

**B**asketball and soccer are perhaps the most popular team sports in the world, and gymnastics, while not so widespread, is growing steadily.

The ancient Greeks practised a primitive form of gymnastics to train for combat sports. Later they elevated gymnastics to the Olympics. The 19th Century, however, marked the beginning of modern gymnastics. It quickly proved to be a fine form of physical and mental discipline with recreational and therapeutic value. In addition, it proved to be one from which both men and women could benefit; there has been a gradual change in the emphasis from strength to fluidity of movement.

ward III banned it in 1365, fearing it endangered national security by competing with archery. The ban had little effect. Mobs continued to play in the streets and whole parishes competed against one another, sometimes setting the goals miles apart. In the 19th Century, when schools took up the sport, it became more orderly and gave birth to rugby football, North American football and soccer.

To commemorate the 1976 Olympic Games at Montreal, which will feature these and many other sports, the Canada Post Office has brought out a series of special stamps.

The designer, James Hill's medium is casein paint. He depicts a

Mint stamps are available to collectors through philatelic counters at select post offices across Canada, as well as by mail order through the Philatelic Service, Canada Post Office, Ottawa, Ontario, KIA-OB5.

Four other Olympic stamps issued by the Post Office feature three categories of the Arts And Culture Program—the Performing Arts, Handicrafts and Communications Arts—and the Winter Olympic Games at Innsbruck.

The first three Arts And Culture stamps were designed by Ray Webber of Toronto, and measure 30 mm by 49 mm in a vertical format. A total of ten million 20-cent stamps and 8,500,000 each of

## CANADA'S OLYMPIC STAMPS



James Naismith invented basketball in 1891 at Springfield, Massachusetts.

Students could not play baseball or football during winter and they found calisthenics boring. A new game was required. It would have to be an exciting, easily learned, non-violent, indoor team sport played with a large ball. The objective of the game, Naismith decided, would be to hurl the ball into a box suspended high in the air, but since no boxes were available for the first game, peach baskets were used. Naismith's enthusiastic students thus proposed the name "basketball."

Soccer, often called association football, is one of the games which evolved from medieval British sport "in which a round or oval object, usually the inflated bladder of an animal, was kicked, punched, carried or driven toward some goal." The sport was so popular that Ed-

single athletic figure in a moment of intense action, with extraneous detail eliminated to focus on the movement.

The predominant cool blue colour of the stamps featuring gymnastics, basketball and soccer is in contrast to the hot, aggressive orange-reds of the previous set of combat sports. Olympic stamps, also designed by James Hill, a well-known Canadian illustrator whose work has appeared in numerous Canadian and American magazines.

The stamps featuring gymnastics, basketball, and soccer are in the denominations of eight cents plus two cents surcharge, ten cents plus five cents surcharge, and twenty cents plus five cents surcharge. They measure 30 mm by 36 mm in a vertical format. A total of 15 million 8+2 cents stamps, ten million 10+5 cent stamps, and ten million 20+5 cent stamps have been printed in four colours.

the 25-cent and 50-cent stamps have been printed in four-colour lithography.

Another set of Olympic stamps features combat sports: boxing, fencing and judo. A total of 24 million 8+2 cent stamps, 14 million 10+5 cent stamps, and 14 million 15+5 cent stamps have been printed in three-colour lithography.

The net proceeds from the surcharge portion are being used to support the Olympic Games and Canadian amateur athletes.

"Many Canadians have been making a point of buying every Olympic stamp since the first issue. In doing so, they are not only collecting souvenirs of the 1976 Olympic Games, but also contributing to the support of these Games," says the Postmaster-General Mr. Bryce Mackasey. For those who haven't bought these yet, the Olympic stamps will be on sale until the end of 1976.