BEARDEN SAYS

‘Physical Education Important Too’

By MARK MONTGOMERY

“Rice needs to do a better job educating the whole individual, recognizing his emotional and physical needs as well as his formal education,” Dr. Frank Bearden of the Health and Physical Education Dept. said last week.

“LOOK AT IT this way. Why waste an outstanding Rice education on a man whose poor health later ruins his career, a pre-med whose hand isn’t strong enough to finish that incision, an engineer who can’t get along with people, or a genius who blows his brains out before he graduates?”

Dr. Bearden emphasized the role of physical education in Rice’s overall health picture. Although Rice is one of several universities that require only one year of physical training, the department hopes that its well-planned, personal “P.T. 100” is enough to convince the student of its continuing importance.

However, the R.O.T.C. is now giving additional physical training, for Rice has placed last in recent physical fitness tests at multi-university R.O.T.C. meets.

COULD IT BE that Rice students are “weaker” than most collegiates? Figures from the Rice physical fitness test show that in recent years freshmen have thrown the softball a consistent 2 feet-11 inches shorter than the national norm and have run the fifty yard dash a consistent second or two slower.

But, looking at the only other figures available, in two new tests given this year the class of ‘66 impressively out broad-jumped and “sat up” the norm.

These figures don’t include 20% of the Rice (or national) student body—a 10% “skilled athlete” group, and a 10% “semi-handicapped” group. This includes such disabilities as heart murmur, bone injury, etc. Both groups have separate physical education programs at Rice.

THE FIGURES ARE the test results of the eighty per cent group of “normal” students who are also given a separate “co-ordination test” for homogenous grouping.

Rice’s handicapped group is not larger than the national percentage. Detailed records of each’s problem, gathered by private physicians in an elaborate required physical, (which has replaced the old gym physical), are compiled by Dr. Skaggs, who then relays the information to the colleges and P.T. 100 instructors. The instructors work individually with the “restricted” student during his P.T. hour.

FEW PROBABLY REALIZE that Rice was a pioneer in U.S. physical education, which became an organized study during the ‘20’s. Drs. Scott and Hermance, who came to Rice in 1929, were assistants at Columbia University to the “father of American physical education,” Jesse Williams.

Fifteen graduates from Rice, most of which continued at Columbia, are now department chairmen across the nation. Bearden says that more and more P.E. majors are genuinely interested in the major, and that the future may hold a graduate school for Rice.

Currently much is happening in the P.E. Dept. Astronaut Alan Shepherd secretly made a physical fitness film in the gym the other day, requested by President Kennedy.

WITH THE BIOLOGY DEPT., the P.E. Dept. is requesting federal funds from the National Health Institute to set up a physical education research lab. A treadmill will be installed to aid in tests measuring pulse rate, body temperature changes—in general the scientific foundations of physical education. Coach Neely has given half the women’s restroom on the second floor of the gym for this project.

Dr. Weston, besides being a consultant to NASA on the health of the astronauts, has written a textbook, “The Making of American Physical Education,” plans to write next on intramurals, then on the English background of American sports.