

SPORTS

Special thanks to Doug Fisher, sports writer, for his contribution to this article.

For more than a hundred years, games and matches between Americans and Canadians have been commonplace. And a lot of those games were developed right here in Canada.

Ice hockey originated in Montreal with a group of sports fans looking for a winter game. In the winter of 1874-75, they put lacrosse and football together and came up with hockey. 20 years later it was introduced in the U.S.A. by American students who had played the game in Canada.

Montrealers also had a unique brand of football, distinct from both English soccer and rugby. They used an egg-shaped ball, and the rules allowed touchdowns to count in the score. Harvard University played a game against McGill in 1874 and was so enthusiastic about the form, it pressed for changes in the pattern and rules of the U.S. game.

The Iroquois game, lacrosse, was given its present name by French-Canadian settlers. Given rules and formalized, it was first played by non-Indians around 1840 before being picked up by eastern American universities.

Basketball was a Canadian invention, the brain child of an outstanding Canadian athlete, James Naismith, who developed the game when he was instructing at the YMCA in Springfield, Mass. in 1891.

Curling and figure skating, though not of Canadian origin, were well-developed and competitions were held in eastern Canada long before the nearby eastern States. The oldest curling club in North America, the Royal Montreal, was established in 1807.

Cricket, though not a major sport today, was played in both countries as early as the 18th century. The first formal international match in cricket's history was played between Canada and the U.S.A. in 1844.

By the 1860s, rowing and sailing competitions and regattas were common from Cornwall to Detroit. Indeed, the first world-famous athlete of modern times came out of these competitions - Ned Hanlan of Toronto. In his heyday in the 1870s, he defeated the best scullers of Canada, the United States, England and Australia, and became a household word in North America. During these years, the U.S.A. developed baseball and by the 1880s it was a common summer game between Canadians and Americans.

The Un-common Market



We still play together. Today Vancouver and Toronto are involved in the burgeoning North American professional soccer league; Montreal and Toronto in big league baseball. There are now more pro American hockey teams than there are Canadian. Yet the Montreal Canadiens drafts more American hockey prospects than does any American team in the NHL. American

baseball, basketball, and football players are prominent on many Canadian teams, as Canadians are on American hockey teams. An estimated 600 Canadians attend American colleges every year on athletic scholarships as runners, divers, swimmers, football and tennis players. Although Canada and the United States compete in most international sporting events, there is one that is closed to American athletes. That is the Commonwealth Games, slated to be hosted this summer by Edmonton, Alberta. Only members of the Commonwealth family can participate.

What's the Score?

In the United States, the schools, colleges, and universities have provided the core structure for coaching and development in most sporting activities. In Canada, clubs and communities have been the keys, though now sport is an integral part of the curricula of most schools and universities. Also, at the federal and provincial levels, and through the Canada Games, the Commonwealth Games, and international meets, Canada is supporting and nurturing athletes of world class in almost every sport.

Game Plan



A Sport Canada program, Game Plan, was recently announced by the Federal Government. Its purpose? To develop Canada's amateur athletes for international competitions, particularly the Olympic, Commonwealth, and Pan-American games. An Athlete Assistance Program will provide \$1.8 million in aid to eligible athletes, enabling them to continue their academic or working careers - and their sport. In return they are expected to train intensively in pursuit of world class performance. The new program has the blessing of the Canadian Olympic Association and national sport governing bodies.

A Shot in the Arm



The 1976 Olympics were a tremendous boost to amateur sport, arousing an interest in Canadians everywhere in physical fitness and competitive sport. Although Canada did not win a gold medal in its own back yard, the Summer Games were still one of our best and we took home five silver and six bronze medals. Greg Joy of Vancouver, B.C., won a

silver when he had a leap of 2.23 metres in the High Jump. He was one of those 600-odd Canadians on an athletic scholarship in the U.S.A. - this one at the University of Texas in El Paso.



Diane Jones of Saskatoon brought home a gold medal from the Pan-Am Games in 1975 when she achieved her personal best - 4673 pts. in the pentathlon.



Russ Prior, Ottawa, is Canada's premier weight-lifter, ranking ninth in the world. He won three gold medals in the 1975 Pan-Am Games.

We met in St. Louis



In 1904 Canadian athletes had one of their finest Olympics when they won four gold and one silver medal at the Games in St. Louis. One of these was Etienne Desmarreau, a policeman. The City of Montreal refused to give him time off, so he quit and hitchhiked south. He threw the 25-kilo weight 10.465 metres and won the gold medal. The city, ashamed of itself, gave him back his job.

We meet on the Ski Hills too

For seven seasons the Canadian American Ski Trophy Series has been recognized as the premier North American ski racing circuit, surpassed only by World Cup and National Championship meets. In 1978, Canadian and American teams will compete under a new name - the North American Ski Trophy Series.



Success in these Nor-Am races can lead to World Cup and Olympic Team berths. Points are earned by competitors who finish in the first ten places in any of the slaloms, giant slaloms, or downhill events, and each may count his or her three best places in each specialty for the overall combined title. This title was won in 1977 by a Canadian, Raymond Pratte from Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec.



Kathy Kreiner of Timmins, Ontario, is a former Can-Am (Nor-Am) racer. In 1976 she was Canada's only gold medalist in the Winter Olympics at Innsbruck, Austria. For this Giant Slalom win, and her success in World Cup and other events, she was inducted into Canada's Sports Hall of Fame in 1976.

And now... the Football Field!



On January 8, 1978, the first Can-Am Bowl game was played at Tampa, Florida, between a team of Canadian college all-stars and a Tier 1 squad of football players from U.S. universities. The game was played in pouring rain with Canadian rules, on a Canadian-size field, with a Canadian ball. In the fourth quarter the Canadian quarterback switched to the American ball as it was smaller and easier to handle.

Getting used to the Canadian rules was a problem for the Americans, but they won. Final score: 22-7. The Canadians put up a strong defence which upset the American running game, giving a creditable performance considering that the U.S. players were senior stars in athletic scholarship-supported programs. The pundits had predicted a vastly one-sided score, putting enormous pressure on the Canadian team to prove themselves. They did - and look forward to another match next year.

The People Exchange



A.H. (Art) Ross: born in Naughton, Ontario, in 1886, a celebrated player, promoter, coach, manager and referee, established hockey in Boston, coaching the Bruins to three Stanley Cups. He refereed in the days when officials used bells instead of whistles, and invented the Art Ross net and Art Ross puck, both still in use today.



Wayne Harris: "The Thumper", a middle linebacker and an All-American from Arkansas University, came to the Calgary Stampeders in 1961 and stayed twelve years. All-Western Conference eleven of those years and All-Canadian in nine, he won the Schenley Award for Outstanding Linesman four times.