

The wind beneath my wheels

Not only is Louise Sauvage perhaps Australia's most famous sportsperson with a disability, she is also one of the greatest track athletes this country has ever produced. In Sydney in 2000 she became a household name after winning a gold medal in the 800-metre wheelchair demonstration race at the Olympic Games and two golds and a silver at the Paralympics. But Louise Sauvage had already been a professional athlete for a decade, competing internationally at the top level of her sport. She was involved in sport in one way or another from the age of three, 'when a Perth mother had trundled her daughter along to a neighbourhood swimming pool a couple of days a week. Just for some exercise and therapy.'



Louise was born with a severe spinal disability called myelodysplasia, which inhibits the function of the lower half of the body, giving limited control over the legs. As her mother Rita puts it, "She had one leg underneath her and one over the top, right up to her shoulder. That's how she was born ... She was four and a half hours old when they gently pulled her leg down. It snapped like a piece of cheese." Louise would undergo over twenty operations before the age of ten.

She followed her elder sister Ann into sport, and both of them became stars of the pool, with Louise the only member of their swimming club with a disability. Her sporting involvement went from strength to strength, and she became involved in everything - swimming, basketball and a range of track and field events - competing at national championships and succeeding brilliantly at every sport she took on.

But this vital aspect of her life was suddenly put on hold in 1987 and 1988, a time she describes as 'the worst years of my life'. The scoliosis (progressive spinal curvature) that she suffered from was worsening, and at age fourteen it became necessary for her to have metal rods inserted in her back. What should have been two operations turned into three when one of them went wrong, and lying for months in a hospital bed she started to wonder whether she would ever be able to participate in sport again. For someone as active as Louise it was absolute hell.

Through sheer determination and willpower Louise made an incredible recovery, although the rods in her back now meant that competitive swimming was out for her - so she turned her focus to the track. By 1990 she was competing in her first international competition, the World Championships in Assen, Holland. It was after winning gold and setting a new world record at these games that she made a brave decision that would affect the rest of her life: to make sport her full-time career. Two years later she was representing Australia at the Barcelona Paralympic Games, and arrived home with two golds and a silver to experience her first taste of sports stardom, including an Order of Australia Medal. (She would win countless other awards over the coming years.)

From that point the only way for Louise was up. The next year was her first on the international racing circuit, which meant constant travel to track meets and road races, many of them in the USA and Europe - the pinnacle being the world-famous Boston Marathon. It was in this race that Louise was destined to break the stranglehold of the 'Queen of Boston', US racer Jean Driscoll, when she recorded her first victory in 1997. She went on to win a further three Boston titles in 1998, 1999 and 2001. The undisputed highlight was the unbelievable 'photo finish' in 1998, when she beat Jean by a whisker - one of the greatest moments of Louise's career, and one of the most exciting ends to a race in the history of sport. Another proud moment was winning her first gold medal at the Barcelona Paralympic Games, her first of nine gold and two silver from three

Paralympics. The 1996 Olympics in Atlanta also hold special memories - Atlanta was where Louise won her first Olympic gold medal in the women's wheelchair demonstration event and the only gold medal for Australia on the track.

But this was nothing compared with the reception that would greet Louise at the Sydney Olympic Games in 2000. 'Making my challenge with 150 metres to go, out in Lane 3 on the brick-red Stadium Australia track, I felt as if I was almost picked up and bowled along by the roar of the crowd, the breath of the crowd. Almost literally, they propelled me to the line ... to the gold.' She went on to win three more medals at the Paralympics. Two of them were gold, but it was her controversial silver medal that garnered all the headlines, when half the field in the 800 metres final crashed and the Canadian team successfully appealed against the decision to rerun the race. Louise came second to her arch-rival Chantal Petitclerc.

Louise kept a diary throughout the Games, and it is one of the most fascinating parts of her revealing autobiography, which was co-written with journalist and author Ian Heads. The diary reveals the enormous pressure Louise was under during that period, and offers a unique insight into what it means to be an elite athlete in this country. 'Rereading this diary for the first time', she writes a year later, 'I honestly can't believe just how much I seemed to see everything in a negative light.'

For all her success, there have been many obstacles along the way, both for Louise personally and for the cause of athletes with a disability in general. At the Commonwealth Games in Victoria, Canada, in 1994, head Australian official Arthur Tunstall called the presence of athletes with a disability "'an embarrassment to both sides ... people are going out of their way to assist them and able people are a little bit embarrassed to have them around"'. Despite the storm of protests from the media, the words lingered in many people's minds. (Louise was not a competitor at those Commonwealth Games, as an event for female wheelchair racers was not part of the program. However, she won silver in the 800 metres women's wheelchair race at the 2002 Manchester Commonwealth Games, the first major able-bodied competition where full medal events were offered for elite athletes with a disability.) And two years later, at the Paralympic Games in Atlanta, Louise says that 'I felt like a second-class citizen for the first time in my life. The Paralympic Games appeared to be no more than an afterthought for the city in the wake of the Olympics ... Even the American athletes were ashamed of what their country had turned on!'

It was only with the intense adulation given to all athletes participating in the 2000 Sydney Olympic and Paralympic Games that sport for athletes with a disability in Australia even began to approach the profile it deserves. And Louise was in the vanguard. She has played a massive role in helping to change people's views, and earn athletes with a disability the same level of respect as their able-bodied counterparts. As Louise's great friend Ros Shaw puts it: "'It's Louise who has been the role model, the front-runner of everyone involved in sport for people with disabilities. As soon as someone says 'wheelchair athlete' people think of Louie. If any able-bodied athlete had done what she has done - winning over all distances, road and track - they'd be an absolute world superstar now.'"

Louise Sauvage is without doubt one of Australia's most talented athletes ever. But just as impressive as her undisputed ability are her humility, determination and tremendous will to succeed - qualities that get her up every morning without fail, rain or shine, for another gruelling training session; qualities that see her through those final metres of a 42-kilometre marathon, her hands red raw from pushing her chair; qualities that help her travel the world year after year, coping with constant frustration, loneliness and isolation; and qualities that make her a ceaseless champion for the cause of athletes with a disability, and people with a disability generally. In the

face of constant setbacks, she has refused to let her disability get in her way. She truly lives out the message that appears on the Sydney Harbour Supercat named in her honour last year:

'You'll never know what you can do or achieve until you try.'

Record your impressions of her story so far:

<http://study.com/academy/lesson/objective-writing-definition-examples.html>

What is objective and subjective writing?

What are the features of subjective and objective writing?

Where would you find subjective and objective writing?

What is the purpose of subjective versus objective writing?

How is objective language used in Louise Savage's story?

Matthew Knight Arena by Ersun Warnke

Fairness isn't exactly an attribute in this story, but it could be.

At Phil Knight University, as some people are fond of calling the University of Oregon, you can hardly walk a block on campus without finding a building named after a member of the Knight family.

Perhaps we will soon have murals being put up that depict Phil Knight communing with gods and angels, as the Medici were fond of in ancient Florence.

This extreme form of aristocratic privilege is justified by the claim of aristocratic patronage. It is heralded in the press that Phil Knight deserves these honors because of his great generosity to the University and the people of Oregon.

For the sake of accuracy, let us examine those claims in some detail.

Matthew Knight Arena is being paid for by a \$200 million dollar debt issue, taken out by the State of Oregon. This is \$200 million dollars being borrowed in the name of the tax payer, to be paid back at interest, resulting in a total bill that will probably be around \$400 million.

This massive bill is to be paid for with a massive increase in ticket prices.

Ultimately, the parents of University students will foot most of the bill, and the increase in ticket prices will serve to make attending your student's games an even greater financial hardship.

On the other hand, the whole purpose of building the most expensive arena in college basketball is to build a team that can compete aggressively on the national level, and get the national TV coverage that will make this arena very profitable for Phil Knight and his Nike empire.

Building a nationally competitive basketball team means cherry picking students from around the country, so chances are that Oregon parents won't have to worry about having to pay higher prices to see their children on the court. Their children won't be on the court.

So, what does Phil Knight pay for all of this free advertising? Just how generous is he?

He pays nothing. That's right. Nothing.

He has "pledged" \$100 million dollars as collateral on the State's loans, which will only be paid if increased revenues fail to cover the debt payments.

Here is the deal:

The State of Oregon borrows \$200 million to build an arena.

The University of Oregon, using more taxpayer money, pays for recruiting, coaching, tutoring, and pampering all of the top notch basketball players they bring in from around the country.

The City of Eugene pays for the surrounding infrastructure necessary to support the arena.

Oregon basketball fans pay more than double the old price for tickets at the new arena, and concessions and other costs will likely rise at a similar level.

The arena gets named after Phil Knight's son.

Nike gets millions upon millions of dollars in free advertising in perpetuity.

Phil Knight pays nothing.

The "investors" who buy the State bonds issued for the project get \$200 million in tax free income.

Wow, that really is a good deal!

Every time I review one of these boondoggles I become ever more convinced that I should learn to deal Three Card Monte and setup a table on the Capital steps. I could make a fortune. As long as the passing legislators were allowed to gamble on the credit of the taxpayers that is.

What I would suggest for Phil Knight is that if he would like to show some generosity to the people of Oregon, and put his family's name on grandiose buildings, perhaps he should consider building some factories in our State.

If you are selling pairs of shoes for hundreds of dollars surely you can afford to pay your employees fair wages. Surely the economic impact on the State of shifting a significant portion of Nike's production to local factories would far exceed that of a basketball stadium.

Meanwhile, I would suggest that Matthew Knight Arena be renamed Oregon Veterans Arena.

Since \$400 million dollars of taxpayer money has already been committed to this project, surely a bit more could be dedicated to erecting a memorial outside the stadium to the Oregonians who have served, been wounded, and passed away in the last decade of foreign wars.

Surely these thousands of veterans deserve more honor than a single man.

If the taxpayers of this State are to pay \$400 million dollars to build a grand arena for staging sporting events, then it should be the taxpayers who decide who this arena should be named in honor of.

When thousands of people come to this arena to watch games, and millions more see it on television, a memorial to our veterans would serve as powerful reminder of the sacrifices that have been made in the name of our State, Country, and way of life, to make it possible to build grand buildings and stage great spectacles of sport.

In fact, the choice of a name for this arena reflects very clearly on culture and values of the people of this State.

Do the people of this State reserve their greatest honors for aristocrats who suck on the public teat and aim only to aggrandize themselves and increase their personal profits through every sham display of generosity that they stage?

Or do the people of this State reserve their greatest honors for those who toil in anonymity, working with dedication and making great personal sacrifices for the greater good, even while others increase their wealth and status at their expense?

The choices made, and there reflection on our culture and values, will be on display for the entire nation to see every time the Oregon basketball team takes the court at our new arena.

The taxpayers of Oregon are the ones paying for this arena, and they are paying dearly. It is their arena, and it is for them to decide what name should be given to it.

Naming the arena to honor Oregon Veterans is one possibility that makes sense. If you simply wanted to name the arena after the people who paid for it, Oregon Taxpayers' Arena would be fitting as well.

Circle the subjective phrases in this article.

Choose 3 phrases from the above article to rewrite using objective language only (you may need to research your facts)

Journalism: Objective or Subjective by Ersun Warnke

Journalism as a profession is defined institutionally as being devoted to objective truth. Facts. Events. Names, dates, and places. The classical definition of journalism assumes that there is some observable truth that can be related in an objective fashion from the observer to the reader. This conception of journalism has been criticized extensively since its inception.

The crux of the complaint found amongst the critics of objective journalism is that the personal, or the subjective, is inseparable from the observer, the observation, and the objective. In other words, the observer cannot help but to color their observations with their own personal bias, which is inherently subjective.

Consequently, the critics of objective journalism assert that objectivity is always a façade, and that subjective journalism, which openly declares the subjective bias of the author, is in fact the more truthful form of journalism.

Subjective journalism not only relates the same facts as those found in objective journalism, but includes information about the author's own subjective biases, which may shed light on the author's process and intentions in composing a piece of work that assembles a set of otherwise unconnected facts into a cohesive and persuasive narrative.

I make no secret of my personal belief that the subjective form of journalism is the truer and more informative of the two.

I recently wrote an article, [Matthew Knight Arena?](#), which calls into question a particular land and development deal negotiated between the University of Oregon, Phil Knight, and several other entities.

In response to this article, "Oregon Reader" asks: "Ersun, Should you decide if you are going to be a news reporter or a commentator?"

To which I would respond: there is not, as I see it, any separation between the two.

If I write an article on a particular subject, limited in length by both my own abilities as a writer and the patience of my readers, I necessarily must forego a great deal of documentation, explanation, and exposition on the more subtle points involved.

Where it is not reasonable to provide long proofs based on documentation of certain assertions, I simply state them as my opinion. In all cases, there is a body of supporting documentation that can be accessed, but it is not practical to lay out this body in its entirety every time I would like to share my own personal assessment of some fact in a story.

I insert subjective commentary into my work in order to shed light onto my purpose in writing a story.

The act of composing disparate facts into a linear story is subjective in and of itself. The fact that I include a commentary on my reasons for composing a particular story does not make my work any more subjective than any other form of journalism.

In fact, the revealing of my own personal judgments in my work serves to make the end result more informative for the reader, who can judge my work in the light of my own subjective biases, which I make no secret of.

As a journalist, I am sharing my subjective perspective, with the intent that it may be of some value to the reader. What value may be derived from my subjective perspective is ultimately up to the reader.

Sports journalism is never objective – do you wish to change your answer? Why or why not?

Jargon is specific terminology, understood by people belonging to a particular group. For example medical jargon is language that is used and understood by doctor, legal jargon, specific terminologies for solicitors, and sports jargon to the arena where they belong.

Can you think of particular jargon that you have heard in a sport you follow?

This Unsporting Life by Dominic Knight

When I was but a young lad of 16, I was visiting another school for a tennis match when some friends called to me from a cricket pitch. It was the mighty Fourth XI (out of four) and, given our school's traditional indifference to sport, they were down a player who hadn't bothered to turn up. Would I be willing to fill in as last drop?

Would I ever. As an Australian male, I'd like to think I know a thing or two about cricket. I'd even played competitively in year 7 or year 8 (well, if you count losing every single match as "competitive"). And I once scored 12, one of the highest scores all season. So I thought it would be child's play to put on a quick-fire, Viv Richards-style half-century so my admiring teammates could carry me off the field, triumphantly brandishing a stump.

I donned (in the sense of "putting on", not "reminiscent of Don Bradman") some pads but opted – hygienically – not to use the "box", which had already been down the undies of most of my sweaty teammates. I jauntily strolled out to the middle, bat propped rakishly over my shoulder, communicating to the bowler that I was made of better stuff than the amateurs he'd been facing earlier. I took guard. The bowler began his run-up. And propelled his first medium-slow delivery right into my crotch.

Honestly, the pain was excruciating ... but even more agonising for an adolescent whose manhood had just been metaphorically (and literally) crushed were the taunts. "Balls before wicket!" said one wag. My pride also retired hurt that day. And I haven't played cricket with a real ball since. Because, despite my enduring love of it, despite my fantasies whenever I take to the field that somehow things will be different this time, I am crap at sport.

I don't "throw like a girl" or take wild air swings and miss completely. I'm not like a scene from *Revenge of the Nerds* (well, not in that respect anyway). I just mean that every single time I play sport, whether it's soccer, table tennis or tenpin bowling, I'm invariably the most mediocre. That's not how Aussie blokes are supposed to be. My passport is meant to give me mystical powers of eye-to-hand co-ordination as well as bucket-loads of Aussie spirit. The Australian way is to fight above our weight and bring back the glory. It's Steve Waugh scoring that century in an afternoon at the SCG. It's Lleyton Hewitt chasing down every damned ball on his way to a Wimbledon title (as opposed to chasing Bec Cartwright). It's our hero Socceroos, except in the years 1975 to 2005. But the only champion sportsman I have any chance of emulating is Steven Bradbury. And I'd need a much greater number of people to collapse in a heap ahead of me before I took home any medals.

We're not a country where you get points for trying. When Ricky Ponting's team surrendered the Ashes, we didn't congratulate them on getting close. We were devastated. And that's my problem. I play soccer with a bunch of mates in the park on weekends – unfit, lazy blokes who, for the most part, ought to be just as bad as me. But for some reason, they effortlessly outclass me. So I make fun of myself before others can, all the while sobbing on the inside like a baby. And even though all of us could pretty much serve as a second *Nerds FC* team, the whole thing's become ultra-competitive. I've been shouted at for not tackling hard enough and the girls who used to play with us for fun are long gone, tired of balls being kicked in their faces ... because Australian men don't do "social" sport. Even for toddlers at kindy, it's war.

It's surprising we aren't more tolerant of sporting failures when the most revered example of Australian manhood is the Gallipoli landing. (And believe me, I get hammered on the beach just playing Frisbee.) English football fans can obsess over tiny, unsuccessful regional teams but the Sydney Swans only get crowds when they're winning. While in Melbourne, an Essendon v Carlton match takes on the seriousness of a blood feud – even when both are at the bottom of the ladder.

Where does that leave those like me, whose genes simply aren't cut out for it? Jealous and resentful, frankly. Since we're already confined to the shallow end of sport's gene pool, the least

you could do is not sledge us. We're already painfully aware that we're rubbish and your mum could do a better job. Believe me.

Jocks ought to be careful how much they pick on my kind, though. John Howard loves cricket more than he loves the Queen – and that's saying something. However, he's not only the bloke who hands out that all-important Australian Institute of Sport funding – he gets to open the Olympics and pick the Prime Minister's XI. And that truly is the revenge of the nerds.

How does the first person point of view of this text establish connections with the responder?

Comment on the use of colloquial language in this text. How does it add to the appeal of the text?

What sporting jargon does the author of *This Unsporting Life* use?

According to this article, what attributes do Australians value?

What is the author's opinion of his sporting abilities? How does he justify his lack of sporting prowess?