

Charley Bailey Says:

AAU Is Involved In a 'Civil War'



Bailey

A BOXING ANNOUNCER might put it this way: "In this corner, with certification powers, the AAU . . . and in the opposite corner, with the athletes, the United States Track and Field Federation."

That is essentially the battle line in the mushrooming scrap for control of amateur athletics and competitors, mainly collegians, in the United States.

The AAU's hole card is its designation by the International Amateur Athletic Federation as the U.S. organization with exclusive power to certify, or deny certification to athletes aspiring to international amateur competition.

With the Pan-American Games scheduled for Sao Paulo, Brazil, next April, and the Olympics for Tokyo in 1964, the AAU obviously has something real powerful going for it.

The dissident group, the USTFF, comprises college coaches. Their main argument is that inasmuch as the collegiate ranks produce most of the international competitors, the coaches should have a stronger voice in the over-all situation.

They argue, also, that their ranks have been slighted in the selection of coaches and managers for AAU sanctioned track and field junkets to foreign countries.

As the governing body for amateur athletics in the U.S., the AAU has the right to designate the supervisors for teams participating in the annual trips.

CARL J. ROESCH SR., president of the AAU's Niagara Assn., and its secretary, Herbert J. Mols, a former president, dispute the charge of discrimination against the college coaches.

"Whenever possible," says Roesch, "college coaches are selected for these trips. And the AAU always goes first to the college ranks for Olympic team coaches. If they are not available, other sources are tapped."

Mols adds that "sometimes it is rather difficult to obtain college coaches for trips that fall during the school year. This situation arises with the 1963 Pan-American Games, which will be held in April."

A pretty fair idea of how the battle is going will be obtained in Thanksgiving Day cross-country races. The rebellious USTFF is holding its meet at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

THE SAME DAY the AAU is staging a run in Washington Park at Chicago. Participants in the USTFF risk AAU ineligibility, for this is not an AAU sanctioned meet. And without AAU blessing they will be ineligible for that body's annual championship events, and the Pan-American Games as well.

If the USTFF event draws a representative entry, that group will be encouraged in its challenge of AAU power. But if the meet fails to draw the stars, the AAU will have won at least a big battle, if not the war.