

# Nostalgia Corner

30 Years Ago ... by Paul Davison



## Remember the NFAA Amateur?

Amateurism in archery doesn't mean much today, but with the reintroduction of archery in the 1972 Olympics, and with John Williams winning the gold medal, "amateurism" was as American as apple pie. Then why were there rumors flying around that the NFAA was going to eliminate its Adult Amateur Division?

Prior to 1961, the only amateurs in the NFAA (at the national level) were youth under 18. Everyone else was an "Open Adult." Then from 1961 through 1980, every adult shooter was classified as either "Open," "Amateur" or "Professional." Professional was clear — one had to be a dues-paying NFAA Pro, but there was little distinction between Amateur and Open. Supposedly, an NFAA Amateur had to obey IOC Rule 26, which essentially said you never made, or intended to make, *any* money in the sport. An NFAA Open shooter was anybody in-between a squeaky-clean Amateur and a dues-paying Professional. In other words, or in IOC terminology, an Open shooter was either a non-amateur or a semi-professional, or both.

Since IOC Rule 26 applied only to those with Olympic Games aspirations, most NFAA Open shooters looked with disdain at adult NFAA Amateurs as merely "trophy hunters." You must remember that the National Archery Association, a FITA member, was, and still is, the National Governing Body for Olympic Archery in United States. Then why should the NFAA have an Olympics rule if the NFAA has nothing to do with the Olympics?

Another 1970's rule also contributed to the demise of the NFAA Amateur. FITA Article 201 essentially said

that a FITA shooter could not participate in any international event not controlled by a FITA Member Association. Needless to say, not many archers with Olympics aspirations ever showed up at an NFAA or IFAA event. Moreover, NFAA Amateurs didn't have to follow FITA equipment rules. [Note: From 1995 through 1998, NFAA recognized three FITA "styles" without any mention of "amateur."]

The elimination of the NFAA Amateur Division was first proposed in 1974, and debate continued vigorously until 1979. One die-hard State Association even proposed eliminating the Open Division and creating two NFAA Amateur Divisions — one following FITA rules and one following NFAA rules. Finally, in 1980, the Amateur and Open Divisions were combined into a single "Adult" Division.

As expected, there was a minor rebellion. A few State Associations threatened to pull out of the NFAA. In fact, Pennsylvania, a big amateur state, remained unaffiliated with the NFAA for a few years.

Today, adult amateur archery is essentially a dead issue. The words "amateur" or "amateurism" do not appear in today's NFAA rules except as adjectives or in reference to something non-professional, such as in "Pro-Am tournament." Collegiate archers must remain untainted, but Olympic archers may compete just about anywhere they want, and can earn as much from archery as the market will bear.