55 - THE JOCKEYS: THE ATHLETE FROM XIX CENTURY AND HIS *STATUS* IN THE SPORTS FIELD

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Introduction

Melo's studies (2001) show that horse races were the first structured sport in Brazil, in the Rio de Janeiro of the XIX century. The first club was founded in 1849 (The Horse Racing Club) and the races were structured very fast, following the European sports field common standards, with "professional athletes", the jockeys, responsible for horses conducting at the competitions.

The term "amateur" was used in the horserace, nominating those jockeys that were not acting under contract, racing with no money payment. Sometimes, unusually, in public parties or beneficent events, horse owners and/or high society members were competing conducting the horses. As a matter of fact, amateurism by that time was not a major concern, with no great meaning or impact, fundamentally because it was lacking the moral character existent in the boat-rowing clubs, yet in the transition of the XIX and XX centuries (Melo, 2001).

Worth is to remember that, by the time, the term "sportsman" was used to designate both the practitioner of sports and the ones comprising the usual public and/or the club directors. But the term "athlete" was not used in relation with the sports competitions, but generally was referred to the persons that were fighting for a cause, including the ones that were against the Brazilian monarchy.

Anyway, the jockeys were already showing the characteristics of the athletes of today: they were members of a team (horse ranches); they were undertaking training processes (there were yet the coaches); they were paid for racing, according their performance; they were of medium rank in the races.

What was the characteristic of these XIX century athletes? What was their status? What were the peculiarities of their organization? This study aims to discuss the jockeys presence and role in the pioneer structure of the Brazilian sports field, focusing the XIX century Rio de Janeiro's turf. Such study helps in the understanding of some of the dimensions sofar existing in the subjects regarding the sports.

Jockeys: social improvement

By the time the turf is organizing in Brazilian society, some social rejection of the physical activities was still prevailing. There was some appreciation for the intellectual and contemplative activities versus the hand-made activities.

This way, the high-society positioning would be toward the direction of those activities and as attendants, not getting involved with riding the horses on the streams, exception made for some special occasions. For the elite, the races should not mean intense physical strength. When involved with horse riding they should perform the horsemanship, considered a noble practice with an education character.

Considering this context, the jockeys were recruited from the popular layer or, by the time the sport was more organized (last decade of the XIX century), brought up from other countries, mainly from Argentine and Uruguay, and latter on many British were hired, according their expertness and skills, always being short and light as not jeopardizing the horses performance. As a matter of fact, that was the only chance for somebody from the lower classes to have some participation into the sports field, at the beginning.

Let us see when there were no relationships between the sport and a healthy and strong body. On the contrary, it was desirable that the athletes had a kind of body debility, considering the body model that the boat rowers were bearing in the century's transition, an influence over all other sport practices.

Though they were not receiving the kind of attention given to the horses (these were the great attraction, the "cracks"[1] mentioned in the papers), the jockeys were having some detach in the social circles, because they had some evidence in the contests and because they were well paid by the wage standards of those times. In case of victories, they had an opportunity for making good money.

Because of that, frequently the horserace was presented as an opportunity for social improvement, though but a little of the jockeys succeeded in constructing a financial security, by the time they retired from their activities. Generally, at the most, they succeeded to have some momentary success, while in activity, the clubs letting them down by the end of their career.

The ones who claim that young children should be accepted as jockeys, besides the risk of their integrity be a burden, also used the argument of the social improvement. According the defenders, the reason for that was to provide a better way of life for the children from the lower social classes. However, the truth in the behind, was that they were looking for a better performance of their horses, once the jockeys would be shorter and lighter.

A jockey is considered as of some importance. With the good payment they are earning together with other tips, after 10 or 12 years working they could retire for their private lives with a good fortune (O Sport, 1895, p.1).

This reasoning was used to keep away any type of restriction for using short and young children as jockeys, in the same way it was usually happening in United States.

The Americans are free of those restrictions regarding the age of the horse ranch employees, and as a matter of fact, it was possible to see in the ranches such a short kind of persons that they seem as they were getting out of the diapers. Importance is given to the learning beginning at an early age, and the major part of the boys were starting to have the instructions when they were 8 or 9 years old. Some of them came out of the nursing homes, and other places where there was more poverty. There was predominance of black boys, who generally were introduced by themselves as volunteers (O Sport, 1895, p.1).

The concern regarding the involvement of young children is also brought up by *Jornal do Brasil* from January 13th, 1895. By that time a discussion was happening around the subject of the jockey weight and the results gains, suggestion made that the horse riding by a child would be a great solution. However, there was a concern regarding a central question: not the child integrity but that it was the lacking strenght to perform the task well.

Because of this, *The Sport* was celebrating when a very young jockey succeeded to have good results, a proof that the argument was a safe one: "We should record that ...in the debut of the jockey Antonio of 12 years old, he succeeded to get two beautiful and difficulty victories". (O Sport, 1895, p.2).

Very probably, it was not "the education of colored and poor youngsters" that was the object of concern of the horserace organizers, and pushed them strongly toward defending this point of views. . By contracting children from the popular

layers was providing them many benefits: the races became more emotional, more fast, because of the size and weight of the jockeys; they could afford to pay less premiums and salaries, which would be a "benefit" for children from the poor class; "charity" was mentioned as an important issue, providing an image that the clubs also were concerned with respect to the society. Besides, in an indirect way, they were reassuring the sport as an element of *status* and distinction. Obviously, a different distinction, not the same of the horse owners, organizers and bearers of associate members titles.

Jockeys: an intermediate status

The jockey's names were not having a great divulgation, as compared to the ones given to the horses (these were really celebrated), and the horse's owners, a proof of the different status given to the jockeys. As a matter of fact, the horse riders were not considered as winners, but the horses and the owners.

Some of them became well known, like Marcelino Macedo. This jockey inspired the composition of one valse (named "Master") and the launching of a new hat model, a custom promoted by "Chapelaria Nunes". By the way, in the elegant events in the city, one was supposed to wear "jockey style", meaning to dress like the elite did, not meaning to wear something similar to the jockeys uniforms. Obviously the jockey gains were by far lower than the horse owner's, but for one that came from the poor classes it could be considered as a good job. Many jockeys were earning some money throughout their working life, but frequently becoming poor when the career ends up. This happened, for example, with Francisco Luiz de Sa, leading the victories at the Jockey Club between the years of 1893 and 1896, passing away poor in 1901. The Jockey Club claimed at the time that they could not support him, because they were facing a serious finance situation at the time.

Sometimes, to minimize this impact, the clubs provided job opportunities for jockeys in the end of their careers, in other activities. Lourenço Alcoba became horse rider coach, in 1900. This was also the case of Domingos Ferreira, one of the great horserace winners from the first two decades of the XX century, appointed as run starter (start referee) by the time he retired from the races, in 1920. At that time, the "Athletic" magazine celebrated his indication, taking into consideration that he was "an outstanding Brazilian professional, a self made one, conquering soon many friendships in our turf, because of the honest way of competing in a modest and dangerous profession" (1931, p.7). The famous Marcelino Macedo also became a referee in 1916.

Jockey names were more focused when a punishment was applied, many times unfairly, once they were following orders received from the bosses. Obviously, whenever such punishments were applied, the comments were: "...the aim is to contribute for the improvement of our turf up to the highest level of moral and nonmaterial perfection" (Jornal do Brasil, 1895, p.3).

Some jockeys, however, also have been frequently involved with cheats and controversial occurrences, deserving the press criticism. Once discovered, they received tough punishments and their names were in the papers' highlights. Lourenço Alcoba, one of the most known in the XIX century for this kind of conduct, besides punishments, always succeeded in competing again in the races. Another example was the Uruguayan Mariano Marino.

Machado de Assis, in one of his chronicles (1892), made remarks about the punishment of three jocckeys (Jose Nogueira, for lacking of spirits; H. Cousins, by hinderig a competitor, and Horacio Perazzo, for beating too much in one mare) resume quite well the situation they were submitted to:

My astonishment is that for me the jockey and the horse were integrated parts (...) I could not supposed that both the wills be divided (...) How they will support their families now, if they have one, or themselves, what will they eat now? (...) If they are rich, ok; but then, why they did not set up (...) a banking society, or of any other type, were they could hinder other horse's tramp, spur on one's mares, and, if necessary, to race with no spirits for winning the run? (Assis, 1995, p.85).

Another interesting representation of the *status* differences are the usual horse pictures of that time. Generally the conception of the picture was almost the same, the horse pictured in profile, the horse's owner holding the bridle and the jockey on horseback, frequently unidentified. The aim was identifying the horse's owner and the horse. Besides, normally the jockeys pictured were from abroad, white, not the "black boys recruited from the nurse homes"

Machado de Assis presents clear evidences regarding the horse's valorization, because of the horse races, comparing with the asses. Once the electric traction was coming into the city by the last quarter of the XIX century, both the animals were becoming useless for the society. But the horses still had the turf that was preserving their value, while the asses were loosing their importance and were disregarded. Assis was thinking that an ass was reasoning as follow:

Names are given but to the horses, and almost exclusively to the racehorses. Did not you read that the cables from London, advising that at Oaks' races the horse winners were such and such? Did not read the same thing by Thursday, regarding Epsom's races? City ass, asses that pull carts, have no name; in the country it may be. Horses are so flattered that by winning a race in England their names are spread out all over the world (Assis, 1995, p.100).

Just like the asses, the jockey names were not too much known. They were thought like a part inside the show made up by the elites. A play that was important for the directors, so deserving a temporary acknowledgement. But this did not mean such a great influence over the decisions regarding the clubs direction and of the practice. Even the alternative of richness for the jockeys was an illusion.

So, the jockey had a peculiar intermediate place between the great public and the turf directors. It is valid to say that their participation was more active then that of the public's attending the races at the stand, once they were already conducting the horses. Particularly, I do not agree with this. Tight up to the clubs structure, conditioned by his boss' requests, submitted to a strong ruling, under the pressure for making good results, even incorporating the illusion of some of the symbolic elements of the elites, the jockey was looking like the passive side of the turf.

Diferent wise of the great public, he could not protest strongly. If he did it, or if he made an influence over the results in disagreement with the boss' desires and expectations, he was substituted by another one, angry for the benefits offered by the race clubs.

Jockey women

The horserace was very important with respect to the opportunity for a bigger social participation of the women in the cities of the XIX century, mainly in the great ones. Up to the middle of the century such a space was quite restricted, though more and more requested. In the touristy events, considered as a healthy and familiar practice, the women presence became more accepted. It was usual to see them at the stands, showing up their beautiful dresses and hairstyles. The turf was undoubtedly a escape valve, though also was appropriated by the male world as a way of women presentation "the cream of the cream from society", providing marriages that were usually planed as a business strategy and alliances, instead of a love celebration.

In spite of increase in social improvement, we may say that the women were filling all the available space in the races? There were women that participated in riding horses, like jockeys? Just a little. It is possible to find some special participation, infrequent, taken as a curiosity, an exception, never as an usual custom. Either, up to now there are not to many women jockeys. As a matter of fact they were welcome like public attendants , not as athletes or directors.

A very interesting example of women participation in horserace may be noticed by the time of foundation of The Sao Paulo Jockey Club, in 1875, named Paulistano Horserace Club (Clube de Corridas Paulistano).In the Jockey activities inauguration, in 1876, the third run was won by a woman jockey, probably the first to perform such activity in the country. The winner was Maria Domitila de Aguiar e Castro, a grand daughter of the Marquess of Santos.

About conclusion

As other aspects of the sports field, many of the dimensions present nowadays regarding the athletes representations, were found in the figure of the XIX century jockeys. Of course there are differences regarding the expected body model, its relationship with the health concept, because they did not have the reputation as they have today, for example, the one the soccer players have at present. But there is possible to find the discourse regarding the social raising and the use of their image for the interests of the directors and entrepreneurs acting in the sports, something that naturally will gain power increase inside the context of modernity, by the time the sport become one of the more powerful commercial products into the show-society.

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THE JOCKEYS: THE ATHLETE FROM XIX CENTURY AND HIS *STATUS* IN THE SPORTS FIELD

Summary

Melo's studies (2001) show that the turf was the first sport to have a structure in Brazil, at Rio de Janeiro, by the XIX century. The first club was founded in 1849 (The Racing Club), and the horseracings gained a structure vary fast, following the sport model from Europe, the existence of professional athletes included, the jockeys, responsible for conducting the horses in the contests. What is the characteristic of these athletes in XIX century? What kind of status were they given? What are the peculiarities of its organization? This study aims to discuss the presence and role of the jockeys in the pioneer structure of the Brazilian sports field, having as investigation locus the Rio de Janeiro turf from XIX century. This study helps us to understand the beginning of some dimensions found up to the present in the discourses regarding the sports.

Key words: History of the Sports; turf; jockeys.

LES JOCKEYS : L'ATHLÈTE DU SIÈCLE XIX ET SON “STATUS” À LE CHAMP ESPORTIVO

Resumé

Les études de Melo (2001) démontrent que le turf a été le premier sport structuré au Brésil, à Rio de Janeiro du siècle XIX. Le premier club est apparu pendant l´année 1849 (Club des Courses) et les courses de chevaux rapidement se sont structurées en suivant le format similaire au champ sportif européen, où on peut même trouver le professionnalisme des jockeys, des responsables par la conduction des chevaux dans les courses. Quelles sont les principales caractéristiques de ces athlètes du siècle XIX ? Quel “status” leur était accordé ? Quelles sont les particularités de son organisation ? Cette étude a comme objectif discuter la présence et le rôle des jockeys dans le début de la structuration du champ sportif brésilien, on a étudié le turf dans la ville du Rio de Janeiro pendant le dix-neuvième siècle. Il va nous aider à comprendre l´apparition de quelques dimensions jusqu'aujourd'hui présents dans les discours concernant le sport. Mots-clés : histoire du sport; turf; jockeys

LOS JINETES: EL ATLETA DEL SIGLO XIX Y SU STATUS EN EL CAMPO DEPORTIVO

Resumen

Los estudios de Melo (2001) demuestran que el turfe he sido el primer deporte organizado en el Brasil, en la ciudad de Río de Janeiro del siglo XIX. El primer club apareció en el 1849 (Club de Corridas) y las carreras de caballos rápidamente se estructuraran en el mismo formato común en el campo deportivo europeo, incluso con la existencia de "atletas profesionales", los jinetes, responsables por la conducción de los caballos en las competiciones. ¿Cuál es la característica de estos atletas del siglo XIX? ¿Que status les era concedido? ¿Cuales las particularidades de su organización? Este estudio objetiva discutir la presencia y el papel de los jinetes en la estruturación pionera del deesporte brasileño, teniendo como lugar de investigación la ciudad de Río de Janeiro del siglo XIX. Tal estudio nos ayuda a entender algunas dimensiones que hasta hoy estan presentes en los discursos referentes al deporte.

Palabra-llaves: Historia del deporte; turfe; jinetes.

OS JÓQUEIS: O ATLETA DO SÉCULO XIX E SEU *STATUS* NO CAMPO ESPORTIVO

Resumo

Os estudos de Melo (2001) demonstram que o turfe foi o primeiro esporte estruturado no Brasil, no Rio de Janeiro do século XIX. O primeiro clube surgiu em 1849 (o Club de Corridas) e as corridas de cavalos rapidamente se estruturaram seguindo o formato comum ao campo esportivo europeu, inclusive com a existência de “atletas profissionais”, os jóqueis, responsáveis pela condução dos cavalos nas competições. Qual a característica desses atletas do século XIX? Que status era lhes concedido? Quais as peculiaridades de sua organização? Este estudo objetiva discutir a presença e o papel dos jóqueis na estruturação pioneira do campo esportivo brasileiro, tendo como locus de investigação o turfe do Rio de Janeiro do século XIX. Tal estudo ajuda-nos a entender o surgimento de algumas dimensões até hoje presentes nos discursos acerca do esporte.

Palavras-chaves: História do Esporte; turfe; jóqueis.