyone became involved.<sup>2</sup>

Under the Roman rule the early Olympic Games were discontinued because it was felt the games were influenced too much by the Pagan culture. The Greeks of earlier dominance, however, had no trouble harmonizing the relationship between sports and religion.<sup>3</sup>

The Greek gymnasium, which was provided by every Greek city-state for all male adults, offered facilities and a place for participation in sports, for discussion of intellectual subjects, and for religious worship. An altar and chapel were located in the center of the gymnasium.<sup>4</sup>

Not only were the Greeks known for their integration of religion in sport but also for their good sportsmanship. Sportsmanship was a dominant influence in their culture.<sup>5</sup>

The religious ceremonies of the Greeks were of great influence in the early Olympic Games.

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<sup>2</sup>C. W. Hackensmith, History of Physical Education (New York: Harper and Row, Publisher, 1966), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Bruce L. Bennett, "The Curious Relationship of Religion and Physical Education," Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, September, 1970, p. 69.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 69.

Eleven days before the games were to start safety was guaranteed travelers and merchants by all heads of state and by the power of Zeus (Greek God). People were free to travel to and from Olympia, where the Olympics were held, for 30 days and during the events.

When the Olympics were to start, the first day was devoted to the procession and sacrifices to Zeus. Athletes and trainers stood before the statue of Zeus and swore on the entrails of a pig to use no unfair means to gain victory.

When a participant won and his name was announced, he stepped forward to be crowned by the chief judge. The olive branches that formed the crown were cut from the sacred grove behind the temple of Zeus with a golden sickle by a boy of pure Greek blood whose parents were still living; the crown thus had a religious significance.<sup>6</sup>

A short distance across the Mediterranean from the Greeks one finds the Egyptians who had their special occasions like New Year's, which was celebrated along with their religious ceremonies. They often had wrestling, boxing, and hunting as a part of these celebrations, which were enjoyed by both nobility and the common people together.<sup>7</sup>

When one of the kings or nobles died, on his tomb was portrayed in painting those things that made him happy while alive. Oftentimes one would find symbols of battle, wrestling, and hunting.<sup>8</sup>

During the reformation period Martin Luther supported physical exercise. He saw that physical exercise tended to keep men from drinking, fast living, and gambling. According to Luther, exercise helped the mind and body, but the main

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<sup>6</sup>C. W. Hackensmith, History of Physical Education (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 39.

<sup>7</sup>Deobold B. Van Dalen, Elmer D. Mitchell, and Bruce L. Bennett, A World History of Physical Education (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1953), p. 16.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

objective as he saw it was to keep people from such activities. These things he saw were already happening among royalty in the cities and tended to dull the lives of the people. This happens when men look on physical exercise with scorn.<sup>9</sup>

During the middle ages changes occurred although religion still played an important part in the lives of the people.

During this time a young boy was taken to a castle and served as a page, the first step toward knighthood. He waited upon the ladies of the court, ran errands, and learned the basic religious rites and ceremonies. The boy later would become a squire, then he learned to develop skills like running, jumping, swimming, wrestling, and rope climbing. He had to master the spear, bow and arrow and cross bow, battle axe, mace, and broadsword. He also had to learn horsemanship. He then was tested in all of these skills and after passing all tests, the squire was granted knighthood in an elaborate religious ceremony and thus became vassal to his Lord and defender of the church.<sup>10</sup>

The influence of religious attitudes upon physical fitness seemed to be quite general throughout the world. In the United States the first physical education program was started by Charles Beck. He was a minister, a college graduate, and a very fine gymnast. He taught at Round Hill School where George Bancroft and Joseph Cogswell were administrators. These men saw a close relationship between

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<sup>9</sup> Bruce L. Bennett, "The Curious Relationship of Religion and Physical Education," Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, 1970, p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> C. H. Hackensmith, History of Physical Education (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1966), p. 71.

physical education and moral training.<sup>11</sup>

In 1887, Dr. Edward Hitchcock, a college physical education instructor and a religious man, was asked to speak at a meeting for physical educators. He said this:

We are gathered here again by favor of Divine Providence. . . . Body and heart and soul must go hand in hand. "What God has joined together, let not man put asunder." . . . Let the thought be eminent and predominant with us that the highest aim of all our special work is to develop the most perfect type of man and woman in body, soul, and spirit.<sup>12</sup>

In 1885, two ministers, Reverends Thomas Beecher and William S. Rainsford, made a significant contribution to fitness by operating through the church gymnasiums which offered recreational opportunities to the people of New York. This antedated the development of municipal recreation programs.<sup>13</sup>

The inventor of basketball, James Naismith, was a minister. Amos Alonzo Stagg who was one of the great coaches of the eighteenth century at one time could not make up his mind whether to be a coach or a minister.<sup>14</sup>

Princeton, a Presbyterian college, played Rutgers in the first intercollegiate football game in the United States in 1869.<sup>15</sup>

All of this has had an influence on the development of our present day multi-sports programs. They seem to have

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<sup>11</sup>Bruce L. Bennett, "The Curious Relationship of Religion and Physical Education," Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, 1970, p. 69.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 70.    <sup>13</sup>Ibid.    <sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>World Book Encyclopaedia (Chicago: Field Enterprise Ed. Corporation, 1972), p. 540.

originated with a rather rich mixture of religion and sports. Sports have affected man's life directly from our earliest records of history down to the present time. Because of this it should not be surprising that philosophers like Plato in his Republic would make statements like: "[Education] . . . makes good men and good men act nobly," "The use of exercise . . . greatly contributes to create a part of virtue,"<sup>16</sup> or like Jean Jacques Rousseau who educated Emile in this way,

If then you want to cultivate intelligence in your pupil, cultivate the powers he has to control. Exercise his body continually. Make him vigorous and healthy and he will turn wise and reasonable. . . . It is a shocking blunder to imagine that physical exercise is injurious to the operation of the mind.<sup>17</sup>

It should also not surprise us when religious men use sports in metaphor. Isaiah uses swimming to make a point in Isaiah 25:11, and Paul in the New Testament, who is well known for his athletic metaphors, in I Corinthians 9:25 talks about the crown of victory as a corruptible crown. In our time religious men are still using sports in metaphor and telling of their importance. Billy Graham is an example of this. He is

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<sup>16</sup>James A. Bell, "Plato, the Ghetto and Physical Education," The Physical Educator, Vol. XXIX (May, 1972), p. 87.

<sup>17</sup>Curtis J. Twenter, "History Speaks but Who Listens," The Physical Educator, Vol. XXIX (May, 1972), p. 89.

An enthusiastic exponent of the virtues of athletic competition and the sanctity of "Christian" coaches and players. Graham has made sports a basic metaphor in his ministry.<sup>18</sup>

#### PHYSICAL FITNESS IN A MODERN SOCIETY

In the twentieth century mankind has an interesting problem and especially in the United States. Because of advanced technology, many people in industry and other occupations have had a reduction in work hours to thirty-two hours. People are driving more than ever before and walking less. Death caused from the diseases of the cardiovascular system are increasing sharply.<sup>19</sup> Dr. Digennard said it this way:

We are the most sophisticated, scientifically advanced people of all time, but unfortunately, have been somewhat blind to the long range perils of the sedentary life with its luxuries, conveniences, excesses, and reduced muscular work demands. Few, if any, recognize and associate pollution of the human body and dehumanization of human life, characteristics of our times as real as the contamination of air and water, as outcomes of our modern living patterns.<sup>20</sup>

The answer to this problem lies in the realization that many of life's problems can be corrected through the

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<sup>18</sup>"Are Sports Good for the Soul?" Newsweek, January 11, 1971, p. 51.

<sup>19</sup>Curtis J. Twenter, "History Speaks but Who Listens?" The Physical Educator, Vol. XXIX (May, 1972), p. 89.

<sup>20</sup>Joseph Digennard, "The Purpose of Physical Education in the 70's," The Physical Educator, Vol. XXVIII (October, 1971), p. 125.

educational process and at the very foundation is the problem of physical education and the fitness of people.<sup>21</sup>

President John F. Kennedy said:

For physical is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body; it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity. The relationship between the soundness of the body and the activities of the mind is subtle and complex. Much is not yet understood. But we do know what the Greeks knew: that intelligence and skill can only function at the peak of their capacity when the body is healthy and strong; that hardy spirits and tough minds usually inhabit sound bodies.

In this sense, physical fitness is the basis of all activities of our society. And if our bodies grow soft and inactive, if we fail to encourage physical development and prowess, we will undermine our capacity for thought, for work and for the use of those skills vital to an expanding and complex America.<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Leonard Himler said that as a psychiatrist in thirty-five years of practice he had never treated an individual who had a recreational hobby that involved the exercising of large muscles. He felt that he never would because exercise provided a release for pent-up emotional pressures. He went on to say that colleges and universities could not teach a more important subject than that of physical exercise.<sup>23</sup>

An article in Science Digest spoke of a study that

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<sup>21</sup>Anthony Paplauskas-Ramunas, Development of the Whole Man through Physical Education (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: University of Ottawa Printing Press, 1968), p. 9.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>23</sup>Personal interview, June 14, 1973, with Coach Clarence Robinson, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

was made on some 45,000 former students from Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania. The results pointed out that participating in college athletics appeared to be protection against coronary death.<sup>24</sup>

John A. Widtsoe enlarged on this idea and included the spiritual dimension by saying:

The condition of the body limits, largely, the expression of the spirit. The spirit speaks through the body and only as the body permits . . . hence, if the body is in poor condition from birth, man must strengthen it as the days increase; if it is strong from the beginning, he must make it stronger.<sup>25</sup>

David O. McKay, a past president of the LDS Church, made this statement:

The healthy man, who takes care of his physical being, has strength and vitality; his temple is a fit place for his spirit to reside. . . . it is necessary, therefore, to care for our physical bodies, and observe the laws of physical health and happiness.<sup>26</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS OF SPORTS

When a person looks at sports in an international frame of reference, he will see that sports is viewed quite differently in other countries than it is here in the United States. The United States Olympic Committee made an

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<sup>24</sup>"Life-saving Sports," Science Digest, September, 1966, p. 23.

<sup>25</sup>John A. Widtsoe, A Rational Theology (7th ed.; Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1967), pp. 171-172.

<sup>26</sup>David O. McKay, "The Whole Man," Improvement Era, April, 1952, p. 301.



accusation against Cuba and their Prime Minister, Fidel Castro, during the Olympics in Colombia in 1971. The news media covered it with these remarks:

Castro took exception with remarks made by the president of the United States Olympic Committee, who said at the site of the games in Cali, Colombia, Saturday that "like the Soviet Union and other communist countries, they (Cuba) believe superiority in sports reflect the strength of the system . . .<sup>27</sup>

The American people have never regarded amateur sports consciously as a part of our national effort, but other countries do. Many people will argue that a nation is not accurately tested by Olympic status, but that a better measurement would be the physical condition of all the populace--not just the stars. But in this day of international stalemates, millions of people are using the scoreboard of sports as a visible measuring rod to prove they are superior to the democratic way of life.<sup>28</sup>

Robert F. Kennedy published an article that spoke of changes he would like to see in American sports. Part of the reason for these changes was:

There is widespread persistent belief that a definite relationship exists between athletic excellence and national strength. With the world wide following for sports in these times, millions know which nations are winning.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>"Castro Denies Politics Charge," The Blackfoot News, August 16, 1971, p. 4.

<sup>28</sup>Robert F. Kennedy, "A Bold Proposal for American Sports," Sports Illustrated, July 27, 1964, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

With the international interest given to sports, it is not difficult to see how they could be used, exploited, and eventually destroyed. Professionalism, athleticism, championania, commercialism, exhibitionism, and spectatoritis are thought by many educators to be dangerous to sports and could bring about their ruin.<sup>30</sup> George Hebert from France said this:

They are in the first place the result of the fact that sports have gone astray from their true purpose, which is both useful and social. In their current concept, sports are anti-educational and, in their practice, the important psychological factor is not taken into consideration. It is sufficient to bring them back within the educational framework to make them once more healthy.<sup>31</sup>

Not only do sports stand in jeopardy abroad, but also in the United States sports, and physical fitness, too, in many areas, hang in the balance. There are classes on the college and university level which once were required that have now been terminated. Elementary and secondary schools have had their physical education programs greatly hampered or completely discontinued because of the difficulty of acquiring the funds to keep them going.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Anthony Paplauskas-Ramunas, Development of the Whole Man through Physical Education (Ottawa, Ontario, Canada: University of Ottawa, 1968), p. 72.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>32</sup>Curtis J. Twenter, "History Speaks but Who Listens?" The Physical Educator, Vol. XXVIII (October, 1971), p. 89.

## HARMFUL EFFECTS OF SPORTS

In the past few years in magazines and newspapers across the United States articles could be read like this:

In the first four months of 1963 these incidents made important news in sports: Paul Hornung of Green Bay, one of the best football players in the world, and Alex Karras of Detroit were suspended from the National Football League for betting on games. Six other Detroit players were fined for the same offense. . . . Jack Molinas, a former professional basketball player, was handed a ten to fifteen year sentence for fixing college basketball games . . .<sup>33</sup>

Recently in the sports magazine, Sports Illustrated, three successive articles entitled "Drugs in Sport" were published. The first article states:

There are abundant rumors--the wildest of which circulate within rather than outside the sporting world--about strung-out quarterbacks, hopped-up pitchers, slowed-down middleweights, convulsed half-milers, and doped-to-death wrestlers.<sup>34</sup>

As the article continued, it centered on whether this should happen in sports and if it did what the results might be. It went beyond the use of drugs to what the use of drugs would lead to, like bribery, college recruiting, spitballs, etc. According to the author, when questions about such things as these were asked among athletic leaders they either ignored, dismissed, or denied that any problems existed.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>John Underwood, "The True Crisis," Sports Illustrated, May 20, 1963, pp. 17-19.

<sup>34</sup>Bil Gilbert, "Athletes in a Turned-on World," Sports Illustrated, June 23, 1969, p. 67.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

However, the athletes themselves tell their story. Bill Montgomery, a quarterback for Arkansas, suffered a shoulder injury during the 1969 Sugar Bowl game. He was given a shot (pain killer) and sent back in the game. Dave Maggard, a United States Olympic shot-putter, told of how the Russian and United States weight athletes used anabolic steroids to make them bigger and stronger. Weight lifters were using amphetamines to get a little extra lift.<sup>36</sup> Ken Ferguson, a professional football player, said he believed 90 percent of the college linemen used steroids, that pro scouts have given them to college draftees, and that they have found their way to the high school level.<sup>37</sup> This is apparently nothing new. They had similar problems in 1904 when four physicians had to revive the marathon winner who had taken strychnine and brandy.<sup>38</sup>

Not only is the use of drugs a serious problem which demonstrates the harmful effects that can come from sports-related activities, but dishonest procedures by players and recruiters have been practiced for many years. As early as 1877, long before the Black Sox scandal of 1929, Louisville, then a major league club, expelled four players for throwing games.<sup>39</sup>

Seven members of the University of Michigan's 1893 football team were not even students at the University, and when Yale lured James Hogan, who later became an All-American tackle, to New Haven in 1902

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 66.      <sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 71.      <sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., May 20, 1963, p. 17.

it was by dint of free tuition, a suite in Vanderbilt Hall, a ten day trip to Cuba, and a monopoly on the scoreboard.<sup>40</sup>

Today, not only do these problems continue, but the problem of racism is not solved. Dave Meggyesy wrote an article on the St. Louis Cardinals, a professional football team. He was a linebacker on that team for seven years. The article told how the room assignments, dining hall, their leisure time and their parties were segregated. The Negroes were not allowed, even in the planes in which they travelled, to associate with the white ball players.<sup>41</sup>

During Dave's college years he played ball for Syracuse. At midterm all the freshmen football players were called in and a tutor gave them the answers to their upcoming tests.<sup>42</sup> He spoke of other colleges this way:

Nearly every major university in the country has an employee within the athletic department who supposedly provides athletes with tutorial assistance. . . . His task is always the same: to keep athletes eligible, even if it involves getting them an early look at exams, or hiring graduate students to write their term papers or take finals for them.<sup>43</sup>

Three coaches at the University of Illinois were fired because they provided for the football and basketball players a slush fund, which, according to the coaches, was needed "walking-around money."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>41</sup> Dave Meggyesy, "Sex and Racism in the NFL," Look, December 1, 1970, pp. 65-66.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., November 17, 1970, p. 70. <sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> "Coaches Out," Time, March 31, 1967, p. 49.

Steve Owens played football for the University of Oklahoma and now is playing professionally for the Detroit Lions. He stated that he was offered \$10,000 to play football for a college team when he was just out of high school.<sup>45</sup> It is interesting to note that while Steve did not name any college, just recently his Alma Mater, ranked number two in the nation in football, had to forfeit nine of its games, including the Sugar Bowl Game victory with Penn State, because of recruiting irregularities.<sup>46</sup> This information was brought to light by the Big Eight Conference officials, of which the University of Oklahoma is a member.

There are two groups of officials in the United States that regulate these problems, the Amateur Athletic Union and the National Collegiate Athletic Association. However, even they have disputed over who should regulate what and this is still unsettled.<sup>47</sup> Any problems of the above mentioned types are handled by either the individual conferences in which the school belongs or by the two amateur athletic groups. At the present time only one of the sports activities with which this thesis is concerned has any control on drugs and that is track. At the present time any athlete can use any drug that his team trainer, team

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<sup>45</sup>The Blackfoot News [Blackfoot, Idaho], April 21, 1973, p. 6.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., April 19, 1973, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup>"Olympic Hurdle," The Economist [London], January 5, 1963, p. 33.

physician, or he himself can get without fear of the law or suspension from his team.

There can be no question that there are problems in sports and some are very serious ones. They must be properly corrected if sports is to survive this generation. The public is becoming more and more aware of the problems in sports and this could bring about some forced changes. One coach from the Southeastern Conference said it this way:

I think all of us in college athletics have gone far astray--in recruiting, in letting people leech on to us who are known to be of bad character. I think we are gutless not to clean up our own business. You cannot use my name, because I am as gutless as the rest.<sup>48</sup>

#### POSITIVE EFFECT OF SPORTS

Even though there are some negative aspects in the field of physical fitness, there is a great deal about it that is very positive. Where physical education is concerned it was best said this way:

One cannot build a skyscraper or even a simple house without laying, first of all, a solid, unshakable foundation; in a similar way, one cannot develop a dynamic and well-integrated personality without a resourceful bodily basis.<sup>49</sup>

With these in mind the late President John F. Kennedy said in an article that ". . . intelligence and skill can

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<sup>48</sup> John Underwood, "The True Crisis," Sports Illustrated, May 20, 1963, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Paplauskas-Ramunas, Development of the Whole Man through Physical Education (Canada: University of Ottawa Printing Press, 1968), p. 9.

only function at the peak of their capacity when the body is healthy and strong; that hardy spirits and tough minds usually inhabit sound bodies."<sup>50</sup>

Bob Richards, one of the great track specialists of his time and an Olympic gold medal winner, gives his philosophy for winning in sports as well as life in these words:

First, dream great dreams; have a will that translates those dreams into reality, have a will to win. Second, let some great challenge, let something or someone inspire you to see yourself, not for what you are, but for what you can become. Do your level best, no matter what. Run the race with the greatest that is within you. Live up to the highest that you have. Do what God has set to do. And lastly, take God with you. And I know that you'll win and conquer and triumph in life.<sup>51</sup>

He goes on to say that in his experience the great athletes and coaches put great emphasis on the relationship a person had with God. This attitude, in contrast with the attitude of most people in the athletic profession, seemed to add a special dimension to their lives which he called the spiritual dimension.<sup>52</sup> He then said:

I have always prayed in competition, not to win, but that God would help me do my best . . . I don't quite know what it is, but when that divine dimension touches your life, the greatest within you comes out.<sup>53</sup>

The book he compiled is devoted to the many experiences of individual athletes and their relationship with God.

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>51</sup>Bob Richards, The Heart of a Champion (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1959), p. 31.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.



Coach John Wooden of UCLA has an interesting background in basketball having had for the last seven years a team who either won or was second in the National College Basketball Championship (NCAA). Coach Wooden said this:

I tell our basketball players that if they're going to accomplish the goals set for the team, they're going to have to be in better condition than anyone else. This is achieved through hard work, but also by thorough mental, moral, and spiritual conditioning.<sup>54</sup>

Coach Wooden elaborated on these items and then said:

All these qualities are essential for success and the fortitude to excel. But there is no possible way to attain anything worthwhile without prayer and complete devotion to the one who gave everything for us that we might be the victors in life and over death itself.<sup>55</sup>

Coach John Ralston, former football coach at Utah State University and now coach of the Denver Broncos, never goes into a game without first having prayer with his team.<sup>56</sup> He was selected Coach of the Year in 1971 and coached the All Star Shrine game that same year.

Cassie Russell, one of the great basketball players of today, plays for the New York Knicks and has been dubbed by his teammates as "the Reverend." Cassie makes this observation:

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<sup>54</sup> LeRoy King, Courage to Conquer (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1966), p. 38.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>56</sup> Personal observation, having played under him for three years, and personally talking to him about his philosophy.

Sports writers have asked me many times, "Why do you believe in God and in reading the Bible?" This has been a big question to me over the years and I have given a great deal of thought to it. I don't know how it is with others, but reading the Bible regularly and praying keeps me in spiritual condition. This is as important to me as staying in top physical condition in and out of season.<sup>57</sup>

There are not only individual athletes who feel that religion is important in their sports life, but there are organized groups with this philosophy. One such group calls themselves "Athletes in Action." During the basketball season they field a team which competes in basketball throughout many of the bigger cities and at half time the athletes tell how they found Jesus in their lives. During other seasons of the year they sponsor such special activities as "Weekend of Champions," where they bring together athletes from all sports areas and put on demonstrations of different kinds and invite a guest to talk about Christ.<sup>58</sup>

Another group called the "Fellowship of Christian Athletes" have been organized for many years. Their organizer, Don McClanen, organized a group of athletes he considered to be great in their sport. This he did in 1954 for the purpose of setting forth a clear picture of Christ which he felt athletes had a unique opportunity to do. Today, nineteen years later, this group has over 100,000 members. In 1969, 10,000 athletes and coaches involved in sixteen

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<sup>57</sup> LeRoy King, Courage to Conquer (Westwood, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1966), p. 68.

<sup>58</sup> "Are Sports Good for the Soul?" Newsweek, January 11, 1971, p. 51.

different conferences challenged high school, college, and professional athletes and their coaches to serve Christ.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout the year, the fellowship holds "weekends of champions" during which awe-struck youngsters mix freely with sports heroes who provide them with pointers on how to win in the game of life as well as in athletics.<sup>60</sup>

It seems that not only the coaches but the athletes like to mix inspiration with perspiration.

The Peace Corps is an organization that has used sports to accomplish its goals. Sargent Shriver, who was the director of the Peace Corps, said:

The men and women we have sent overseas have shown, in the best tradition of American sport, that we can help build personal character, national pride and international understanding.<sup>61</sup>

In this article Sargent Shriver tells of many experiences that they have had in Thailand, Iran, the West Indies, India, Pakistan, and many other places. As an example of what is being done, in Thailand the Peace Corps organized a softball and basketball tournament which met with great success. This was done to help raise money to build a physical education complex. The governor of one of the committees set up to organize the tournament wrote a letter expressing gratitude and told how the people of his

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<sup>59</sup>"Harnessing Hero Worship," Christianity Today, August 22, 1969, p. 11.

<sup>60</sup>"Are Sports Good for the Soul?" Newsweek, January 11, 1971, p. 51.

<sup>61</sup>Sargent Shriver, "The Moral Force of Sport," Sports Illustrated, June 3, 1963, p. 30.

town look kindly on the American people for their help.<sup>62</sup>

Mr. Shriver is very positive in his feelings of the value of sports. He concluded his article with this statement:

The moral force and dedication of our overseas volunteers represent qualities shared by the great majority of American athletes--qualities which will be with us long after today's unhappy scandals have faded from memory.<sup>63</sup>

The long history of sports has not been without its problems, some of which need to be solved, and soon, but there have also been many beneficial things result. Religion and religious ceremonies have had a great influence upon the sports activities, though sometimes this influence has been minor. Two things seem clear: sports activities are with us to stay and the influence of religion will continue--with varying degrees of intensity. To be a successful force for good, sports must be placed, and kept, in a proper perspective.

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 63.

## Chapter 3

### EXCELLENCE IN GOSPEL LIVING

In determining what constitutes excellence in gospel living a person could search through the standard works and what the general authorities have been saying over the years and compile a very impressive list of things that the Lord has given to man from time to time. The question that would eventually arise is--what do you include and where do you stop? Who will set the standard?

Undersigned by David O. McKay, Hugh B. Brown, and N. Eldon Tanner is the answer. These brethren issued a statement to all stake presidents and bishops giving them the requirements for entering the temple or gaining a temple recommend. Since people in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have to be in good standing and living in accordance with the principles of the gospel to go into the temple, this statement would set a standard by which excellence in gospel living can be measured. Derived from that standard the following statements were used in this study as the basis for measuring excellence in gospel living:

As an athlete, how well did you

1. Keep the moral laws of the Church?
2. Attend all Church meetings?
3. Keep the word of wisdom?

4. Sustain the leaders of the Church?
5. Fulfill Church financial obligations?
6. Fulfill Church priesthood responsibilities?<sup>1</sup>

The temple has been spoken of as the university of the spirit. In the dedicatory prayer of the Kirtland temple, which is used by the leaders of the Church as an example for all dedications, it states,

. . . organize yourselves, prepare every needful thing, and establish a house even a house of prayer, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of learning, a house of glory, a house of order, a house of God.<sup>2</sup>

A little later in the same prayer is the statement, ". . . that no unclean thing shall be permitted to come into thy house to pollute it."<sup>3</sup> As indicated in these statements from Joseph Smith as he offered this prayer, the temple is a special place. Since only those people living the gospel should be worthy of going through the temple, the above list would come closest to being a measure of excellence in

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<sup>1</sup>See Temple Recommend Book (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1972), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1956), pp. 198-199.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 199.

gospel living and will therefore be used as the criterion.

### EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS

When a person speaks of sports and its values, every person has his views and they may vary as much as those of the coaches who work with the different sports every day.<sup>4</sup> However, the importance seems vital, as President John F. Kennedy explains in these two quotes:

Our struggles against aggressors throughout our history have been won on the playgrounds and corner lots and fields of America.

We do not want our children to become a generation of spectators. Rather we want each of them to become participants in the vigorous life.<sup>5</sup>

It looks as though the president has in mind that everyone participates but not everyone who does will achieve excellence in that area. That does not lessen its value or importance, but for the purpose of this thesis excellence in sports must be focused on.

Every coach written to had a different opinion as to what excellence in sports was to them. The dictionary in defining excellence says, "A high or the highest degree of good qualities, those qualities that make for special worth or merit. The state of possessing good qualities in an eminent degree."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Questionnaire sent to coaches, Appendix.

<sup>5</sup>Arnold Hano, The Best of Sport 1946-1971, ed. by Al Silverman (New York: The Viking Press, Inc., 1971), p. 362.

<sup>6</sup>College Dictionary.

The term "sports," for the purpose of this thesis, will mean specifically football, basketball, wrestling and track. The athletes who make up the sampling are those who have excelled in one or more of the above areas. The athletes were selected by their coaches or one appointed by them to do the selecting. In the coach's mind the athletes had excelled in sports and had lettered in one or more of the areas.

Each athlete selected was sent a questionnaire which he was to fill out using his years of experience and how he personally felt.

To determine what qualities make up excellence in sports, Coach Stan Watts of BYU was interviewed as to his thinking on this subject.<sup>7</sup> A list of qualities was then compiled which became the basis of a questionnaire which was formulated and sent out to thirty college and university coaches in the intermountain area.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of the questionnaire was to get some concensus on qualities which make up excellence in sports. Out of some thirty qualities which were sent out to each coach, there was very little agreement in their thinking. LDS coaches placed more importance in some areas than did coaches who were non LDS. Because of the lack of agreement it was decided that those qualities most often mentioned by the coaches would be the

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<sup>7</sup>Personal interview with Coach Stan Watts, July 23, 1971.

<sup>8</sup>See questionnaire in the Appendix.



rule or measure for excellence in sports, not that this list would be all inclusive, but that these are the ones the coaches look for most often in their athletes. The ones most often mentioned by the coaches were:

Competitiveness

Confidence

Dedication

Dependability

Desire

Discipline

Effort

Fundamentals

Mental conditioning

Physical conditioning

Pride

Sacrifice

Team play

Team standards

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted among LDS athletes who have excelled in sports to see if there is a relationship between living the standards of the Church and excellence in sports. The hypothesis is that LDS athletes who participated in sports credit, in part, their excellence in sports to excellence in the gospel.

Religion has played a dominating role in sports at times and at other times in history it has played a minor role. Through history, from very early times to the controversial present, religion has been involved with sports and will continue to play a role in sports in the future.

A questionnaire was sent out to 114 LDS athletes and seventy-six responded. These athletes were selected by their coaches or an appointed representative. They represented three colleges: Brigham Young University, University of Utah, and Utah State University. There was a letter of introduction that accompanied each questionnaire sent to the athletes by mail. There was also a follow-up letter sent which increased the returns by 20 percent. The total returns were 67 percent. Of the athletes who responded, 73.6 percent indicated they were active in the LDS Church. Thirteen and two-tenths percent stated they were semi-active and 13.2 percent indicated they were not active in the Church.

The questionnaire is made up basically of two components, the fourteen athletic qualities that the coaches selected which represent excellence in sports and the six questions from the Latter-day Saint temple recommend book which represent excellence in the gospel.

While there was much information gained from this study, only that information pertinent to the study will be given. The results of the study are reported under the following headings: (1) the LDS religion is a help to the athlete; (2) it is difficult to live the moral law during the sports season; (3) the effect the moral law had on the athletic qualities; (4) there is a conflict with keeping the Sabbath day holy; (5) the effect of keeping the Sabbath day holy on the athletic qualities; (6) the word of wisdom was a help to the athletes; (7) the effect of the word of wisdom on the athletic qualities; (8) there is difficulty in being aware of what is happening in the Church; (9) there is difficulty in taking care of financial obligations in the LDS Church; (10) the effect LDS Church financial obligations have on the athletic qualities; (11) there are conflicts in fulfilling priesthood responsibilities; and (12) the effect priesthood responsibilities had on the athletic qualities.

The report also includes several figures.

#### RELIGION HELPS

Seventy-six of the 114 athletes responded to the questionnaire.

Sixty-nine (90.8 percent) athletes indicated the LDS gospel was a help to them in their athletic endeavors while seven (9.2 percent) indicated the gospel had no effect on their athletic endeavors. This information is in Figure 1.

#### MORAL LAW

As shown in Figure 2, twenty-two (28.9 percent) athletes indicated there was a problem with keeping the moral laws during the sports season while fifty-four (71.1 percent) athletes indicated that keeping the moral law was no particular problem to them. There were a number of written responses that indicated that after high school the further an athlete went in sports the more pressure there was to do wrong and not live by any particular moral code.

A number of athletes indicated that professional sports were morally deplorable.

Out of the fourteen athletic qualities the following stood out from the rest as being significant in the minds of the respondents. Five qualities stood as being most important: dedication, dependability, discipline, mental conditioning, and pride. The athletes responded sixty-three (82.9 percent), sixty-three (82.9 percent), sixty-seven (88.2 percent), sixty-six (86.8 percent), and sixty-three (82.9 percent), respectively. Confidence, sacrifice, and team standards stood out but not as high. The athletes responded fifty-eight (76.3 percent), fifty-seven (75.0 percent), and fifty-six (74.7 percent), respectively. Figure 3 indicates this information.

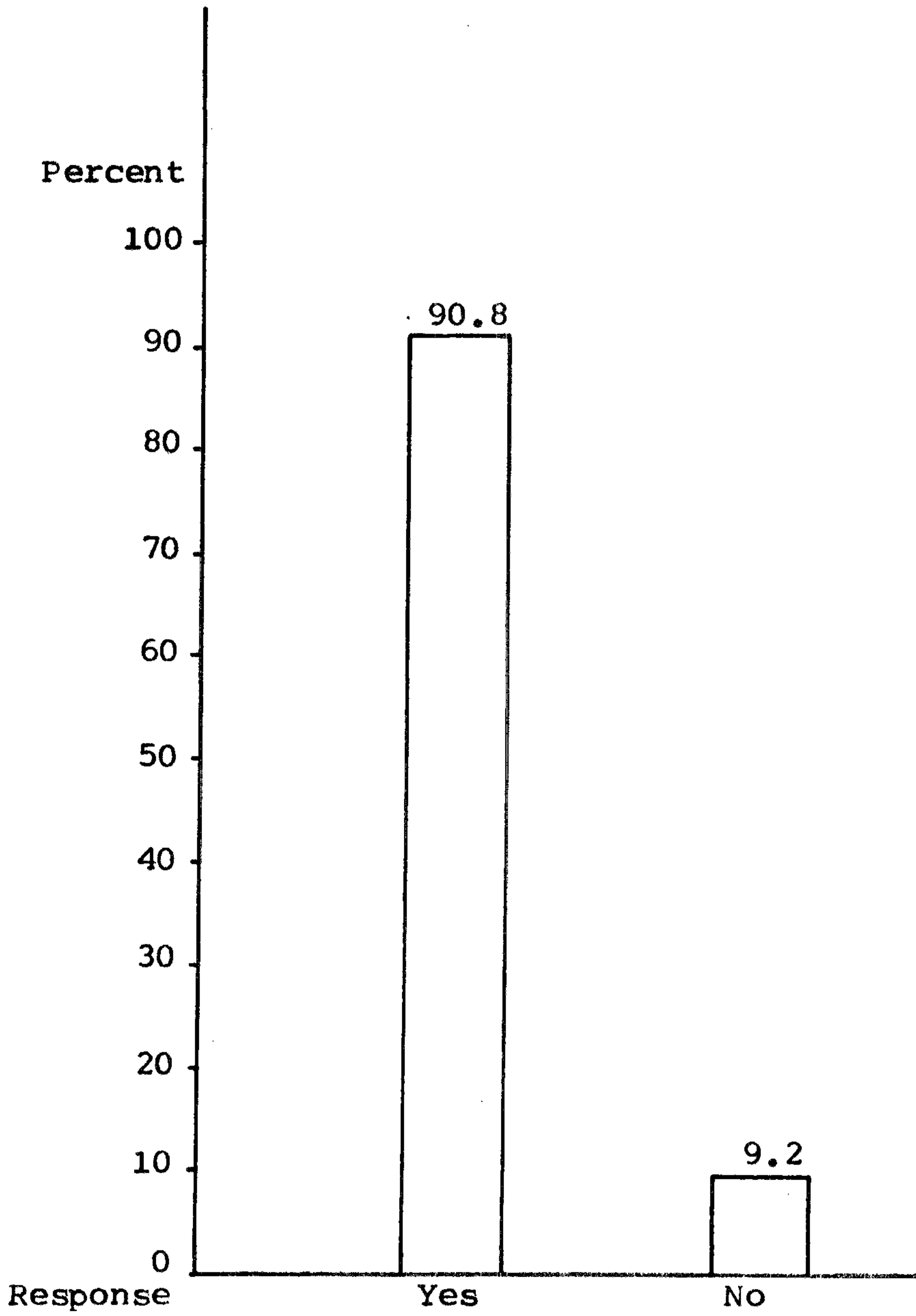


Figure 1

The LDS Religion Is a Help to the Athlete

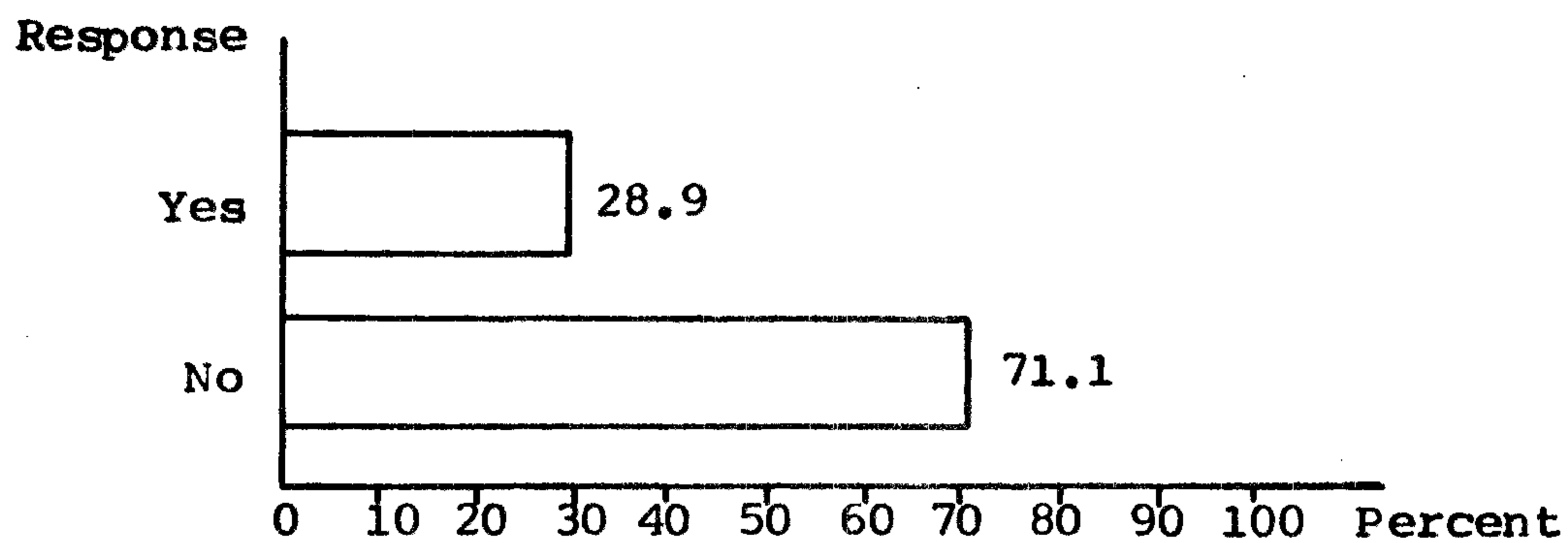


Figure 2

It Is Difficult to Live the Moral Law during Sports Season

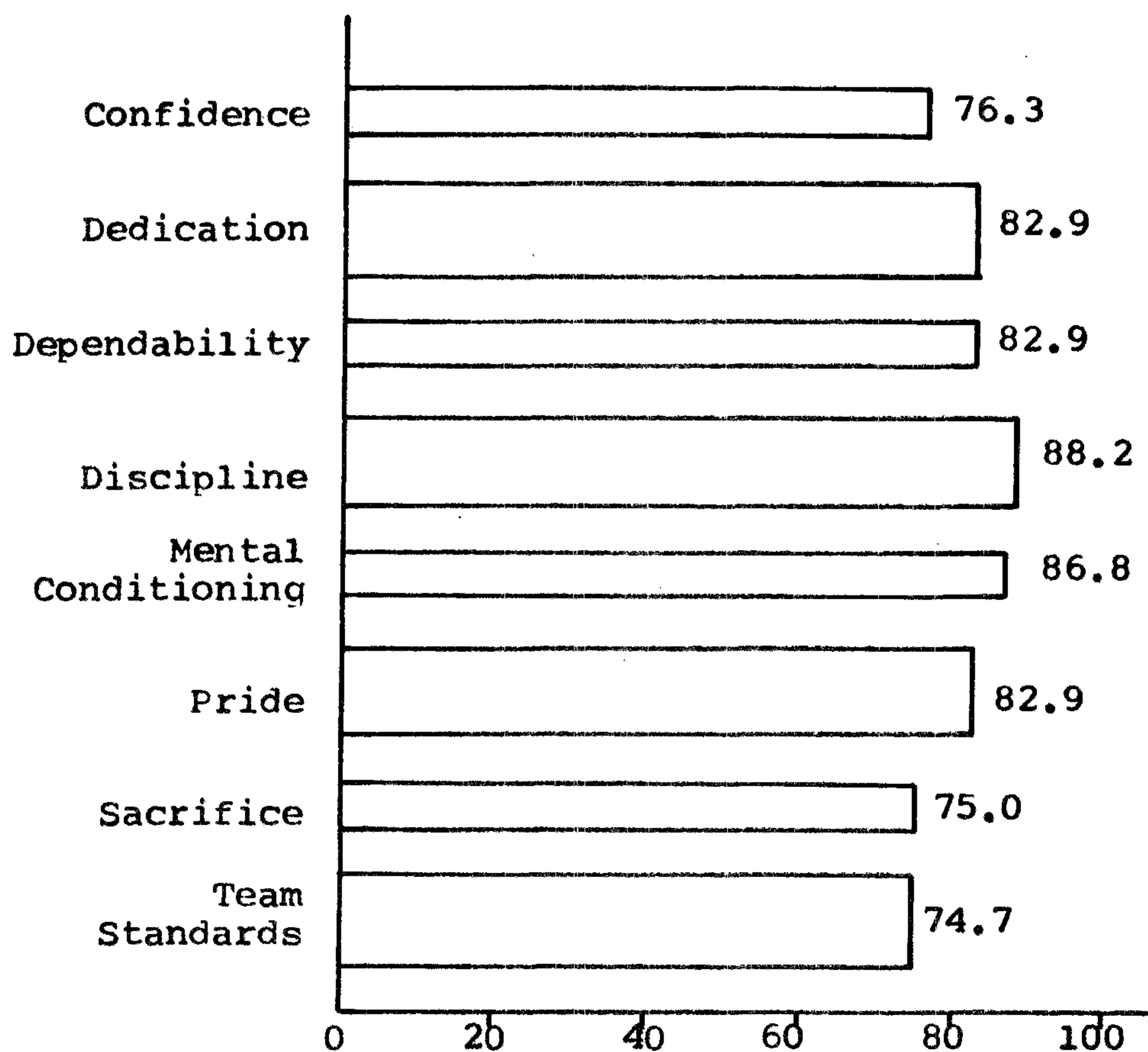


Figure 3

Summary of the Effect the Moral Law Had on the Athletic Qualities

## SABBATH DAY

Figure 4 represents the response relative to keeping the Sabbath day holy. The athletes had a conflict in this area. There were workouts, film watching, practices, and games being played on Sunday. Forty-one (53.9 percent) athletes indicated there was a problem of keeping the Sabbath day holy and being involved with sports. Thirty-five (46.1 percent) athletes indicated there was no problem. A number of the athletes stated they refused to play or practice on Sunday and their coaches worked with them, while others refused and were fired, showing a difference in attitude on the part of coaches concerning this principle.

The Sabbath day had little or no effect on the athletic qualities with the exception of dependability and effort which the respondent felt strongly about. Sixty-four (84.3 percent) athletes indicated there was a significant effect of the Sabbath day on dependability. Sixty-seven (88.2 percent) athletes felt that effort was greatly affected by keeping the Sabbath day. This is shown in Figure 5.

## WORD OF WISDOM

The LDS athletes' response to the word of wisdom, active and nonactive members alike, was favorable. Seventy-two (94.7 percent) athletes indicated the word of wisdom was helpful. Four (5.3 percent) athletes felt the word of wisdom had no effect on their success as athletes.

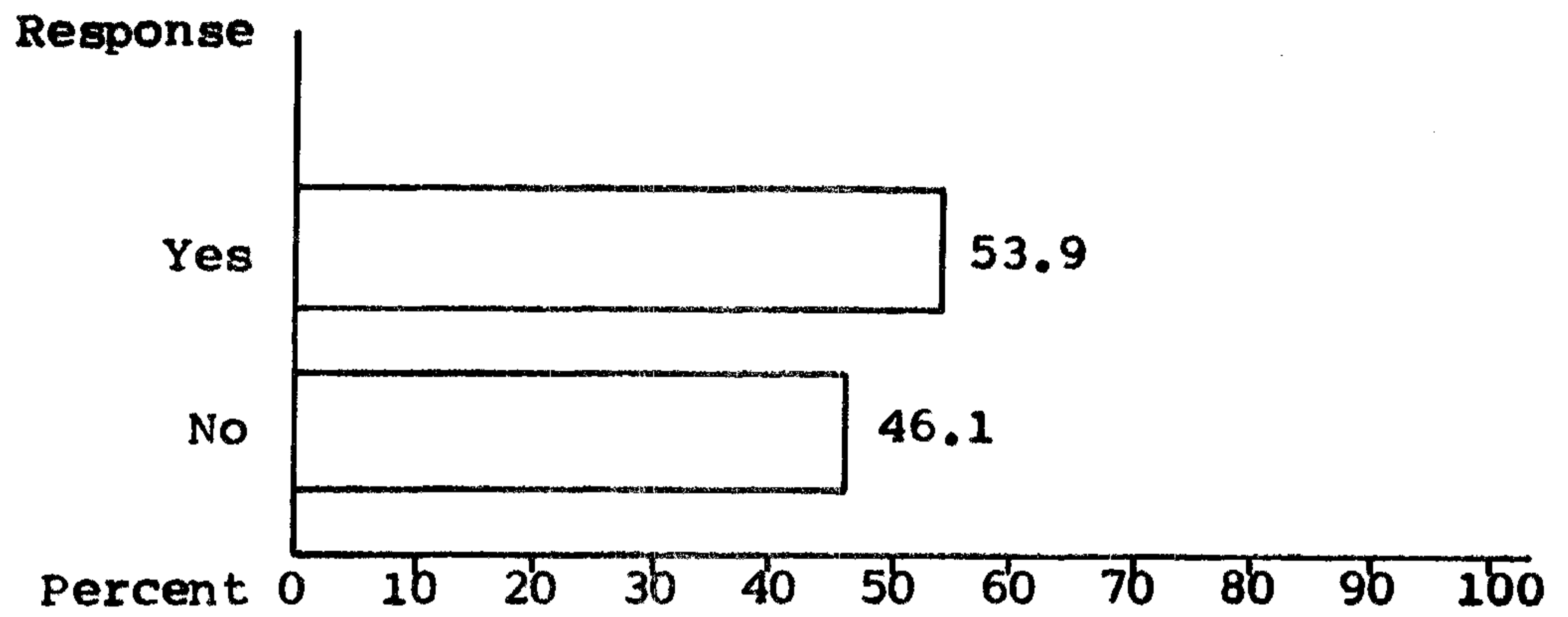


Figure 4

There Was a Conflict with Keeping the Sabbath Day

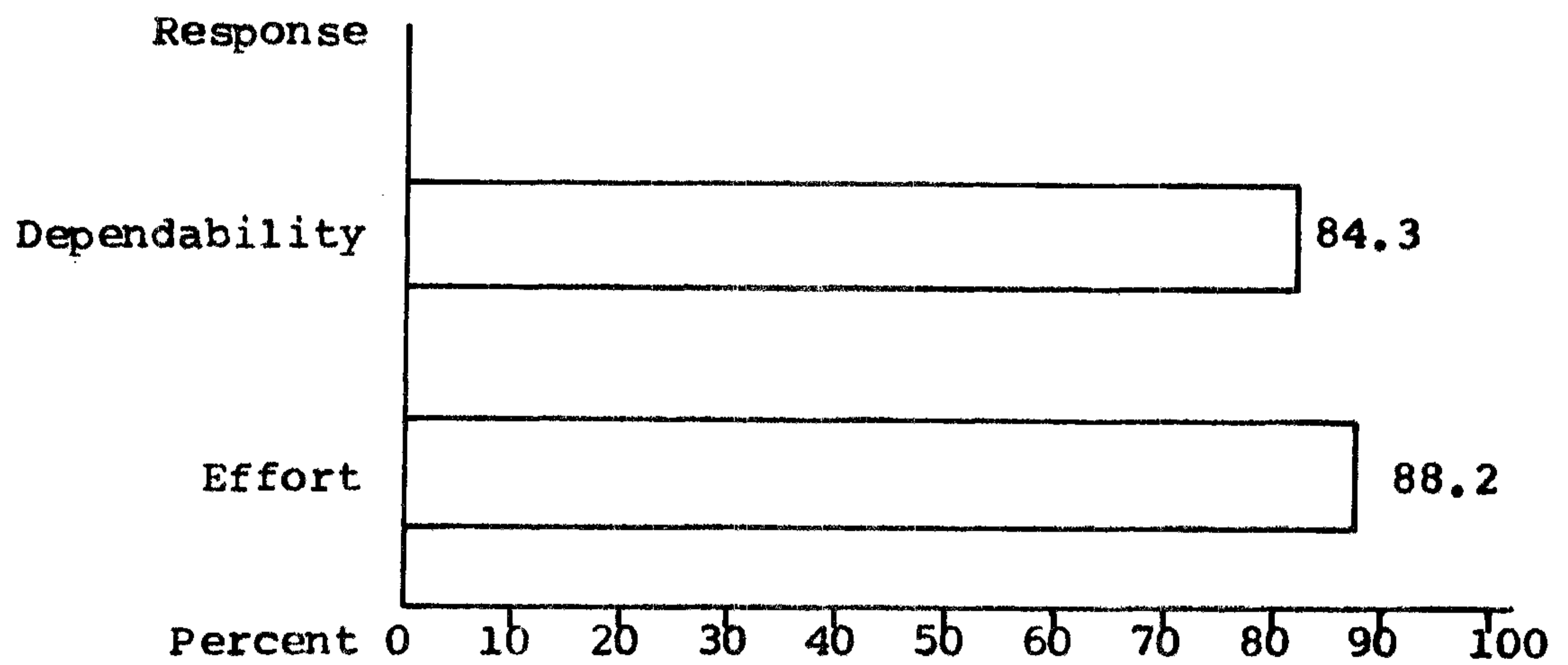


Figure 5

The Effect of Keeping the Sabbath Day on the Athletic Qualities



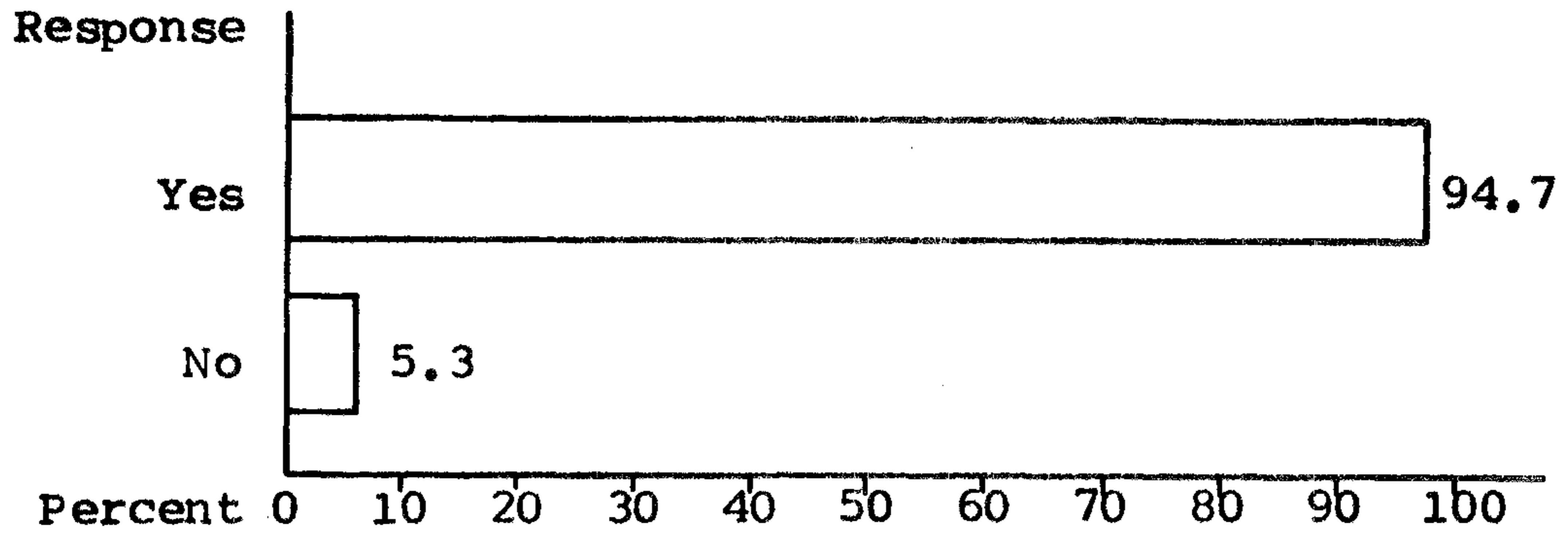


Figure 6

The Word of Wisdom Was a Help to the Athlete

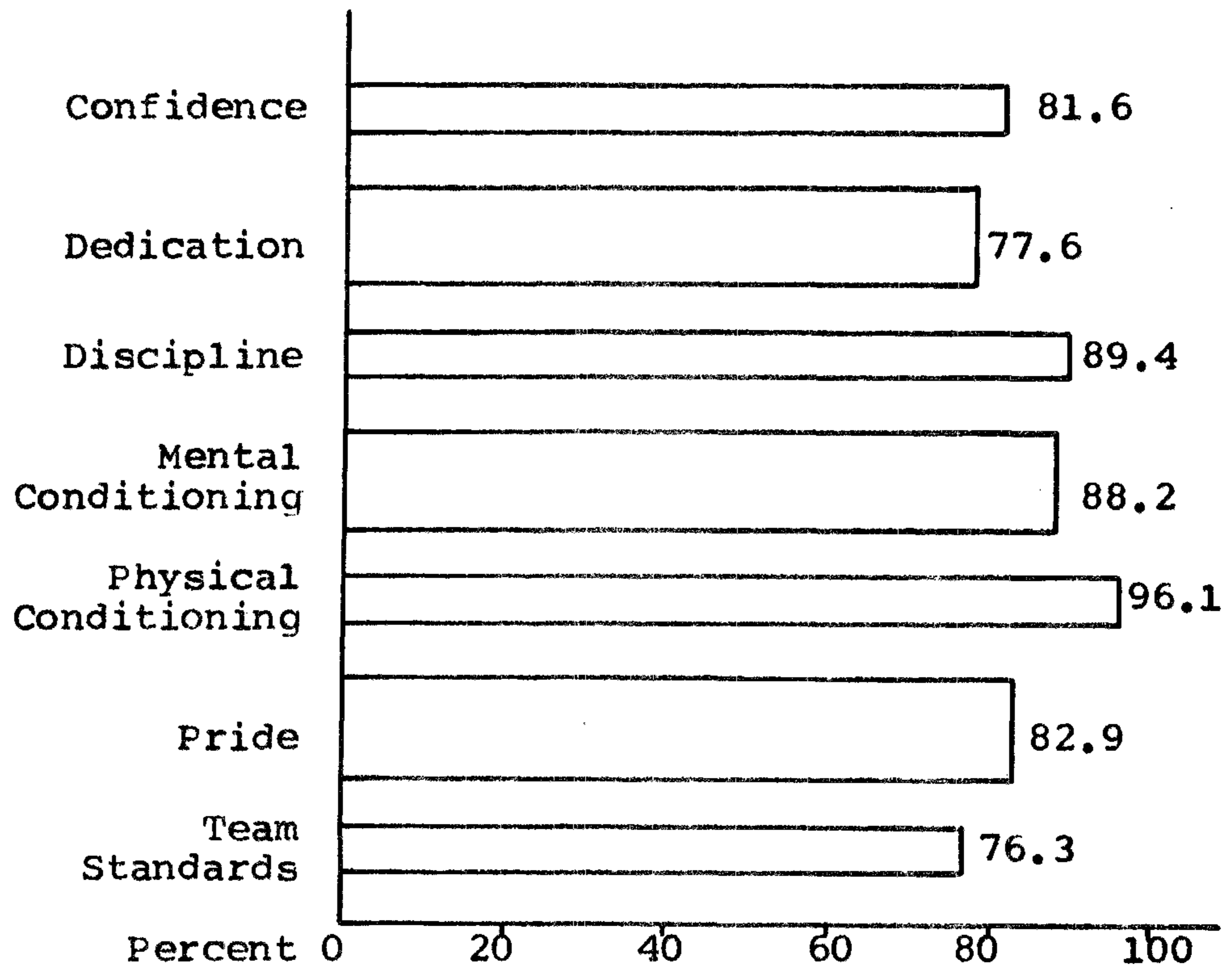


Figure 7

The Effect of the Word of Wisdom on Athletic Qualities

Several athletes indicated they were respected for their beliefs while another athlete was fired because he refused to drink with his coaches.

The effect the word of wisdom had on the athletic qualities is reflected by the number of them the athletes thought were highly significant. They are confidence, dedication, discipline, mental conditioning, physical conditioning, pride and team standards. The athletes responded sixty-two (81.6 percent), fifty-nine (77.6 percent), sixty-eight (89.4 percent), sixty-seven (88.2 percent), seventy-three (96.1 percent), sixty-three (82.9 percent), and fifty-eight (76.3 percent), respectively. Figure 7 shows these results.

#### CHURCH HAPPENINGS

As Figure 8 indicates, there is little or no relationship between keeping aware of what is happening in the Church and the success of an athlete according to the athletes. They responded in this manner: Twelve (16.8 percent) athletes felt that there was a relationship and that it was important to an LDS athlete to be aware of what was happening in the Church while the great majority, sixty-four (83.2 percent) athletes, felt there was no relationship at all.

The respondents felt that there was no significance between finding out what is going on in the Church and their achieving excellence in sports or that it makes a contribution. Several athletes mentioned that if an athlete cares

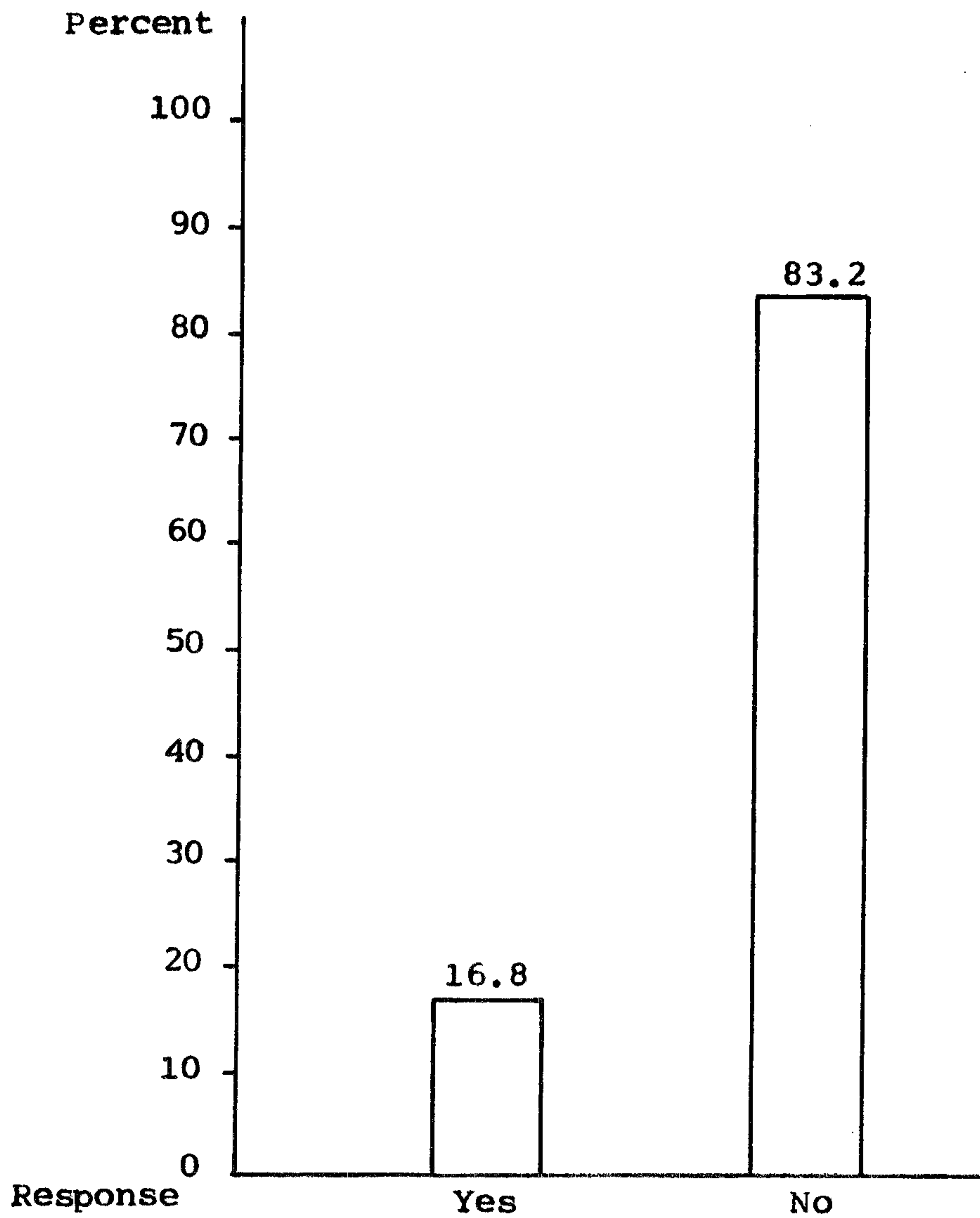


Figure 8

There Is Difficulty in Being Aware of What Is  
Happening in the Church

to know what is happening in the LDS Church they could read the Church magazines, Church News, and they could also get information from their bishops.

#### FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

There was a high percentage of athletes who indicated that there is no bearing on taking care of their financial responsibilities and athletic excellence. Sixty-five (85.5 percent) athletes responded this way while eleven (14.5 percent) athletes felt that it did make a difference and that it did have a bearing on athletic success. This is shown in Figure 9.

There is a relationship between the feelings of the athletes as illustrated in Figures 9 and 10. The athletes indicated that there was very little significance as far as affecting the athletic qualities was concerned, with the exception of the quality of sacrifice. Sixty-three (82.9 percent) athletes felt that sacrifice was highly affected by taking care of financial obligations. Two athletes indicated that they felt because of early Church training they had the advantage over the average athlete because they had learned the principle of sacrifice early in life. Figure 10 shows this information.

#### PRIESTHOOD RESPONSIBILITIES

There are fifty-eight (77.3 percent) athletes who say there is no relationship between excellence in sports

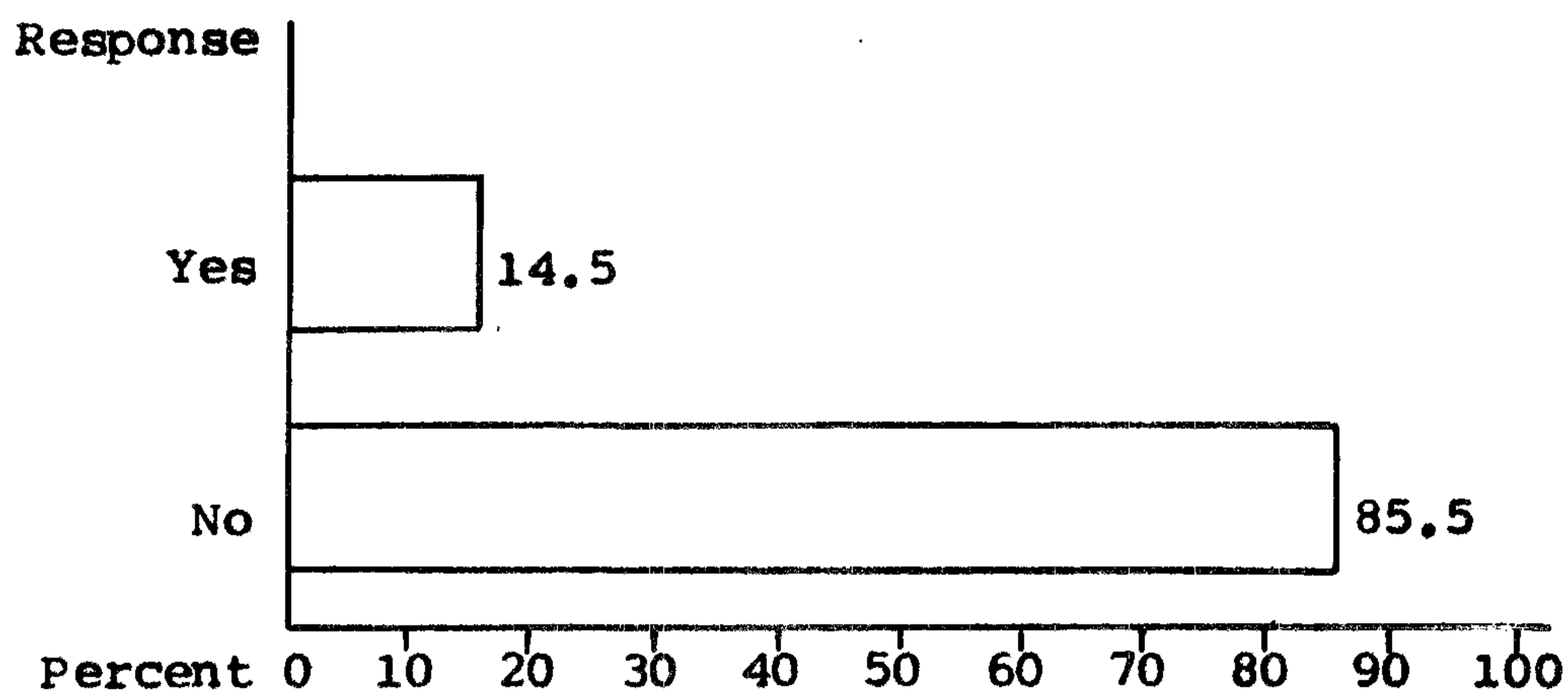


Figure 9

There Is Difficulty in Taking Care of Financial Obligations in the Church

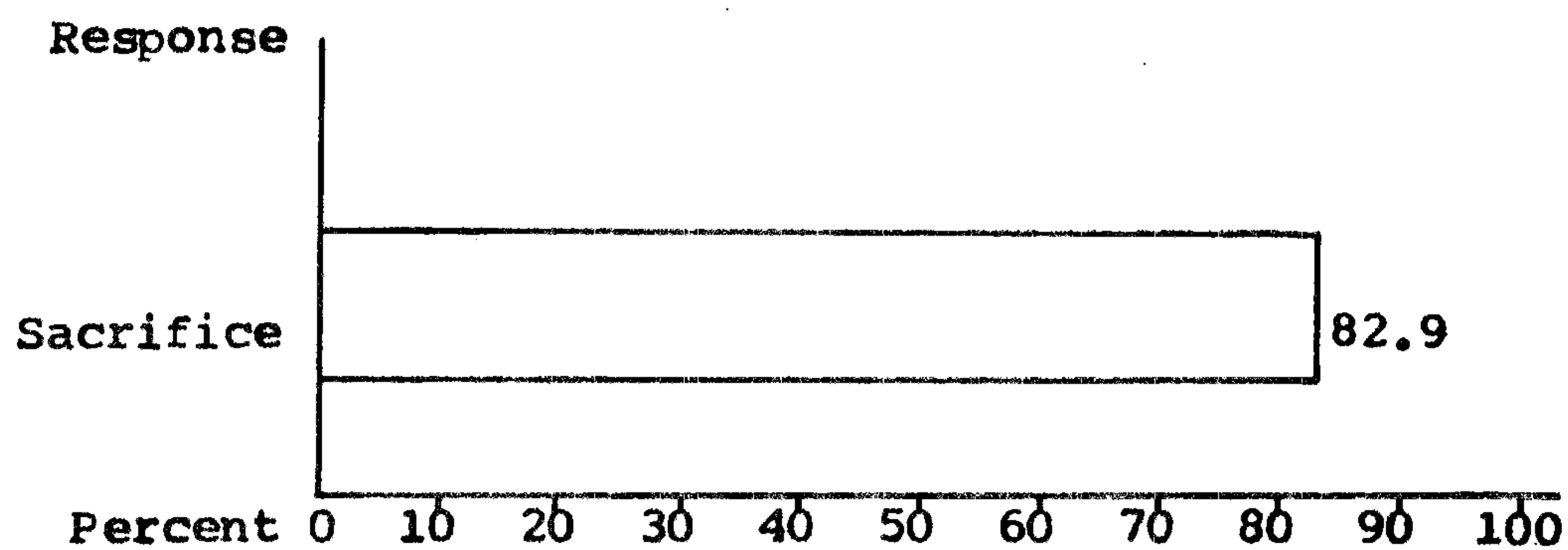


Figure 10

The Effect Church Financial Obligations Have on the Athletic Qualities

and fulfilling priesthood responsibilities, while seventeen (22.7 percent) athletes feel there is a significant bearing on athletic success. See Figure 11. Priesthood responsibility was explained to the athletes to mean home evening, home teaching, etc.

The athletes indicated that there was no relationship between priesthood responsibilities and athletic success but that there was a significant effect on the athletic qualities. The qualities affected were confidence, dedication, desire, and discipline. The responses of the athletes were, sixty-one (80.3 percent) athletes, sixty-two (81.6 percent) athletes, fifty-nine (77.6 percent) athletes, and sixty-three (82.9 percent) athletes, respectively, that there was a significant relationship between taking care of these priesthood responsibilities and success as an athlete. Figure 12 shows these results.

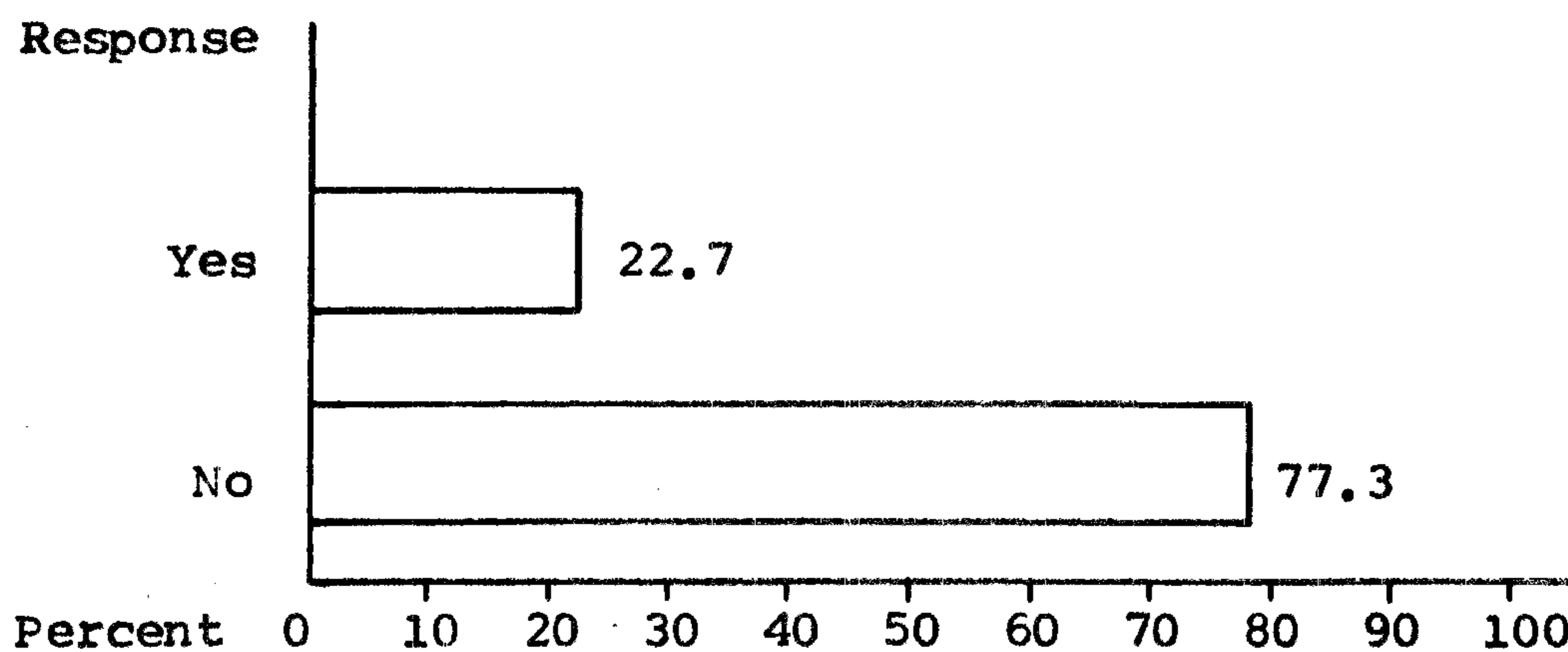


Figure 11

There Are Conflicts in Fulfilling Priesthood Responsibilities

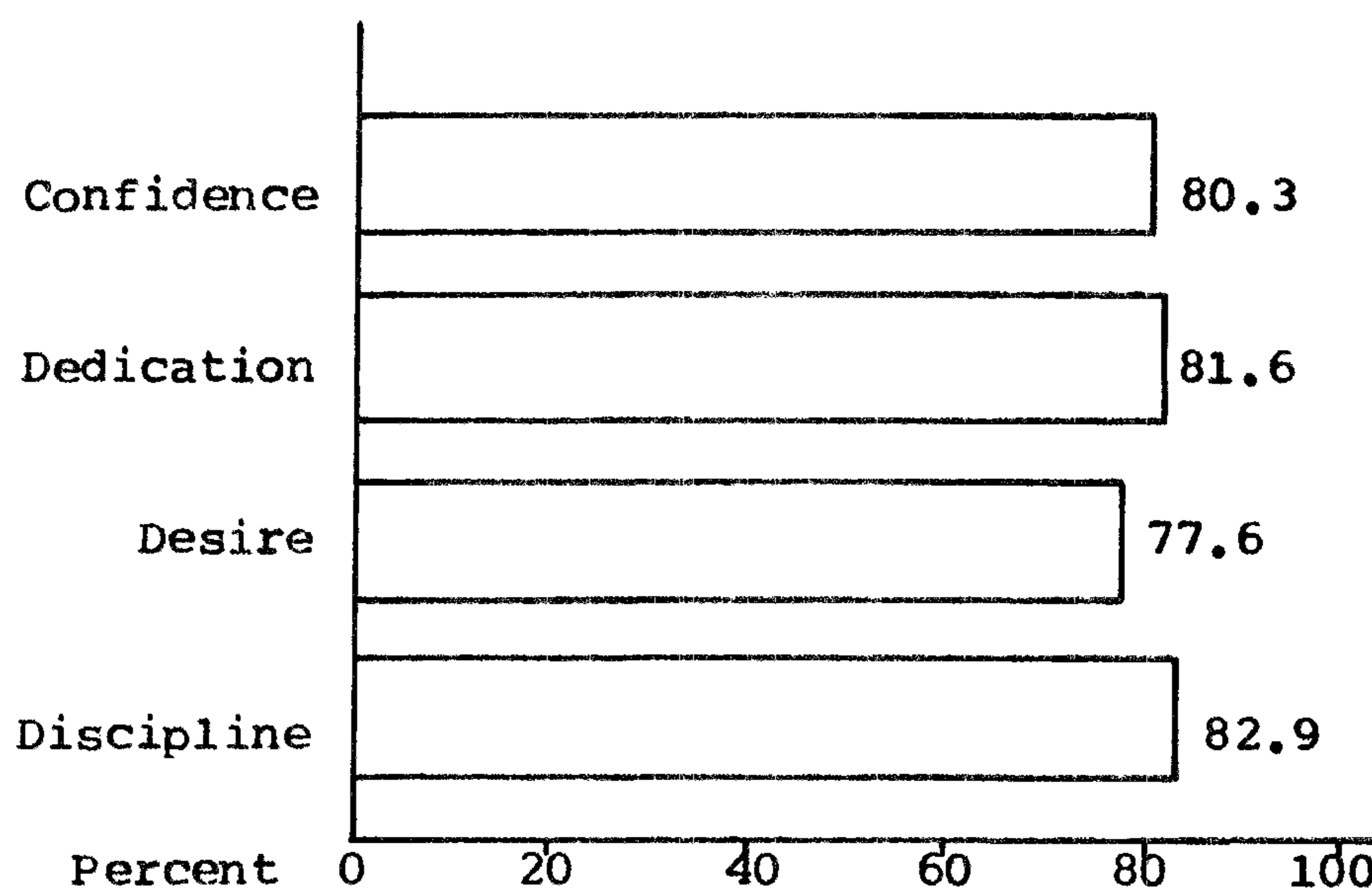


Figure 12

The Effect Priesthood Responsibilities Had on the Athletic Qualities

## Chapter 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to show by the use of the opinions of LDS athletes who have excelled in sports whether or not excellence in gospel living contributes to excellence in sports.

Though there are many contributing factors that go into making a good athlete, the hypothesis is that LDS athletes credit, in part, their excellence in sports to excellence in gospel living.

The review of literature points out that from very early times in history religion played a role in sports and has continued from that time to the present. The significance of the role that religion played differed somewhat with the time and people, but whether it was a major or minor role, it has always been there and it appears it will continue to be a part of the athletic scene in the future.

It was determined that a questionnaire would be the best way to get the opinions of the athletes. A questionnaire was made up with fourteen athletic qualities suggested by college coaches polled and seven questions from the temple recommend book. These qualities were used to measure the effect that excellence in gospel living had on excellence in sports. The information gathered from the questionnaire is as follows:



1. Whether the athlete was active, semi-active, or not active.
2. Whether or not the athlete felt that the LDS Church was a help to him or not.
3. Whether or not keeping the moral laws, attending all Church meetings, keeping the word of wisdom, sustaining leaders of the Church, taking care of Church financial obligations, and taking care of Church priesthood responsibilities had an effect on the athletic qualities given by the coaches.

The athletic qualities are: competitiveness, confidence, dedication, desire, dependability, discipline, effort, mental conditioning, physical conditioning, pride, fundamentals, sacrifice, team play, and team standards.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the questionnaire and the information gathered in this thesis, the following conclusions were that:

1. According to the opinions of athletes involved with this study, religion does make a contribution to an athlete's sports life.
2. According to the opinions of athletes involved with this study, the moral laws of the Church have a very beneficial effect on the athletic qualities.
3. There was a conflict, according to the athletes, with proper observance of the Sabbath day.

4. According to the opinions of athletes involved with this study, the word of wisdom has a very positive effect upon the athletic qualities.

5. There was no relationship between athletic excellence and being aware of Church programs and activities, according to the athletes in this study.

6. According to those polled, there was no relationship between fulfilling financial obligations to the LDS Church and excellence in sports.

7. According to those polled, fulfilling priesthood responsibilities had a beneficial effect on excellence in sports.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following statements are recommendations for further research:

1. That research be developed on the athletic qualities coaches teach and what character traits they try to develop.

2. That research be conducted on a high school level as to the effect excellence in gospel living has on their excellence in sports.

3. That research be conducted on the effect sports has on religion.

4. That research be done on how the home affects the athlete, such as the home influence, teachings, sports background, etc.

5. That research be done on how LDS athletes succeed per capita with other athletes in setting NCAA records, as All Americans, etc.

6. That research be conducted on the effect the LDS Church has on LDS athletes in non-contact sports versus contact sports.

7. That research be conducted on the LDS Church athletic program and its effect on members of the LDS Church.

8. It is further recommended that the Church athletic program stay amateur and stay away from professionalism.

9. That the LDS Church keep its athletic program.

10. That men selected as coaches and directions be spiritual men honoring their priesthood.

11. That the Church further attempt to keep a year around program of activities.

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APPENDIX

Route 5, Box 166  
Blackfoot, Idaho  
March 28, 1973

Dear Athlete,

My name is Bob Cummings. I played football at Utah State a few years ago and now I am in the process of finishing my Master's Degree and need your experience and help. The hypothesis being tested in my thesis is that excellence in gospel living contributes to excellence in sports. It would be a great help to me for you to fill out the questionnaire and send it back in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. The questionnaire is two pages long, which includes a checklist and 9 "yes, no" questions. The questionnaire is confidential, therefore, no name or address is necessary. Your honesty is very important as you check those items you feel best fit you.

The following definition is given for the purpose of this survey and to help you determine what excellence in gospel living is:

1. Keep the moral laws of the church
2. Attend church meetings
3. Keep the Word of Wisdom
4. Sustain leaders of the church
5. Take care of church financial obligations
6. Take care of church priesthood responsibilities

Since this is an opinion poll among LDS athletes, there are not right or wrong answers per se.

Thank you very much for spending the time to complete this questionnaire. I appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Cummings



Blackfoot, Idaho  
April 10, 1973

Dear Athlete,

This letter is in regards to the questionnaire you received from me a week ago. I am very pleased with your response so far and I am anticipating a good return from the rest of the athletes. The deadline for my thesis is set for July 13th in order for me to graduate this fall.

Some of you have indicated you would like to have the results of this thesis and I will be glad to mail that information as soon as I am finished. If you would be interested, put your name and address on a separate piece of paper and I will put it in my file and mail you a copy of the results when completed.

Please disregard this letter if you have already mailed the questionnaire to me. If you haven't, will you please do so. I would really appreciate it.

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Cummings

QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the following information:

High School Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Sports Participated In: Football \_\_\_ Basketball \_\_\_ Wrestling \_\_\_ Track \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

College Attended \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

Sports Participated In: Football \_\_\_ Basketball \_\_\_ Wrestling \_\_\_ Track \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Married \_\_\_\_\_ Temple \_\_\_\_\_ Civil \_\_\_\_\_ Single \_\_\_\_\_ Divorced \_\_\_\_\_

Do you consider yourself to be Active \_\_\_\_\_ Semi Active \_\_\_\_\_ Not Active \_\_\_\_\_  
in the L.D.S. Church?

Please indicate the effect each of the gospel standards has had on the 14 athletic qualities in your sports life. Circle the number that best describes your feelings.

		EXAMPLE				
Gospel Standard		Highly Detrimental	Detrimental	No effect	Beneficial	Highly Beneficial
B. Attend All Church Meetings						
Athletic Qualities	1. Competitiveness	1	2	3	4	5
	2. Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
	3. Dedication	1	2	3	4	5
	4. Dependability	1	2	3	4	5
	5. Desire	1	2	3	4	5
	6. Discipline	1	2	3	4	5
	7. Effort	1	2	3	4	5
	8. Mental conditioning	1	2	3	4	5
	9. Physical conditioning	1	2	3	4	5
	10. Pride	1	2	3	4	5
	11. Fundamentals	1	2	3	4	5
	12. Sacrifice	1	2	3	4	5
	13. Team play	1	2	3	4	5
	14. Team standards	1	2	3	4	5

A. Keep the Moral Laws of the Church

1. Competitiveness	1 2 3 4 5
2. Confidence	1 2 3 4 5
3. Dedication	1 2 3 4 5
4. Dependability	1 2 3 4 5
5. Desire	1 2 3 4 5
6. Effort	1 2 3 4 5
7. Discipline	1 2 3 4 5
8. Mental Conditioning	1 2 3 4 5
9. Physical Conditioning	1 2 3 4 5
10. Pride	1 2 3 4 5
11. Fundamentals	1 2 3 4 5
12. Sacrifice	1 2 3 4 5
13. Team Play	1 2 3 4 5
14. Team Standards	1 2 3 4 5

B. Attend All Church Meetings

1. Competitiveness	1 2 3 4 5
2. Confidence	1 2 3 4 5
3. Dedication	1 2 3 4 5
4. Dependability	1 2 3 4 5
5. Desire	1 2 3 4 5
6. Effort	1 2 3 4 5
7. Discipline	1 2 3 4 5
8. Mental Conditioning	1 2 3 4 5
9. Physical Conditioning	1 2 3 4 5
10. Pride	1 2 3 4 5
11. Fundamentals	1 2 3 4 5
12. Sacrifice	1 2 3 4 5
13. Team Play	1 2 3 4 5
14. Team Standards	1 2 3 4 5

## C. Keep the Word of Wisdom

1. Competitiveness	1 2 3 4 5
2. Confidence	1 2 3 4 5
3. Dedication	1 2 3 4 5
4. Desire	1 2 3 4 5
5. Dependability	1 2 3 4 5
6. Discipline	1 2 3 4 5
7. Effort	1 2 3 4 5
8. Mental Condition	1 2 3 4 5
9. Physical Condition	1 2 3 4 5
10. Pride	1 2 3 4 5
11. Fundamentals	1 2 3 4 5
12. Sacrifice	1 2 3 4 5
13. Team Play	1 2 3 4 5
14. Team Standards	1 2 3 4 5

## E. Church Financial Obligations

1. Competitiveness	1 2 3 4 5
2. Confidence	1 2 3 4 5
3. Dedication	1 2 3 4 5
4. Desire	1 2 3 4 5
5. Dependability	1 2 3 4 5
6. Discipline	1 2 3 4 5
7. Effort	1 2 3 4 5
8. Mental Condition	1 2 3 4 5
9. Physical Condition	1 2 3 4 5
10. Pride	1 2 3 4 5
11. Fundamentals	1 2 3 4 5
12. Sacrifice	1 2 3 4 5
13. Team Play	1 2 3 4 5
14. Team Standards	1 2 3 4 5

## D. Sustain Leaders of the Church

1. Competitiveness	1 2 3 4 5
2. Confidence	1 2 3 4 5
3. Dedication	1 2 3 4 5
4. Desire	1 2 3 4 5
5. Dependability	1 2 3 4 5
6. Discipline	1 2 3 4 5
7. Effort	1 2 3 4 5
8. Mental Condition	1 2 3 4 5
9. Physical Condition	1 2 3 4 5
10. Pride	1 2 3 4 5
11. Fundamentals	1 2 3 4 5
12. Sacrifice	1 2 3 4 5
13. Team Play	1 2 3 4 5
14. Team Standards	1 2 3 4 5

## F. Church Priesthood Responsibilities

1. Competitiveness	1 2 3 4 5
2. Confidence	1 2 3 4 5
3. Dedication	1 2 3 4 5
4. Desire	1 2 3 4 5
5. Dependability	1 2 3 4 5
6. Discipline	1 2 3 4 5
7. Effort	1 2 3 4 5
8. Mental Condition	1 2 3 4 5
9. Physical Condition	1 2 3 4 5
10. Pride	1 2 3 4 5
11. Fundamentals	1 2 3 4 5
12. Sacrifice	1 2 3 4 5
13. Team Play	1 2 3 4 5
14. Team Standards	1 2 3 4 5

- Overall would you say that the L.D.S. Religion was a help to you?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Has the Word of Wisdom been a help to you as you participated in sports?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Has there been a conflict with keeping the Sabbath? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
(short comment)
- Do you feel there is a conflict in fulfilling your priesthood responsibilities (home teaching, home evening, etc.) and participating in sports? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Do you feel while participating in sports that it is difficult to be up on what is going on in the church, what the general authorities are saying and what they want us to do? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Are there problems financially in sports that conflict with paying tithing, fast offerings, and budget? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Do you feel that it is any harder to live the moral law while participating in sports than at any other time in your life? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_
- Any additional comments you wish to make at this time would be appreciated.

Route 5, Box 166  
Blackfoot, Idaho

Dear Coach:

My name is Bob Cummings. I am writing a Master's Thesis and need to identify those qualities that are found in the successful athlete.

With the assistance of Coach Stan Watts from Brigham Young University, a list of thirty qualities was compiled. I would appreciate it if you would check those qualities you feel make up those outstanding athletes you have had over the years.

Please return the checklist at your earliest convenience. Thank you so much for your help.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Cummings

Dear Coach,

This checklist has been prepared to assist in determining what constitutes excellence in sports. Please rate the following terms as they relate to excellence in sports. If there are others that you feel are vital, list them from #31 to #35 and rate them on the scale.

	Absolutely Necessary	Highly Desireable	Some Importance	Unneces- sary
1. Cleanliness				
2. Competitiveness				
3. Confidence				
4. Dedication				
5. Dependability				
6. Desire				
7. Discipline				
8. Effort				
9. Example				
10. Fundamentals				
11. Game rules				
12. Honesty				
13. Humility				
14. Learn to accept advice				
15. Loyalty				
16. Mental conditioning				
17. Obedience				
18. Overcoming discouragement				
19. Playing without remuneration				
20. Physical conditioning				
21. Poise				
22. Pride				
23. Punctuality				
24. Reaction				
25. Sacrifice				
26. Sportsmanship				
27. Team leadership				
28. Team play				
29. Team standards				
30. Unselfishness				
31.				
32.				
33.				
34.				
35.				

Comments:

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,  
Robert L. Cummings

A STUDY OF THE OPINIONS OF LDS ATHLETES CONCERNING  
EXCELLENCE IN GOSPEL LIVING CONTRIBUTING  
TO EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS

Robert L. Cummings

Department of Church History and Doctrine

M.R.E. Degree, August 1973

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to show by the use of the opinions of LDS athletes who have excelled in sports whether or not excellence in gospel living contributes to excellence in sports.

Religion has played a role in sports from very early history and has continued to the present time. The degree of religious influence has been determined by the society of the time, whether it played a minor or a positive role.

The results of the study pointed out the following:

The teachings of the LDS Church had a positive influence, according to LDS athletes, on the fourteen qualities of sports that were selected by coaches representing excellence in sports. The areas they were positive in were moral laws, word of wisdom, and priesthood responsibilities. The athletes were in conflict on whether the Sabbath day was an influence or not on excellence in sports, and they determined that keeping current on Church happenings and paying Church financial obligations had no bearing on the athletic qualities.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

  
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James R. Harris, Committee Member

  
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