



Sports in Brief

There will be no sports reported in this issue for the simple reason coaches and managers are not co-operating by sending their coming schedules or dates for exhibition games in.

In place of the regular sports is a short article on:

GAMES AND SPORTS OF THE IROQUOIS

The Iroquois enjoyed games and sports, in many of which they acquired remarkable skill. Games were associated with their religious ceremonies, for it was believed that they were pleasing the Great Spirit and they often performed with religious intent. During a famine or epidemic a game might be ordered by the medicine men to propitiate the spirits. At the conclusion of their sacred observances the groups remained together to enjoy a period of sport and festivity. In the early days competitive games were entered into with nation playing against nation and village against village, or tribal division against tribal division.

They were not carried on for individual glory. The prize was victory. Field days with exhibitions of strength and skill added much to the pleasure of Iroquois life.

Ball play, hoop games, and target shooting were popular summer sports. Ball play has always been among the favourite games of the Indians. The most popular ball games among the Iroquios were lacrosse, shinny and double ball

the last two being played by the girls and women. Foot races were always enjoyed and long periods of practice usually preceded them. In winter, snow shoe races, shinny, ice ball, and snow snake, and snow boat were enjoyed. Indoor games of chance played in winter made use of cherry stone, peach pits, sections of deer bones, carved wooden tallies and other handmade equipment. The men put much labour into the carefully prepared snow shoes, snow snakes, spears, javelins, lacrosse sticks, tallies and other articles used in playing the game.

Lacrosse was played by the American Indian centuries before the discovery of America. It was described by a French Trader in 1662-1669 and by a missionary at an even earlier date. In ancient times a wooden ball, made from a burl or knot of wood, was used. Later a small ball of deer skin, stuffed hard with moss or hair and sewed up with sinew, came into use. The original bat had a solid, curving head. Later a racquet with curved end, across which a net of sinew or deer skin thongs was strung to a point far up the handle, was substituted for the bat. These racquets were sometimes carved. Because of its resemblance to a bishop's crozier the racquet was called "La Crosse" by the early french colonists and the game came to be known as "Lacrosse".

When the game was to be played a large field or sheet of ice was cleared and "gates" consisting of two poles ten feet high were erected about sixty yards apart at opposite ends of the field to serve as goals.

Before the game began each player removed all clothing except his breech cloth. The teams, of six or eight men each assembled... (Continued on page 22)