SPORTS &c

by A SIXBIT CRITIC

Just what sport enjoys the most widespread popularity throughout the world, we are not prepared to say offhand, and it is too much of an effort to dive into the dope and check up at the moment. Still, after looking over an account of the preparations being made for next year's World Cup soccer tournament, we would say that "fitba" must be right up there with the contenders.

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There are no less than 55 countries affiliated to the Federation International de Football Associations, and of these—in spite of cold wars, hot revolutions and other upset conditions—32 are entering the tourney, and preparing to send send teams into the competition.

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The Union of Soviets Socialists Republics—Russia for short—will be the outstanding absentees, as England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are entered. Since 1946, the Russians have joined three international governing bodies of sport—soccer being one of these. But their failure to enter for the World Cup affair caused little surprise, as the finals will be staged in South America, and it seems that Mr. Stalin prefers to have his athletes perform closer to home, where they would be assured of all the comforts of life.

* * *

This will be the first time the World Cup has been competed for by more than 30 countries since it was first put up, back in 1930, by Jules Rinfret. The British had nothing to do with the first three tourneys, having seceded over the vexed question of "broken time"—that is, paying amateurs for the time they must be away from work and wages while taking part. Since the war, however, the British have agreed to "reasonable payments" to amateurs and have entered the four already-mentioned teams.

* * *

The groups in the four zones for the 1950 competition work out like this:

Zone A

Group 1—Austria, Turkey, Syria.

Group 2—France, Yugoslavia, Israel.

Group 3—Belgium, Switzerland, Luxembourg.

Group 4—Sweden, Finland, Eire.

Group 5—Spain, Portugal.

Group 6—England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland.

Zone B

Group 7—Argentina, Chile, Bolivia.

Group 8—Uruguay, Peru, Ecuador.

Zone C

Group 9—U.S.A., Cuba, Mexico.

Zone D

Group 10—Burma, India, Philippines.

* * *

This preliminary stage of the tournament must be completed by April 15, 1950. The victors, plus Italy, then proceed to Rio de Janeiro where the competition proper is scheduled from June 28 to July 16. Four of the 16 teams assembled at Rio will then be "seeded" and placed one in each section. The remaining 12 teams are ballotted into the four sections and each team plays against each other to find a section champion.

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Elaborate arrangements have been made for the staging of the tournament at Rio de Janeiro. The Brazilians have undertaken to supply free air transport for all competing nations and to house and entertain them. This will set the Brazilians back something like four hundred thousand dollars, but it will be more than recovered from the attendance proceeds of 18 days' fanatic soccer. Most of the higher-priced tickets have already been sold, even long before it is known which nations will arrive in Brazil.

* * *

The 1950 tournament is the second time the World Cup finals have been played in South America, where, incidentally, the Olympic Games have yet to be held. The first time was for the inaugural series in 1930 when Uruguay was the host nation and also the winner. In 1934, when the tournament took place in Italy, the host nation was again successful. The third series was promoted by France in 1938 and Italy retained the trophy. Should the trophy again be won by the Italians, they will keep it in perpetuity, because it goes outright to the country that wins three times irrespective of whether they are in succession or not.

* * *

Which should be enough about soccer for the present—except this: Just why Canada's name should not appear on the list we are not in a position to say. But we are sure of one thing, the reason cannot be fear of making a poor showing. No matter how weak a soccer team we sent, it couldn't do worse than our representatives in international tennis, track and field, and several other sports we might mention. Maybe it's just that the soccer "badgers" aren't as fond of travel—at somebody else's expense—as those who hang around some of the other pastimes.

"Yer Out!"—Umpire John Stevens signals a vigorous out as Yankee second baseman Jerry Coleman tries to make it two by firing to first base. Vern Stephens of the Boston Red Sox is forced out at second base in the second inning of an important Red Sox-Yank game at Yankee Stadium. The runner was forced on a grounder by Bobby Doerr, who beat the throw to first.

THE FARM FRONT

by John Russell

"So you're thinking about remodelling your hen house. Well, you're probably hoping to do one of two things, either keep up with the Joneses in appearance, or compete with them in earning power."

* * *

That's the rather striking first paragraph of an article I ran across in a farm paper published out in Iowa, and having borrowed that much from Howard Bayles, a college poultry specialist, I think I'll pass along to you some of his ideas on the subject. (The article, by the way, is headed "Cold Hens Don't Lay — And Neither Do Crowded Birds).

* * *

Appearances — such as a paint job or new roof line — can wait. But a better house to boost the earning power of your flock cannot wait — unless you like to give money away.

* * *

Many laying houses are as old and outmoded as a Model T car. They don't protect the flock from heat in summer, or cold in winter.

* * *

Such houses are wet and unsanitary — perfect for diseases and parasites. Some are too small to house flocks in comfort.

* * *

They are responsible for more low production than almost any other one thing. But many of them can be fixed up to do a better job.

* * *

Suppose your house is too small. Enlarging it by making it wider may be the cheapest and best way to get more room. Wide houses are better, anyway.

* * *

It's easy to widen a shed-roof house. But gable-room (two way) buildings can be widened, too—if they're tall enough. You can safely go as wide as 30 feet if the house is to be insulated.

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Another common fault with old houses is the lack of temperature control. The best layers will slump if house temperatures drop 'way down in cold weather. Insulation is the only answer.

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Sorry to say, many jobs of insulation are not well done. For instance, it's a waste of time to build a double wall with just a layer of paper between.

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Three times as valuable is a board wall on the outside of the studs, another on the inside. Then make use of the space between by putting in a dry fill of ground cobs, chopped straw or other insulating material.

* * *

But fill insulation calls for tight walls. And board walls seldom are tight enough.

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So, it's absolutely essential to line the inside of the outer wall with wind-proof paper—red resin or building paper is best.

* * *

You can do it by tucking strips of the paper between the studs and tacking it temporarily to the outer wall. The fill later will hold it in place.

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The inside wall must be vapor-proof, too. Again, a board wall alone won't be tight enough to keep vapor from dampening the fill and causing it to decay.

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So, before nailing on the inner walls, tack a layer of vayor-proof paper against the studs. This, when covered with the board wall, will protect your insulation fill.

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The Voice of Autumn

The owl has hooted in the evening darkness. The voice of autumn has echoed across the valley. There is no mistaking it now, for although the green world is still green it has the gleam of dogwood berries turned scarlet and the shine of goldenrod in the fence corners and the glow of little white asters on the meadow. There is the cider smell of windfall apples in the orchard and the wine tang in the vineyard. You can close your eyes and know that the change is taking place.

Ripeness is fulfillment, and it comes not at the peak of summer. It comes when the season begins to ease down the long hill toward winter and ice, when the days shorten and the stars of night begin to gleam in longer drakness. Ripeness is a summation, of long, hot days and simmering sun and warm rain and the flash of lightning across the summer sky. It is the beauty of blossom brought to the succulence of fruit, the soft green of new stem toughtened to the firm fiber of the reaching twig, the winged seed of a maple now rooted at the grass roots and finding sustenance in the soil. Ripeness is September, warm at mid-day, chill at dusk and covered with cool dampness at dawn.

The change is more than a matter of sunlight and day-length, for there is a rhythm in all growing things, a rest and a resurgence. The seasons belong to that rhythm, as do the day and the night. But so does the apple, and so do the goldenrod and the asters. The peak is past. The wave of the great rhythm now begins to ebb, and the cricket sings, the owl hoots, the crows call querulously. You can hear autumn from any hillside.

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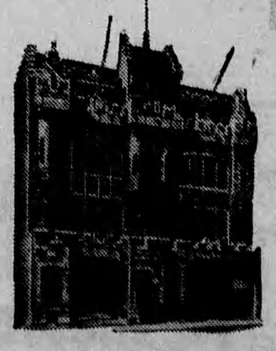

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