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SWISS SOCCER

Here is a real paradox: Soccer is one of the most popular sports in Switzerland and yet it is losing spectators at an alarming rate. The joke goes around that there are now more soccer players than there are spectators.

Indeed, the soccer clubs are finding it harder and harder to fill their stadiums with spectators. The reasons for this spectators' desertion are many and vary from club to club: competition from international matches, uninteresting and boring inter-club matches, low level of skill, bad weather, lack of atmosphere in the stadiums. But one of the main reasons must surely be television. Not only is it much easier and cheaper to watch a match on TV, but TV also brings you matches from other countries where the standard of play is much higher than in Switzerland. The semi-professional Swiss clubs can never match the quality of play of clubs like FC Milan, München, Bremen, Ajax, Marseille, Barcelona or any of the top British clubs. So the spectators get spoilt with top class soccer on TV and they find it less and less worthwhile to go out and pay to see a second rate match.



Scenes like these are hardly ever seen on inter-club matches. Only when the Swiss National Team plays can the organisers hope for a good attendance, but even then 20.000-25.000 people is the best they can hope for against 50.000-100.000 in other countries. It seems that soccer, like skiing, is becoming a sport for "doers" rather than for "watchers", which in a way may not be such a bad thing after all.

SECOND CLASS SOLDIERS

As from July 17 this year, the Swiss army will have two classes of soldiers. The first contingent to be divided into "Soldiers A" and "Soldiers B" are the 1700 recruits who start their military training in Moudon and Losone in the medical corps. The purpose of this project is to improve the effectiveness of the army by increased specialisation. Soldiers A will be those who combine motivation, intelligence and stamina. On the other hand, Soldiers B will be those who show little interest, antipathy and aversion to effort. In order not to sound too discriminatory, the Defense Department found a very diplomatic way to describe B Soldiers: "Those who are more efficient in auxiliary functions" (read: menial tasks). However, the Defense Department is very optimistic. It expects the number of A Soldiers to be in excess of 50%....

HIGH SPEED FINE

A 21 year old man from Zürich with his BMW holds the dubious record of having been fined for the fastest speed ever recorded by police in Switzerland: 235 Km per hour. He was stopped by the police near Bülach. He was also driving without a licence which had been taken away from him only a month earlier for a similar offence. He is facing imprisonment as well as a hefty fine.

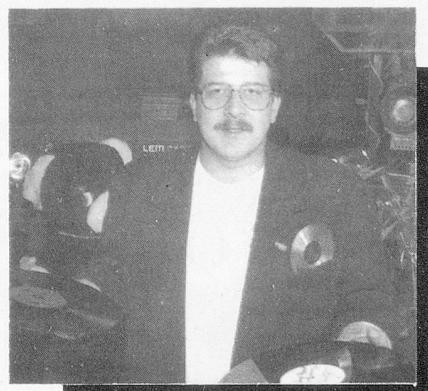
DISCRIMINATION

After Berne and Baden, Winterthur is the 3rd city in the German part of Switzerland where women can travel by taxi at night at a cheaper rate than men. The lucky ladies get a 25% discount.



SNOWBIKE

It may well become the newest craze on the Swiss ski fields. The snowbike is not yet on sale in the shops as it still only exists as a prototype. But if the tests are conclusive, it could well become even more popular than the ordinary skis or the snow boards.



WORLD CHAMPION DISC JOCKEY

Eddy MANCINO, 32, has succeeded. Non-stop during one hundred eleven hours the Bernese car dealer has played out his hobby as a disc jockey and thus earned his place in the Guinness Book of Records. "A fantastic feeling despite an enormous lack of sleep" he commented after his record breaking record playing marathon.



THIEVING POSTMAN

If you have relatives in Lucerne and sent them some presents in the past which never arrived, here is the answer to your puzzle. A 25 year old "Pöstler" has been arrested for stealing mail and postal parcels which he was supposed to deliver. He either sold the contents or swapped them for drugs. The value of the stolen goods is estimated to be well over SFR 350,000.

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