III. North American Sport and Physical Activity


The Aztec game tlachtli has been played in all Mezoamerica for over 3,000 years. Fifteenth and sixteenth century Spanish conquerors observed and described the game. Their chronicles indicate that tlachtli and its predecessors were the world’s first games played with a bouncy rubber ball. Basketball,
soccer, football, and volleyball could have emanated from it. Cortez brought tlachtli players to Europe for exhibition games. Accounts and rules circulated throughout Europe and Spain began importing rubber balls, drastically changing popular sports. Tlachtli added two other elements to existing games: scoring by passing the ball through a goal, and teamwork. Based on secondary works; 14 notes.

Mary Lou LeCompte

III-2


Lacrosse played numerous roles in the Seneca Nation, including recreation, religious ritual, welcoming guests, and conditioning for battle. The object of the game has not changed since the seventeenth century, but other characteristics have. Early webbing was tight and used to stop the ball which was then tossed into the air and hit with the stick. Boundaries were determined by mutual agreement; from twenty-four to two-thousand players engaged in a single contest. Participants suffered fractures, crippling injuries, and even death. The unique aspect of the Seneca game was fluidity—rules were agreed upon for each specific contest. Based on primary sources and secondary works; 31 notes.

Mary Lou LeCompte

III-3


The Strathcona system of physical education was the transplanted British system of physical education, syllabi and all. It was Canada’s first curricular programme of physical education. Because of Ontario’s relatively large population, the Trust was fully developed and implemented there. The system encouraged both physical and military training of pupils, and competitive schemes were developed to enhance the purposes of the Trust. The benefactor of the system, Sir Donald Smith, Lord Strathcona, intended the Trust to be an incentive programme to develop physical education in the schools. The Strathcona system, however, was the only provision made for physical education during the period from 1911 to 1939. The Strathcona Trust provided the first form of pupil training and teacher preparation in physical education and had considerable impact upon the development of physical education in Ontario and Canada. Based upon primary sources and secondary works; 53 notes.

Don Morrow

The demand for economic, social, and political reform coincided with a quest for reform in sport among Canada’s Western and Maritime provinces. Central Canada’s domination in most aspects was viewed by the two groups of provinces as the source of many problems in the life of the Dominion. Many of the problems existing between central Canada and the West revolved around the centrally-dominated Amateur Athletic Union of Canada. Disputes over rules, eligibility, national championships, and international representation in sport were commonplace. The Maritimes were hostile toward central Canada because of the economic control which Ontario exerted over them. In sport, Maritimers resented the lure of better competitive opportunities in central Canada for promising, young eastern athletes in hockey and track and field as well as the administrative dominance of central Canada in Sport. Based upon newspapers and secondary works; 87 notes.

Don Morrow


To combat the problems of the depression, the liberal British Columbia Premier T. D. Pattullo effected a policy in 1933 known as the “little New Deal.” As a result, the Recreation and Physical Education branch of the Province Department of Education was established. It was created originally to combat the problems of the unemployed by maintaining morale and developing work habits via a Provincial Recreation Youth Training Program. The program expanded to cover a larger area of the province, and it opened its doors to the employed. It contributed significantly in forming the basis for the Dominion Provincial Youth Training Program and served as a prototype for similar programs in Alberta and Manitoba. Its function declined after 1940 due to the emergence of war training programs and the expansion of the war industry. Based upon primary sources and secondary works; 29 notes.

Dave Brown


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Dave Brown

Elfrida K. Berzins was a multi-talented individual who made significant contributions to the field of physical education. Worthy of note were her many achievements and accomplishments in Europe (1904-1948) and in Canada (1948-present). It was not “the extrinsic and tangible credits that made her contributions so significant, but the intrinsic personal qualities she passed on to others through living life to its fullest.” Based upon primary sources and secondary works; 96 notes.

Dave Brown

III-7


The 1976 Montreal Olympic Games emerged as one of the most political of all the Modern Olympics. The refusal of the Canadian government to allow Taiwan to compete as the Republic of China because of Canada’s economic ties with the People’s Republic of China, the boycott by black African nations in retaliation for New Zealand’s participation in the Olympics, and the attempted political defections by a Romanian rower and a Russian diver are examples of politics entering the Montreal Games. The Modern Olympic Games have become competitions to enhance national prestige and political ideologies rather than promoting friendly athletic competition between nations of the world community. Unless drastic reforms are made, political intrusions will continue to threaten the future of the Olympic ideal and the very existence of the Modern Olympic Movement. Based on newspaper accounts; 21 notes.

Robert W. Case

III-8


Independent stock car drivers, those not backed by commercial or individual sponsorships, have repeatedly tried to break into the winner’s circle in racing. However, neither a 1969 Professional Driver’s Association refusal to race at Talladega, nor the 1973 “Independent 250” (a non-NASCAR event promoted by Raymond Williams for independent drivers), nor a 1976 threatened strike by independent drivers succeeded in closing the money/winning gap between independents and the top racers. NASCAR, dominated by the France family, has dictated the ever-changing rules to insure crowd-pleasing enter-
tainment, guaranteed purses, point fund bonuses, and a 30+ race circuit. Publicized races throughout the country, elimination of shorter distance races, withdrawal of factory money, and a reluctance to oppose the power of NASCAR (must submit to race) all reinforced the domination of the sponsored drivers over the independents. No notes.

Angela Lumpkin

III-9


The Davenport Boat Club sponsored the July 4, 1912, speedboat regatta to determine the National Champion of the Mississippi Power Boat Association. Although many classifications of boats entered the competition, the main interest focused on the then evolving hydroplane type of boat. The winner “Baby Reliance,” a 32-foot second-step hydroplane, was clocked at just under 50 mph. The boat club, which had barely finished its boathouse in time for the 1912 regatta, remained open for twenty-one more years. After that hectic, confusing regatta, the club members became content to run their boats at a leisurely pace and welcomed such Mississippi boat travelers as the Mayo brothers to their docks. Membership declined and the city condemned the property in 1933 as an “eyesore.” Based upon interviews, newspapers and secondary works as summarized at the end of the article; no notes; 3 photos.

Aimee M. Loftin

III-10


During the late 1890s American artist Thomas Eakins painted three major canvases of prizefighters: *Taking the Count, Salutat,* and *Between Rounds.* Eakins had a preference for “living thinking acting (sic) men and women whose faces tell their long life story.” He was an important figure in the turn of the century “strenuous life” movement and his boxing paintings were a testimony to this. Eakins’ work places him in the company of Winslow Homer, Walt Whitman, Stephen Crane, and Theodore Dreiser. His works revealed how expressive boxing could be. Based on primary sources and secondary works; 39 notes.

Michael Kupersanin

III-11

The 1962 film version of Rod Serling’s “Requiem for A Heavyweight” offers a portrait of a Chicano which goes beyond the traditional stereotype of the “gay caballero” and the “Latin lover.” The retired boxer is portrayed as a man with “a code of ideals—honor, a sense of dignity, loyalty, a scrupulous honesty,” all of which “paradoxically brings about his own defeat.” The conflict between the boxer’s manager and the social worker who wants to elevate the athlete is highlighted when the manager chides her, “You think when you put clothes on an ape you can make a dancing partner out of him.” The boxer winds up as a professional wrestler. He continues his life in the ring, the only world he knows, listening to “The Star-Spangled Banner,” the only song he knows. Based on primary sources and secondary works; 6 notes.

Lee Lowenfish

III-12

“Woman A Wheel,” Michigan History, 64, No. 5 (September-October 1980), 33-35.

The article briefly covers three areas, including: (1) the growth of bicycle manufacturers, repair shops and other businesses related to the bicycle in Michigan; (2) a cursory look at the evolution of the bicycle, itself, from the “ordinary” through the tricycle and to the “safety” bicycle; and (3) comments about women’s and men’s fashions when riding the various machines. The question of appropriate attire focuses on women riders. No notes; reference made to Cycle Age (1896) and The Western Cyclist (1885); five photographs.

Phyllis Ocher

III-13


From the 1920s to the 1950s when national high school basketball tournaments were played, three teams from the northern Kentucky-West Virginia area were part of these extravaganzas. The exploits of Ashland, Kentucky High School in 1928 and 1929 at the University of Chicago as well as the Ashland girls’ team, 1928 state tournament champions, are recounted. This was the first boy-girl “double.” St. Joseph’s of Huntington, West Virginia went to the national Catholic tournament at Chicago Loyola University in the mid-1930s with one of its outstanding teams, and Huntington Douglass participated in the national Negro tournament at Nashville 1949-51. Based on interviews and news accounts; five photographs; no notes.

John Schleppi

Adrain Anson, nicknamed “Cap,” “Unk,” “Pop,” or “Pappy” played and managed in professional baseball from 1871 to 1898. Twenty-two of those years were spent as player-manager of the White Stockings. As a player he was a good hitter but average first baseman. As an innovative manager he started, among other things, spring training, signals, and pitcher rotation. After Albert G. Spalding released him, Anson tried a variety of business and other ventures, none of which were successful for long. He died in 1922 and was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1939. His plaque states, in part, “the greatest hitter and greatest National League player-manager of the nineteenth century.” Based upon primary sources, newspapers and secondary works as summarized at end of article; no notes; 5 photos.

Aimee M. Loftin


Empirical research revealed that baseball did not contribute to upward social mobility during the 1900-1920 era. The large majority of players in the major leagues had middle class backgrounds and were reasonably well-educated. Lower class whites were underrepresented and all blacks were excluded from baseball. The myth of baseball’s open recruitment policies served to buttress traditional American values of hard work, rugged individualism, and democracy. Based on primary sources, newspapers, and secondary works; 30 notes.

Michael Kupersanin


What is now Boston University’s football stadium was formerly the home diamond of the National League Boston Braves, a baseball team of many totems and few triumphs. In a move that portended baseball’s coming Expansion Era, the Braves abandoned the site in 1953 and moved to Milwaukee. The article reviews the highlights of the park’s thirty-eight years of active service. Based on primary sources and secondary works; no notes.

David Q. Voigt

Meier, Klaus V. “‘We Don’t Want to Set the World on Fire’: We Just Want to Finish Ninth,” Journal of Popular Culture, 13, No. 2 (Fall 1979), 289-301.
The fanatic followers of the New York Mets in their first years seem to contradict philosopher Paul Weiss’s theory that sport provides a “superb occasion for enabling young men to be perfected.” The Mets, however, filled a void in the lives of New York fans who missed National League baseball after the Dodgers and Giants left in 1957. The corporate coldness of the Yankees left many fans looking for an alternative team. Sportswriters eagerly wrote about the Mets since the scriveners’ jobs had been jeopardized with the absence of a second team. Fans rejoiced in the on and off the field bumbling of their new team, whose antics seemed to be an antidote to the alienation they felt from society in general. Based on secondary works; 52 notes.

Lee Lowenfish

III-18


The Stone Junkies is a softball team in the black town of Parks, Louisiana. Organized in 1971 the team grew out of unemployment, poverty, and boredom. It became a unifying force of the town and created feelings of pride and dedication previously unknown. In 1975 they were accepted by an all-white league after earlier attempts failed. Because usage of the recreation facilities at Parks is at a new high today, the practice routines of the Junkies have been limited, but the team continues, nevertheless, as a strong social force in the community. Based on empirical evidence; no notes.

Joan Paul

III-19


Prior to 1891 major league baseball rules allowed pinch hitters to be used only in an emergency. Since then rules were changed to allow their tactical employment in the fashion that has since added drama to the game. The article reviews the great pinch hitting performances of this century and clarifies baseball records on the subject. Based on primary sources and secondary works; statistical tables supplied; no notes.

David Q. Voigt

III-20


Vital statistics and basic biographical data on each of 11,000 major league baseball players who played as little as a single game since 1876 is the contin-

William (Lone Star) Dietz was a multi-talented man who became well-known as a painter of Plains Indian life, a Hollywood actor, a star gridiron performer for Pop Warner’s Carlisle Indians, and one of the country’s most successful football coaches in the period between the two world wars. Born in 1884 of a half-blood Oglala Sioux Indian woman and a man of German descent, Dietz had many highlights during his long career, but maybe none so important as his coaching triumphs. He had only one losing season during his coaching stints at Washington State College, Louisiana Polytechnical Institute, Albright College, and the Boston Braves of the National Professional Football League. Maybe Dietz’s most important triumph was leading his Washington State College team to a 14-0 victory over Brown University in the 1916 Rose Bowl. No notes; 7 illustrations.

David K. Wiggins


Football in Texas, 1936-1941, was a civic celebration, a ritual defiant proclamation against the harsh struggle with land, wind, and temperature. A losing season caused pervasive lethargy in a community or region, but a winning season renewed faith in the righteousness of daily struggles. Texas A & M and the University of Texas provided the fiercest sectional rivalry. Regardless of team rankings or season records, the Aggies had never defeated the Longhorns at Memorial Stadium. Descriptions of annual Thanksgiving Day games between the two state universities provide psychological insights into this “rite of passage” for one young Longhorn fan. Based on primary sources and newspapers; no notes. Two pictures.

Roxanne M. Albertson

Millions of fans follow sports because it seems to vindicate an American precept that talent is rewarded by success. But, for the black athlete the return is usually small. In football, blacks are usually “stacked” at skilled positions, meaning many gifted athletes do not start and are relegated to utility roles. While more “blue-chip” black athletes are being recruited for college than ever before, the frequent recruiting and academic scandals leave many black athletes ineligible and embittered about the system which brought them to college. There are only “nominal” changes in the pros: the draft replaces recruitment, the taxi squad substitutes for the junior college, and the policy of the team management replaces the “personal ethos” of the college coach. Based on secondary works; no notes, 7 references.

Lee Lowenfish


In 1928 the Providence (Rhode Island) Steam Roller was a member of the struggling National Football League. College football was a popular spectator sport, but few professional teams drew more than local interest. Scheduling was done by individual teams, thus league championships were awarded on winning percentages. The Steam Roller scheduled eleven league games, but did not play two league teams. Often competing on both Saturday and Sunday in different cities, the team still managed an 8-1-2 league record to become the 1928 NFL Champion. In 1931 Providence relinquished its NFL franchise because of insufficient gate receipts. Based on oral testimony and newspapers; no notes; three pictures.

Roxanne M. Albertson


During the 1920s, professional football reached its zenith in the industrial community of Ironton, Ohio. Major local events of the period included the Ironton Tanks games against the New York Giants, Chicago Bears, and the neighboring Portsmouth Spartans. Through interviews, players and officials revealed the meaning of professional football for that small industrial hamlet. Based upon news articles and interviews; no notes.

John Schleppi
Bobby Jones, the only golfer ever to win the Grand Slam, won the British Amateur and Open and the United States Amateur and Open in 1930. From 1923 to 1930, he played in all four tournaments and won thirteen times. Jones retired from tournament golf in 1930, and failing health precluded his playing by 1949. He was instrumental in opening the Augusta National Club in 1934. Although he rejected the title of “Master’s” as presumptuous, the annual tournament, nevertheless, assumed that name in 1938. No notes; illustrations.

June A. Kennard

Klaw, Barbara. “Queen Mother of Tennis: An Interview with Hazel Hotchkiss Wightman,” American Heritage, 24, No. 5 (August 1975), 16-24, 82-86.

In this interview with Hazel Wightman shortly before her death, she reminisced about her long involvement in tennis as a player and grand madame. Inquiries ranged from her successful career as an undersized player to her views about the modern woman’s game. Wightman’s opinions fluctuate between disapproval of “unladylike” behavior, such as swearing, to an open appreciation of the more assertive style and attitudes of today’s women players. No notes; illustrated.

June A. Kennard


The 1,980 athletes from 37 countries who competed in the 1932 Olympic Games during the worst period of a worldwide depression saw good old American capitalism turn a $1,000,000 profit and toward national madness for sports. The crowning achievement of these Games was the construction of an Olympic Village, a self-contained city for athletes which promoted friendship and world peace. Although incidents of prejudice and discrimination toward some athletes tarnished the games somewhat, outstanding individual performances highlighted the Los Angeles Olympics. Based on primary sources and secondary works; 36 notes.

Angela Lumpkin

Sport is defended as a legitimate aspect of historical inquiry and a necessary mechanism through which to gain a fuller understanding of the past. Through a description of “Sport and Modern Society,” an undergraduate history course at the University of Southern California, the author credits sports with being both a mirror reflecting society and a conditioner or socializing agent affecting society. The topical framework of the course includes the origins and expansion of organized sport; the continuity and change in societal attitudes as reflected in traditional and modern sports; the political and economic aspects of sport; and inequalities due to social class, ethnicity, and gender. Based on primary sources and secondary works; 22 notes.

Angela Lumpkin

Cone, Carl B. “Sports History with a Kentucky Bouquet,” *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 77 (Autumn 1979), 275-84.

Sports history has emerged as a legitimate cross-disciplinary subject in the schools. A brief history of the beginning of certain organized sports (boxing, horse racing, and basketball) in the United States and Britain is presented along with the development of sporting periodicals. Particular reference is made to the holdings of the Keeneland Turf Library at the Keeneland Race Course and the University of Kentucky Library, both at Lexington. Three photographs; no notes.

John Schleppi