

THE JOURNAL OF NUCLEAR MEDICINE (ISSN 0161-5505) is published monthly by the Society of Nuclear Medicine, Inc., 1850 Samuel Morse Drive, Reston, VA 20190-5316. Periodicals postage paid at Herndon, VA, and additional mailing offices. *Postmaster*, send address changes to *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*, 1850 Samuel Morse Drive, Reston, VA 20190-5316.

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Endgame

There are 60 seconds in a minute and 60 minutes in an hour. There are also 60 months, 60 issues of *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*, in an Editor's five-year term. As this is the 59th issue under my direction, it seems like a good time to reflect on the experience, what it has meant to me, what I have learned from it. On several occasions, I have likened the experience to being a coach of a sports team (*The Editor*, June 1994, and *The Editor at Halftime*, June 1996). I observed that even though you want to win each game, it may be necessary to pull your starters, not simply to give them a rest, but in order to prepare other players for future games. Like a coach, the Editor of a monthly journal does not have the luxury of having only established superstars to serve as authors or reviewers. There are many good players, the stars of tomorrow, who need coaching and instruction in the revision of their work. I believed then, and I believe now, that addressing the varied needs of the Society as a whole is as much a part of the Editor's mission as it is of a coach who needs not only to field the best team for each game but also to prepare for an entire season and to plan for future seasons.

We know that a balanced team, coordinated and supportive of one another, frequently does better over a full game, certainly a full season, than a team dominated by a single star who does not encourage others to share the burden or the spotlight, or even several stars who do not play in a coordinated manner. I have seen this in sport; I have seen it in the editorial process: recognizable academic stars who can continue to do spectacular things in the spotlight but who do not provide the balanced performance needed by a medical specialty and its journal. They continue to perform well but their team loses.

I have also seen others, however, genuine stars who have had their glory days, who now are filling another role: that of developing the performers of tomorrow by guiding and encouraging them in research, publication and service to their specialty, their science. I am delighted to have observed this and to have had the opportunity to be a part of it.

There is another concept in sport that deserves attention: the endgame—the special strategy or skill employed as the game is concluding. There are probably several varieties of the endgame: the endgame when the outcome is not yet decided, the endgame when you are ahead, the endgame when you are behind. The analogy doesn't really seem to hold for an editorial term since there will be no decision ultimately. So is there a strategy for an endgame when the outcome doesn't matter?

The analogy holds in so far that the way one plays or coaches the game matters even when the outcome is no longer in doubt. Do we appreciate the team that runs up the score? Do we respect the team that gives up on itself? Do we respect or appreciate the team that intentionally injures another player? What do we want from these teams, from the groups that we admire and want to respect? We want style; we want grace. We want further commitment to a belief in fairness, rules and in team play rather than just serving the ego needs of a select few.

In the endgame, regardless of whether the outcome is clear or has yet to be decided, we see another aspect of a team, an individual or group. Do they, does he or she, believe in standards, in mutual respect and fairness, in quality of effort, in helping others? Are these qualities only mouthed when the cameras are rolling or do these qualities represent essential beliefs that are upheld even when the clock is running out and the game is almost over?

Stanley J. Goldsmith

Editor-in-Chief, *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*

November 1998