Bachelor and Hockey Bobby Soxers—Marlboros' Johnny McCormack, leading scorer in the OHA senior race, has other worries besides bagging his quota of goals for Joe Primeau's team. They're obviously pleasant worries, however, as you might discover from this picture of Johnny instructing his St. Mike's (U of T) hockey team. Left to right (front row): Vicky Boechler, Ann Malcolm, Betty Markle, the coach, Francis Conlin, Rita Bauer (sister of Bobby, ex-Boston Bruin), Helen Martel, Babe Coughlin and Barbara Smith. Back row: Nancy Gates, Jean Rutherford and Mamie Flynn.

Sports – And One Thing or Another

By FRANK MANN HARRIS

("A Sixbit Critic")

One of our feminine readers—we might say that the lady is a violent supporter of the Montreal Canadiens and not feeling any too good about the state of the world at present — writes regarding a certain well-known member of the Toronto Maple Leafs. "I understand that many years ago there used to be a song entitled AND BIG BAD BILL IS 'SWEET WILLIAM NOW'. I wonder if you could get a copy of it, and send it with my compliments to 'Bad Man' Ezinirki. Ever since one of our boys gave him a mild going-over in Montreal 'Big Bad Bill' seems to have lost a lot of that much advertised fight of his—just another of the kind that loves to dish it out, but ca't take it!"

* * *

Personally, we have no particular feeling either way regarding Mr. Ezinicki — or any other professional athlete, for that matter. There was a day when we could follow, with intense and even passionate interest, the progress—or lack of it—of some pro. team. But that day is in the dim and distant past. It goes back to the time when a great Canadian Sports Editor—Francis Nelson, by name—gave us a little advice which really opened our eyes.

* * *

We had been bewailing to Mr. Nelson the fact that "Our" team—if memory serves aright it was the old Tecumseh's Lacrosse Team—was getting the worst of it from some hated rival, and appeared to be in great danger of losing its last chance for the Championship.

* * *

"Don't worry about it too much," advised Mr. Nelson. "Just remember this—if you were to go into those dressing-rooms, right now at half-time, and switch the uniforms on those two teams, they'd probably be battling one another just as hard when they came on the field again."

* * *

Then he added something we have always remembered, and frequently quoted. "When you look at any professional sport, if you see a good game you've had your money's worth. If it's a poor game, even the fact that it might be for the championship of the world doesn't make it any different. Amateur athletes, playing strictly for the fun of it, have no obligation to think too much about the spectators but it's different with professionals, who if they put on a tame exhibition are cheating those who make their living possible."

* * *

Here, we seem to have got slightly off the trail of Bill Ezinicki — and whether or not he's lost some of the battling spirit that has characterized him for the past couple of seasons. Our personal feeling is just the same as it has always been—that Ezinicki is a colorful and potentially-great hockey player who was being exploited, mostly by irresponsible sports writers, to his own great disadvantage.

* * *

Billing Ezinicki as a "killer" and all that sort of tripe might help swell the box-office tally, and draw extra customers who came only to holler "Get Ezinicki" every time he stepped on the ice. That's very fine, especially for the type of "sports" promoter whose idea of the greatest game of the season is the one which broke the last attendance record.

* * *

But just suppose that Ezinicki—spurred to more intensive efforts by those hostile shouts, he being that type of athlete—should by some mischance injure an opponent really seriously, perhaps even fatally. In less time than it takes for you to read this, he finds himself suspended, maybe banished for life.

* * *

Inside a month all we writers who hammered out so many greatly-needed columns from his doings — to say nothing of the promoters who cashed in on his drawing-powers — would have practically forgotten him completely, or almost so. If Mr. Ezinicki has pulled in his horns a trifle—is no longer letting himself be made the sacrificial goat for an entire club, we think he has been very well advised. Coaches and managers who stress the "fighting qualities" of their teams have a lot to answer for. If the penalties fell as heavily on them as on those they incite to such prowess, maybe they too would "cool out" a trifle.

* * *

A week or so ago we wrote something in praise of the British Boxing Association for its action in curbing the broadcasting and televising of fights in future. John Lardner— son of the great and only Ring W. and himself a smart and thoughtful sports observer — a couple of days later wrote along the same line, and speaks about how the increasing popularity of television threatens the very life of sport, not only in Britain, but on this Continent as well.

* * *

"It appears," he says, "that the British fight fan is getting his entertainment practically everywhere but at the place where fighters are fighting and ticket sellers selling tickets. The boys might be fighting at the bottom of the Suez Canal for all they are drawing at the gate. The big shows are playing to peanuts, and the small shows folding up."

* * *

Well, we can picture it as a very sweet thing indeed—to sit by your home television screen and, in a single Saturday afternoon, tune in and see a few innings of World Series Baseball, some scraps of American and Canadian football, the finish of some of the most important horse races of the day, and various other items of the sort—all without the slightest exertion. If you have the only television set in your vicinity and can charge the neigubors a small admission fee, it will be even sweeter. But after a few years of it — just where the athletes are coming from, to keep things going, is something we haven't yet been able to figure out.

★

Hard Necessity

The wearing of the kilt is becoming more common in Scotland, not because of a revival of nationalism, but because of a shortage of trousers.

Magazine "Facts" Need a Recheck

In a recent issue FORTUNE — the magazine that sells for a dollar a copy and seldom mentions anybody low r down in the social scale than a millionaire — published somethi g of a "blast" at Canada. The article, among other things, said that "in an even race Kansas wheat grower might put Canadian growers out of business" — the reason being that our farm research was so greatly behind that in "God's country".

Canadians who pay any attention to this kind of thing are having a quiet smile to themselves over such nonsense. According to the C.P.R. "Agricultural and Industrial Progress in Canada" the world's wheat championship — decided annually at the Chicago International Grain Show — has been won by Canadians just 29 times out of 33 shows held since 1911. More than that, all four of the wins by non-Canadians were on wheat from Montana — which lies along the Canadian border; and the prize-winning grains were all varieties either originated in this country, or from a dscendant of Canadian strains.

It would seem as if FORTUNE might do a little checking on its much-publicized "fact-checking" staff.

Streamlined Ski Lighter and Faster

Britain has produced a new, streamlined ski, said to be lighter and 10 per cent faster than any other.

The new ski, likely to prove the surprise of the 1948 Olympic winter games, is made of steel, plastic and wood, and may later be made unbreakable.

It was tried out secretly on the Jungfrau glacier during the summer by James Palmer Thompkinson, captain of the British ski team for the Olympic games.

News of the invention is beginning to leak out among the other teams in Switzerland—and one of the new skis has disappeared mysteriously in the night.

★

A Bright Idea

Fond Mamma: "Wouldn't you like to give your hoop to that poor little boy who has no father?"

Tommy: "Couldn't we give him father, instead?"

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ISSUE 6—1948

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