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**WINNING THE SETI OLYMPIAD:
THE ROLE OF THE DEDICATED AMATEUR**

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ABSTRACT

Since its emergence as a respectable scientific discipline nearly a half century ago, the electromagnetic Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) has been dominated by three classes of practitioners: government agencies, academic institutions, and nonprofit organizations surviving on a combination of private contributions and research grants. Recent technological advances have brought a new group of players into the SETI game – dedicated amateurs with a personal passion for achieving interstellar contact. This paper explores the contributions such non-professionals are making to SETI science, in the realms of experimental design, equipment construction, software development, direct observation, sky coverage, signal analysis, and message interpretation. Like the amateur athlete competing in an Olympiad, the amateur SETIzen can expect to struggle for survival, absent commercial or institutional sponsorship. We will show how grass-roots amateur efforts can nevertheless supplement the accomplishments of the professional SETI community, bringing us all closer to the day of contact.