

Lacrosse in 1875

By Sir Henry Pellatt, C.V.O.

It is so long since I have even thought of Lacrosse that I do not know what to say that would be of interest to you. I can only give you a sketch of my past experience and let it go at that.

My first Lacrosse was with the Maple Leafs, and we played on the Cemetery Common which reached all the way from Parliament Street over to Jarvis Street, and from the Ravine on the north to Carlton Street on the south (Toronto). There was not a house there at that time—about 1875.

After playing Lacrosse in the evening, we used to go down in the Ravine at the head of Parliament Street, where there was a very large pond for swimming. The creek ran down from west of Yonge Street, forming this large swimming hole, and then ran out to the Don River.

We boys were all swimming after playing Lacrosse, and one of our boys, son of Colonel Macdonald, a Waterloo veteran, was drowned; he was a lad of about 12 years of age. That was about 1873. I mention this to give you an idea of what the city was like at that time.

We also had a splendid swimming place on the north-east corner of Sherbourne and Carlton Streets.

I played in the old Maple Leaf Club, formed, as far as I can remember, by Philip and Matt Ellis, and some of the old Model School boys at that time. As far as I know, "Jockie" Aird, now Sir John Aird, and myself are the only two left of that old Club. I graduated from there into the Junior Torontos, and later to the Senior Club, with which I played until 1879. That year I trained for the United States amateur championships.

The Toronto Lacrosse Club sent down to New York a fine team composed of Tip Arthurs for the 100 and 220 yards, Ardagh (son of the Chief of the Fire Brigade) for the 100 yards, Auldjo for the long distance races, and myself for the mile. I was the only one that came home victorious. I was challenged for \$10,000 to race against Duffy, whom I had beaten in the amateur races. The professional element had started into sport at this time, but I had made a good finish as an amateur, and did not want to turn professional, and I never did any racing after that.

This professional element has done more to hurt Lacrosse and all sports than it has done good, and has eaten its way

into baseball and even into cricket in England. The professionals came in and the amateurs went out. In the old amateur games of Lacrosse we used to have 20,000 to 30,000 people at a game. After the professionals started, it was very hard to get any spectators at all, and Lacrosse went into a serious decline.

Lacrosse was first introduced by the Indians. Down around Cornwall and Montreal was the only place that a good lacrosse stick would be bought, and most of them were made by the Indians.

Lacrosse was entirely an Indian game, and was started down in Montreal some 60 years ago. The first to take up the game was the Montreal Lacrosse Club, and it was a very fine Club indeed. The Toronto Lacrosse Club followed. The first lacrosse sticks were made down near Three Rivers in Quebec, they were all made by the Indians, and they were laced tight and had no bag or pocket in them. The original game was throwing, and catching, not carrying. The Indians played in pairs, most of them in bare feet, but some with moccasins on, they passed the ball from one to the other and before anybody would have time to check a fellow the ball would be thrown to another Indian. The Indians always tried to keep spread out so that the ball could be passed from one to the other. It was very seldom you saw an Indian run over 20 yards with the ball.

The Indians first played in Montreal, they were not professionals, they had their expenses paid and a small percentage from the gate money was given to their tribe.

Toronto soon followed and the Indians came here and I have seen 20,000 people at a match. The lacrosse grounds at the time were on Jarvis Street from Wellesley Street north. The grandstand extended the whole length of the grounds and we used to get some very large crowds at the games and also at the amateur races. Later on the game was taken up by the professionals, and when they came in the amateurs went out, and it was the same with other athletic sports.

At that time our definition of a professional was "anybody who ran for money or played for money"—there was a very distinct and positive law regarding this.

I think the entering into lacrosse of the professionals has been the means of lessening the interest of the amateurs and of the public.

Lacrosse Players of Twenty Years Ago and How To-day's Stars Would Compare with Them

By Charlie L. Querrie

While lacrosse fans are not so numerous today as they were back about 1910, one cannot attend any fixture without seeing some of the same faces that gathered at Scarborough Beach and Hanlan's Point when Torontos and Tecumsehs faced the Shamrocks, Nationals, Cornwall and Ottawas in some of those stirring contests.

When the old fans gather in the stands at Ulster Stadium or at Oshawa or Brampton, the general topic of conversation at the rest periods is how so-and-so would stack up in competition with the stars of twenty years ago.

Probably us old-timers had a majority of star players, and we certainly had a lot more time to practice than the present crop of stick wielders, but there are several men today who have the ability to play alongside the stars of other days.

Just by way of comparison we might take a few of the old-timers and some of the present-day artists and compare them. To me, the greatest of all home players around 1910 was the late Billy Fitzgerald of St. Catharines, who was brought to Toronto by that wonderful lacrosse general, the late Jimmy Murphy. Fitzgerald was lightning fast; could shoot and stick handle, and had plenty of brains and courage. Now, have we any players like Fitzgerald today? Probably not, but in the old days everyone was not a Fitzgerald, and players like George Sproule of Brampton; Stephenson, De-gray, and Davidson of Oshawa, and—before they turned hockey professionals—Lionel Conacher and Carson Cooper would easily have caught places on any team.

In the old days defence players like Kavanagh, Finlayson, Powers, Graydon, and others, were great, but men like "Ted" Reeve, Bill Coulter, "Stew" Beatty and Gordon Thom would have been just as good.

Given the same encouragement, the same crowds, the same time to practice, I believe that the present-day players would give all us old-timers a run for our money, even if we still think we were pretty good.

Lacrosse in the High Schools

By D. M. Graham, B.A., Runnymede Collegiate

The time is not so far distant when nearly every town and hamlet in the province boasted of its lacrosse team, and every body accepted his lacrosse stick as part of his rightful and inevitable inheritance. Then came those years when the popularity of our national game waned to such an extent that comparatively few of our young Canadians ever saw a game of lacrosse.

Lacrosse is staging a comeback! The game has, and always will have, an irresistible appeal for the one who has ever felt the thrill of playing it. When lacrosse sticks appear on the school campus, baseballs disappear. At Colgate Collegiate, this year, (1931) thirty-five boys turned out for the freshman lacrosse team, while only four reported for baseball.

Lacrosse is having its rebirth in the public and high schools and it is in these two institutions that the future of the game depends.

Last summer, (1930), as an experiment, the Ontario Amateur Lacrosse Association made it possible to give a course in lacrosse to over one hundred public and high school teachers, who were attending the course in Physical Education at the University of Toronto. So enthusiastic was their response to the game that the Department of Education will give lacrosse a place in the curriculum with rugby and basketball.

Teach the teachers and they will teach the boys. The majority of the teachers, knowing nothing about the game, are timid at introducing it in their schools, but now that they are being instructed their reluctance is changed to enthusiasm.

Runnymede Collegiate, and the community it serves, has accepted and endorsed lacrosse enthusiastically. Sixty-five league games of lacrosse will be played at this institution by the end of this May, (1931) and the teams will represent boys from the ages of eleven to twenty years of age. Two hundred and twenty-five boys playing lacrosse cleanly, have merited the co-operation of all the parents in the district, and we no longer have to fight against the prejudice of parents refusing to allow their boys to play lacrosse.

We have abolished shoulder and arm pads, and have reduced slashing to a minimum. As a result, the game is

much faster and cleaner, and incidentally less expensive to operate.

The teacher, of necessity, feels a greater responsibility to the boys under his charge, than does the average coach, and if he is to establish lacrosse in his school, he must keep the game clean, and protect the boys from injury as much as possible.

The next five years, I think, will see lacrosse definitely established as a high school sport. And with organizations like the Toronto Lacrosse League and O.A.L.A. sponsoring the game amongst the schools in the summer, boys will again be seen in every town in Ontario carrying their lacrosse sticks to school.

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A National Asset — Lacrosse

By A. E. Lyon,

President Canadian Amateur Lacrosse Association

The Canadian boy developed physically to fit him best for the larger responsibilities of citizenship and business is the purpose of those promoting lacrosse, Canada's national game. It costs more to outfit a boy to play lacrosse, but we want the Canadian boy developed along the best and most enduring lines. We do not want the product that follows mass production and uniformity, obtained at a fraction of the cost of the skilled workman's effort. They are produced cheaply and they are a cheap product liable to break under a heavy strain.

To stand up under the strain that will be their's who will have to solve Canada's problems requires a boy who has reached the finest in physical development. Lacrosse will provide this better than any other game. It calls into play all the big muscles of the body, the activity of which during the growing period is so essential to the development of a well-balanced nervous system. The heart and lungs which occupy the engine room of the body have their capacity to serve it increased materially. And an alert brain ready to take advantage of constantly changing playing conditions must always be present.

In the capacity to play lacrosse a boy has a certificate of physical fitness. To play it he must be the raw material out of which only the finest type of human product can be made.

Above all, it is not an "alibi" game. If he is outrun or outchecked, it is apparent; if he shoots the ball over the top of the net he is just a bad shot; if he is outguessed it shows him lacking in alertness. In no game has an official so little opportunity to influence the result as in lacrosse.

That is the way Canada's problems must be solved. There is no alibi in life. It is the Canadian boy, youth, and man, best fitted to meet and solve these problems that the advocates of lacrosse are seeking to develop in their campaign to introduce the game into every school and college in the land.

Let us maintain our pride in this national birthright, lacrosse, and use it in the best interests of the Canadian boy and man for the incalculable benefits that are bound to accrue to the Dominion as a whole.

