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Not All Champions Are Athletes

ATHLETIC competition reaches such heights at this season that it may appear only athletes are or can be champions.

Players' enthusiasm as they jump, slap hands, and dance on the playing field adds to the spirit of the occasion. Sometimes it turns out that teams which hold forefingers high after a brilliant play or score actually achieve No. 1 status.

It might be a good thing if some of this enthusiasm and ambition would spread to competitors in other areas of life. There are many non-athletic champions who are recognized for their accomplishments, and a great many others who aren't but should be.

It is a good thing to aspire to become a champion for good and right, as well as for knocking home runs, throwing a football or dunking a basketball.

Not all athletes with these or similar physical talents deserve to be acclaimed as heroes off the playing fields. Many of them are addicted to dope or alcoholic beverages, publicly displaying their indulgence in these vices as examples for young

admirers to follow.

Coaches and managers tend to take the attitude that as long as their players win they don't care what they do at other times. Coaches sometimes set poor examples for their players.

We Americans have become confused about many of our priorities, and one is that we no longer seem to set high standards for our heroes to follow or live up to.

Our sometimes maniacal adoration of movie stars, musicians, politicians, and possessors of wealth exalts many unworthy individuals.

A true hero should be a person of strength, courage, and accomplishment, with moral character worthy of emulation.

There may be heroes and heroines in every walk of life. As Victor Hugo wrote in "Les Miserables" more than a century ago, "Obscure heroes sometimes are greater than illustrious heroes."

A person may aspire to be a champion mother or father. Many who rate this honor are almost unknown outside their homes.

"Champion Good Citizen" is a title

worth seeking. Far too many people overlook or deliberately ignore this goal, preferring to rob, steal, cheat, litter, and abuse the rights of others.

Numerous teachers merit the title of "Hero No. 1" because their patience and perseverance helped others to succeed.

Being a "Champion Student" is more important than athletics because it has more lasting value to individuals and to society.

One may become a champion businessman or woman without becoming rich or famous. Honest dealing with the public and fair treatment of employees and employers are heroic qualities.

Athletes don't win all of the championships. Each of us may become a champion if we are dedicated to worthwhile goals.

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote: "Every man is a hero and an oracle to somebody and to that person whatever he says has enhanced value." You may already be a hero to somebody.