

ATHLETIC

Sports and Pastimes

The final match for the championship of Canada which was won by the Montreal A.A.A. from the Ottawa A.A.C. has been the occasion of a good deal of discussion and no little feeling.

This is mainly attributable, if not exclusively so, to the "bete noire" of so many of our sports—the betting fraternity—and does not, as far as I know, represent the feelings of the players or their true friends. The matter would hardly be worthy of notice but for the fact that the Ottawa correspondent of the *Montreal Gazette* seems to have been carried away by the extent of his losses, or by the expressions of others who have suffered in this way, and to have written to his paper in a strain which could not possibly serve any good end, and might have a very unfortunate tendency to create a hard feeling between Montreal and Ottawa athletic circles if the bond of union between the two, and the strong friendly feeling of one for the other, was not so firmly established as not to be easily shaken.

The power of the press is very great, and may easily be used to arouse or intensify a spirit of jealousy and ill will which it may be found extremely difficult to allay or dispel altogether. It is most unfortunate then, and not very wise for a paper as influential as the *Montreal Gazette* to adopt the strain it did in reporting the results of the final match for the hockey championship.

That the game was not to prove a satisfactory one, irrespective of the winner, was almost a foregone conclusion owing to the condition of the ice before the struggle began, and the result justified the anticipations. Matters were not improved by the long delay which occurred before the M.A.A.A. team appeared on the scene, as owing to the temperature, the ice was perceptibly getting worse all the time. There was excuse, however, for their delay in getting to work, as they had only arrived in the city by special train between 6 and 7 p.m.

The results of the evening demonstrated very plainly what I have already pointed out—the necessity of—namely, greater elaboration in the rules governing championship matches. There ought to be a proviso made for a certain degree of frost without which a match could not be played. It is hardly Hockey when play is conducted in pools of water a quarter of an inch in depth.

Another rule which should be considered is, how long "time" ought to be permitted, except in the case of personal injury having been suffered.

There ought to be a limit, and that limit a short one, to the time given a man to retie his boot lace, or get a new strap

or even to fit on a new skate. Much talk was indulged in by those interested in the result of the game, at the referee not insisting upon greater dispatch on the part of M.A.A.A. members in resuming the game after the interruptions of this description. I fail to see, however, what he could do unless appealed to by the O.A.A.C. men, and then he could only have remonstrated, but he was not asked to do so.

A simple rule would prevent the possibility of a referee being called upon to exercise his judgment in this matter, and would have a tendency to make things run more smoothly.

Those who criticized Mr. Arnton, and his rulings, did so without any just cause, and I am sure none will admit this more readily than the members of the O.A.A.C. team.

The facts of the case appear to be, as far as the match is concerned that the M.A.A.A. managed to get together for a final effort the strongest combination of hockey players that have ever been upon ice—magnificent specimens of athletic humanity they were too—and if they had all been in good training and condition, they would probably have proved too strong for any team in Canada without any breathing spaces. They were fortunate enough to take the first goal, and availing themselves of accidents of one kind or another managed to help through those of their number whose wind is not just what it used to be when they were playing regularly.

The game was played, was lost and won, and probably no more would have been heard of it, if it had not been for that most objectionable element alluded to before, the betting fraternity, who do so much to injure true sport, and who if they have their way may soon reduce hockey to almost as low a level as baseball, where the umpire not infrequently gives his decision almost at the risk of his life.

SKATING.

Few amusements have ever undergone such complete change by the development of a special feature, as appears to be likely to occur to skating by the universal desire among the younger portion of the community to indulge in the game of hockey. This craze is not confined to the male portion of society, it has even seized upon the females, and it is not impossible that, for a time, we may hear of ladies' hockey clubs.

The effect upon skating of this rage for hockey is likely to be most injurious from an artistic point of view unless energetic means are adopted to again arouse interest in figure skating, and the beautiful intricacies evolved thereby. Every youth now devotes his whole time and attention to endeavouring to increase his pace, and all that is wanted is to be able to skate fast. The old skates at one time cultivated for the purpose of figure skating, are discarded for racers in the

endeavour to be fast.

This is most unfortunate, as although hockey is undoubtedly a very fine game, yet there are many hundreds spoiling their chances of ever becoming good skaters in the vain endeavour to become speedy ones, an accomplishment in which many will fail.

Skating clubs may do much to alter this condition of affairs by a more liberal encouragement of fancy skating, and the introduction of prizes which will induce their members to compete for them.

CRICKET.

The cricketers of Toronto are to be congratulated upon the wisdom displayed by those of their number who attended the recent annual meeting of the Ontario Cricket Association, and declined being inveigled into forming themselves into an association to be called the Canadian Cricket Association.

A more unwise proposition to submit to a meeting composed exclusively of representatives of Toronto clubs can scarcely be conceived, and does not speak well for the originator of the idea, Mr. J. E. Hall, who was chosen secretary pro tem. to correspond with clubs throughout the Dominion in order to endeavour to secure their co-operation in the formation of such an association.

It is well known that a good deal of feeling exists in the Dominion against the Ontario Cricket Association and that they have by their independent action on more than one occasion given good cause for such feeling. If then this feeling had been further aggravated by a meeting composed exclusively of representatives of Toronto clubs forming an association to be called representative of the Dominion it could not but have had a most unfortunate influence on the interests of the game throughout the country.

Everyone interested in cricket must heartily hope for the successful organization of a truly representative association, which will be above the suspicion of being under the control or influence of one particular locality.

In connection with the inaugural meeting which it is proposed to call, it may be pointed out that Ottawa is decidedly a more central point to meet at than Toronto, and, especially at this time of the year, preferable in many ways. Ottawa is just as easy of access, if not easier, than Toronto from Manitoba and the North-West, while it is much more readily reached from Montreal, Quebec and the lower provinces.

As a matter of fact Toronto is rather out of the way for a Dominion gathering, and is not easily accessible to any but Torontonians and those in the western part of Ontario.

If true regard is had for the interests of other provinces than Ontario the inaugural meeting of the Canadian Cricket Association will be held in Ottawa.