

SPORTORIALS

Comment on Current Events
By the Sporting Editor

Lauriers will be first in the lacrosse field this year. Two picked teams from the junior and juvenile departments of the Laurier aggregation are to play an exhibition game at Nativity Park, East Cornwall, this evening.

According to the line-ups issued today, the teams are well matched and should offer a good contest. The fact that the game is the first of the season should attract a good crowd of fans.

Ottawa Emmetts have held their first practice of the season and the Montreal teams have been in action for the past ten days. The locals have so far held no practices and an early start is absolutely essential if the Colts are to stand a show against such opposition as M.A.A.A., Nationale or the other squads of the O. and Q. L. A.

It is doubtful if the Athletic Grounds will be opened to sporting organizations before May 1, as the city authorities are anxious to have the field in perfect shape before the season begins. However, there should be nothing to prevent local sport groups from getting busy on other playing fields of the city or suburbs for preliminary practice.

R. J. Graveley, chairman of the Parks Committee of City Council, will call a meeting within a week to arrange a schedule for the use of the Athletic Grounds by local sporting organizations. Lacrosse and baseball will be the main contenders for the use of the grounds on Saturdays, but all sports will be given an equal show.

We are informed that there is a possibility that the local softball league will seek a playing field nearer to the centre of the city this season, instead of using the Athletic Grounds. The arrangement should be satisfactory to all concerned. The use of an uptown field for softball would attract larger crowds and would leave the athletic grounds free for sports which cannot be played on smaller areas.

Four teams are to play in the Senior City Lacrosse League at Ottawa this year, Shamrocks, Madisons, Lauriers and Primrose A.A.A. Gerald Sims is again president of the group. Clint Benedict and Tony Pelletier will be the referees during the season. The schedule will open on May 25.

Finch is to have plenty of sport this year, according to a news item. Although no meetings have been held to date, it is expected that five softball leagues will operate. Plenty of material is available and the groups will include the Men's Town League, Boys' Town League, Public and High School Boys' League, Public and High School Girls League and a district loop including Finch, Avonmore, Newington, Berwick and the Mohawks.

Ed. Baker, sports editor of the Ottawa Citizen, has unburdened himself in his column, "Short Shots on Sport," regarding lacrosse. Ed means for the days when lacrosse was lacrosse. He gives his opinions about the decline of the national game and declares with finality that lacrosse will never come back. We do not agree with the Citizen writer. Here is his point:

"The latest wrinkle in lacrosse is to play the game in an area enclosed by a wire screen, with teams of eight players. 'Tis said such a game is being played with much success in Australia and that a move will be made to have it taken up in this country.

"It may be that this new fangled game would catch on in Canada, but to old time lacrosse fans who have seen the game at its best, when thousands attended the games in the larger centres, and as many in proportion in the smaller places, it would not appear like lacrosse.

"This curtailed game might become an indoor attraction just as the revised wrestling game has proved to be attractive, but it would be a queer sight with caged in players performing outdoors.

"Indoor lacrosse with abbreviated teams has been tried and found wanting. It has been tried with the players on skates, but that didn't prove attractive.

"There was, however, no wire screens to protect the patrons from flying balls in those instances, and it's just possible that with hockey nets, the game might take root and grow. But, it would have to be played after the day is done and darkness sets in.

"The ever increasing popularity of golf and tennis is very much against outdoor lacrosse, and the motor car, too, has had much to

do with what was once known as Canada's national game declining as it has.

"In the days when lacrosse was the outstanding summer attraction, there was little golf or tennis played, and an automobile was a rarity or curiosity. There was a big field of material for development into players in those days, but in recent years the young men who are not playing tennis are driving motor cars. Men of standing in the communities were behind the game. Today such men are playing golf.

"Those who have seen lacrosse at its best will tell you that no game surpasses it as a thrill producing attraction, but it's many a day since the game was played like the old Caps, Shamrocks, M. A.A.A. Cornwall, Toronto, Tecumseh, Brantford, St. Catharines New Westminster and Vancouver teams played it.

"In recent years, the nearest to such lacrosse has been played up in Central Ontario by Oshawa, Weston and Brampton teams but, proficient as they are, those teams fall short of equalling the old timers.

"Lacrosse has to spring from the corner lots, and there are no kids playing the game in those places these days, thus it is strangled from the start."

To put it bluntly, we think Ed is out a mile about lacrosse in Canada. There is every indication of a growing interest in the sport, interest which gives promise of a return of lacrosse fever which swept the Dominion in days gone by. True, the lacrosse of today isn't what it used to be. It has lost much of its gore, much of its roughness and incidentally, some of its color. The modern lacrosse is fast, interesting to watch and a better game to play. The lacrosse which is coming back is a new lacrosse. It may not have the glamor of the old-time game, bemoaned by Ed Baker and the old timers, but it has its good points as a game as typically Canadian as hockey.

Ed Baker says that there are no kids on the corner lots these days, who put heart and soul into lacrosse. That may be the case in Ottawa, where sport of any kind lacks public support, but it certainly does not apply to Cornwall. Last season, six leagues operated in Cornwall, a city of 17,000, bringing approximately 18 teams and 300 players into action. Seventy per cent of the players were under 18 years of age. This season, at least seven leagues will operate, with an increased number of players. Four years ago, lacrosse was practically a dead issue in Cornwall, with only the senior team and one or two local leagues to carry on the sport in the greatest lacrosse town of Canada.

The Citizen sporting editor has told us that lack of interest among the youngsters has strangled lacrosse. Might we suggest that Mr. Baker wield his influential pen in a campaign to stir up a lacrosse fever in Ottawa to equal that in Cornwall.