

EXPERT SKEE RACERS TO MEET

National Tournament to Be Held in Coleraine, Minn.

NEW RECORDS ARE EXPECTED.

Crack Knights of the Spruce Blades Will Make Great Attempt to Equal or Excel Mark Made Recently by Ole Feiring.

By TOMMY CLARK.
Minnesota skee jumpers and those of other states are hard at work preparing for the national tournament to be held at Coleraine Feb. 19 and 20. This event is always looked forward to by the followers of the daring jumpers, who gather in large crowds to witness the wonderful flights of the sturdy competitors on their wooden runners.

This fascinating winter pastime is extremely popular in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan, and it is expected that skiers from all three states and the Dominion of Canada will be on hand when the tourney starts to set new figures for the long leap that is the magnet that attracts the admirers of this reckless form of sport.

Great preparations are being made to perfect the long slide in Coleraine, so the daring knights of the spruce blades will have every opportunity to either equal or excel the world's record figures of 144 feet, made by Ole Feiring at Duluth, Minn., recently. This jump exceeds by six feet the jump made by Ole Gunderson of Chipewaga Falls, Wis., last year. At the recent meet in Duluth for Ants, an Alaskan Eskimo, jumped 127 feet. The longest running jump recorded was made by Ole Mangsenth of Coleraine. He cleared 137 feet.

On the course in Coleraine the top of the incline is at an altitude of between



SKEE EXPERT GLIDING DOWNHILL AT GREAT SPEED.

250 and 300 feet. For those who know little about a tourney of this kind the following will no doubt prove interesting. The starting place for the riders is a wooden structure built at the top of a hill. Hundreds of loads of snow are dumped along the course to make the grade approximately uniform. The riders are started from a point on the slope thirty-three degrees from the horizontal and coast past a point where the slope increases slightly to the jumping off place. The momentum is so great as to impel them forward in the flight through the mid-air, which is the feat of the performance.

A perfect performance requires that in jumper alight on his feet and maintain his balance while on the steepest part of the course. From there he must coast down to the level. The jumper's greatest difficulty is in keeping his balance after leaving the jumping off place and landing below.

Stakes are set five feet apart for the benefit of the judges of the contests. The distances covered by the jumpers are measured in a manner similar to those used on a football field. After each jump the snow on the course is raked, which keeps it loose, so there is a downy bed for the jumper to fall into even if he swerves before alighting and comes down on his shoulders.

To start the contestants a man is stationed at the jump off with a flag, which he signals to a bugler at a certain point, indicating that the track below is clear. Signaling is necessary because the rider at the top of the incline cannot see all of the course owing to the hump just above the stretch of greatest steepness.

Skee jumping has rapidly forged to the front rank of winter athletics in the western section of this country since its introduction by the Scandinavians, and it bids fair to retain the popular favor by the reason of its freedom from objectionable features that enter into other sports.

THOMAS, ENGLISH BEAR.

Crack Pugilist Who May Meet Ketchel For Championship.

Tom Thomas, middleweight champion of England, the lad who wears the new Lord Lonsdale gold belt, is as big a man on the other side as our own Stanley Ketchel is on this. Things turn out right Stanley and Tom are going to bump, and then all disputes as to the real middleweight champion will be settled, leaving out Sam Langford. Thomas, according to Owen Moran and other English fighters who have seen him, is a shifty lad, with a kick in both gloves. He dropped Charley Wilson, the man who beat "Gunner" Moir, in two rounds. Wilson was no match for Thomas at all in the battle for the belt and was outclassed entirely from the start.

Thomas, troubled with rheumatism as he was, fought a grand battle. The day before the fight he was so bad on his right leg he spent half a day in the doctor's office. At that he won easily the next evening. When he fought Bartley Connolly twenty rounds and won his right arm became almost paralyzed with pain after the second round. Crippled as he was, he fought



TOM THOMAS, ENGLISH MIDDLEWEIGHT CHAMPION.

Connolly with his left and still won. From his measurements you can see that he is rather short for a middleweight, standing under five feet seven inches. Ketchel is five feet nine inches tall, which would give him an advantage of over two inches.

Here is the dope on Thomas so far; also note that he is thirty years of age. Ketchel is twenty-three. Thomas' record: Born at Carnelyn farm, south Wales, 1880; height, five feet six and three-quarter inches.

NEW TENNIS TOURNEY.

Players Rally in Support of Clay Court Championship Matches.

Lawn tennis players have rallied so enthusiastically to the support of the project of the institution of a national clay court championship that the successful outcome is assured. Dr. P. E. Hawk of the University of Illinois, chairman of the national banking committee, has stood as sponsor for such a tournament from its inception. He is supported by three of the executive committees of the national association, Ralph Holterhoff of Cincinnati, L. Harry Waldner of Chicago and W. L. Scott of Atlanta. The western players are organizing to put the championship through, taking the stand that nine-tenths of the matches in this country are decided upon clay surfaces.

NATIONAL RIFLE MATCHES.

Tourney Will Again Be Held at Camp Perry With Conditions Unchanged.

The national board for the promotion of rifle practice has completed the preliminary arrangements for the national matches for 1910, which will be held at Camp Perry, Ohio, where similar contests have been held in the past two years. There will be two days' preliminary practice, beginning Aug. 19, and the matches proper will begin Aug. 22. All other contests will be held prior to the inauguration of the national matches.

The rules that governed last year's events have been adopted for the coming meeting, with a few changes calculated to make the rapid fire and skirmish work resemble those under actual service conditions.

Sailing and Motorboat Races.

The regatta committee of the Brooklyn Yacht club has decided on Saturday, July 2, as the starting date of its annual sailing and power boat races over the Cape May course.

Griff to Watch Players Closely.

Manager Griffith threatens to employ detectives to see that Cincinnati players do not violate the temperance clause of their contracts.

SPORTING BRIEFS

Princeton will make cross country running compulsory for candidates for the 1910 football team.

Pugilist Ad Wolgast, who is to fight Bat Nelson in Los Angeles, Cal., Feb. 22, is twenty-one years old and has been fighting four years.

Jesse Westergaard, the giant Danish wrestler from Des Moines, has received a request from Jack Johnson to assist in his training for his contest with Jim Jeffries on July 4.

Vancouver Bowling club's new eight oared shell will make the voyage around Cape Horn coming from England. It will arrive next spring and will be the first eight oared shell in the far west of Canada.

Red Fox, the only son of Flying Fox, the greatest English race horse on this continent, has been landed in safety at the Brookside farm of breeders at Dymont, Barrie, Canada. Red Fox is a big bay horse with black spots the color of his famous sire.

THE JOYS OF BOBSLED RACING

An Exhilarating and Fascinating Sport Indulged In by Many.

WONDERFUL FAST TIME MADE

The Yankee, Winner of Race at Huntington N. Y., Went a Mile in 37 4-5 Seconds—Switzerland the Ideal Place For Great Winter Sport.

In an early day, some time after the landing of the pilgrim fathers, but before one's waistband grew permanently great, there was a simple outdoor amusement known as "slidin' downhill." At that day sleds were roughly of two kinds, high sleds for girls and mollycoddies, who sat tremulously on the seat while some one started them with a gentle push, and low sleds for boys who took the hill with a run and flung themselves down on the sled. "Belly bumper" was the word to describe this method of descent. There were, of course, many variations of the simple sled.

What genius first got the idea of connecting two small sleds by a long plank history does not record. We are told that a bobsled is "a sled consisting of a body resting on two short sleds, called bobs, one behind the other."

In its early stages the bobsled was still crude. Often it was made from two old sleds and an ordinary board, and the carpeting of the plank was regarded as bordering on the effeminate. Even with these crude materials the simple sport of "slidin' downhill" becomes exciting and even dangerous.

The real refinement of the bobsled has come in late years with the increase in the number of winter resorts whose attraction is cold fresh air and not warm fresh air. Switzerland makes a specialty of them, and in Switzerland the bobsled is a highly developed speed machine.

No longer is old fashioned foot and rope steering gear in use. That did well enough for the old timer, which was well loaded with half a dozen venturesome boys and girls. The new machines have steel bobs made for that purpose, with a specially arranged connecting board, which seats between sixteen and twenty-five, and it is steered by a wheel like an automobile. Even a searchlight has been added by one builder eager for novelty.

Races for these elaborately made sleds are a regular feature of the winter carnival at many resorts. In the east Huntington, N. Y., is the center of the sport, and there each year contests for speed and for the sled with the longest "fetch" are held. In fact, a big carnival is planned to be held in Huntington Jan. 27. Several prizes are offered, among them a gold cup valued at \$250. The Yankee, owned by S. F. Townsend of Oyster Bay, N. Y., captured last year's event and established a record for a mile that will probably stand for some time, that of 37 4-5 seconds.

In Huntington the course is especially prepared for the races. Water is sprinkled along the hilly road chosen for the contest, and it freezes under the route is glare ice. Start on a heavy grade over a course of this kind a sled built for speed and manned by a crew of sixteen taught to act as one, and you have the iceboat's greatest rival.

Owing to the inconsistency of the weather in this country a majority of people know very little of the possibilities of the sport. It is not until one gets over in Switzerland, in one of the valleys of that mountainous land, that one finds the sport of coasting carried to the highest point of perfection. It is there in the valley with the poetical name Engadine, at St. Moritz, that coasting becomes an art. In this valley, its floor as high above the level of the sea as the crest of Mount Washington, where winter reigns for half a year and people go to regain health, there is a slide nearly a mile long which has a descent of 550 feet. At some points in the course the sleds travel at the rate of eighty miles an hour. There is sport!

Skill has greatly reduced the time in which the course can be covered. In the early days the average speed was about thirty miles an hour. Recent winners of the contest have averaged, however, more than forty miles. On the straight run at the foot of the course a speed verging on eighty miles has been attained. The same kind of sport may be had with bobsleds, but the single racing sled is the favorite for coasting at St. Moritz. The sweep of a bobsled loaded with several persons around one of the curves is an exciting spectacle. The man at the helm, with eyes fixed ahead and muscles at high tension, keeps the front bob in its course. Those behind lean toward the inside of the curve, two or three of them digging into the snow with sticks, which throw up the snow behind like a cloud of dust. Like an express train it sweeps around the curve and is gone.

Indian Wrestler After Gotch.
John Middle Sky, a full blooded Indian, is the latest candidate for the world's wrestling honors now held by Frank Gotch. Middle Sky recently arrived in New York and announced that he wants a crack at the title. The Indian has done considerable wrestling in the last few years and has never lost a contest.

FIRST ROCK TUNNEL.

Made Centuries Before Drills and Blasting Powder Were Known.

The first rock tunnel of which there is any authentic record was achieved over 2,600 years ago on the outskirts of Jerusalem, when the way was opened for the admission of water of the spring of Gihon to the pool of Siloam.

Gihon, now known as Mary's spring, is in the valley of Kedron and was the only natural spring in the vicinity of the city of David. It was separated from the city by the Ophel ridge, a mass of rock, so that when enemies appeared before the wall they could cut off this supply and compel the people within to depend upon stored water. King Hezekiah about 700 B. C. devoted himself to remedying this by constructing a tunnel, which is referred to in II Kings, xx., 20, to bring the waters within the walls.

At that time not only was tunneling through rocks an untried work and one that must be done without such aids in the way of drills and blasting power as even the most amateur workman would use nowadays, but there was no mariner's compass or other means for following a given direction underground. The distance from the spring to the pool of Siloam is about 900 feet in a straight line, and the hill overhead is about 150 feet higher than the spring.

To perpetuate this Hezekiah's workmen had tools of bronze, of a description now unknown. They began digging from both ends at the same time and tried to keep their bearings in a straight line by sighting from outside. They did not maintain a uniform bore, but kept the slope of the bottom with great accuracy. The shaft is from two to three feet wide and from ten feet high at one end diminishes to a foot and a half in the middle.

Sighting from the outside did not prove a very satisfactory method. Many places are to be seen in the tunnel today where headings were abandoned and a start made in a new direction. Even then the tunnel rambles about and was more than 1,700 feet long before the two ends came together. The opposing diggers were able to find each other at last by listening for sounds of the others' picks and working toward the place whence they seemed to come. This was learned from an inscription on the wall of the tunnel which was discovered in 1880 by some boys at play.

For a city situated as Jerusalem was no gift could have been more welcome than that of an assured water supply. One can imagine therefore that the ceremonies attendant upon the completion of the work were on as magnificent a scale as could then be devised.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Nerve and Coolness.

Seated reading in his private room, the superintendent of a large prison heard a slight sound and, looking up, was confronted by a dangerous convict holding a long bar of iron. "Don't you move," he muttered. "I'm going to get away, even if I have to kill you!"

"But," calmly rejoined the superintendent, "I thought it was tomorrow you were going?"

The man looked at him with stupid amazement. "Yes," said the official, "don't you know? A pardon came for you today in consideration of your good conduct. You can go now, I suppose, if you want to. You'd like to see the papers? They're in here, I believe."

He opened a drawer as he spoke, and the next instant the convict was facing the muzzle of a revolver.

Easy to Be Calm.

It certainly does make a difference "whose ox is gored." Among the patients in the private ward of a Philadelphia hospital, according to a writer in Lippincott's Magazine, there was once a testy old millionaire of that city, whose case gave his physicians considerable difficulty at first.

"Well," asked the crusty patient one morning, "how do you find me now, eh?"

"You're getting on well," responded the doctor, rubbing his hands with an air of satisfaction. "Your legs are still swollen, but that doesn't trouble me."

"Of course it doesn't!" said the old man. "If your legs were swollen it wouldn't trouble me!"

Relieved

"That must be a pretty bad toothache to swell your face like that. Why don't you see a dentist?"

"I did call on your friend, Dr. Pullen, yesterday and experienced great relief."

"You must be mistaken. Pullen has been out of town for a week."

"I know. I felt relieved when I found that out."

A BIT OF DIPLOMACY

An English Official Who Outwitted a French Admiral.

HOW PERIM ISLAND WAS WON

The Interesting Story That is Told by a White House on the Foreshore of the Arabian Coast at the Southern Entrance to the Red Sea.

On the foreshore of the Arabian coast in the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, at the southern entrance to the Red sea, stands a large white house concerning which the travelers to the far east may hear a curious story. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when M. de Lesseps after many difficulties had successfully floated the Suez Canal company, the governor of the British port of Aden, about 100 miles distant, was surprised one morning by the visit of a French squadron of very unusual size for that part of the orient, which, having encountered a terrific storm off Sokatra, had put in for repairs.

In the mind of the governor curiosity was at once aroused as to the destination of so large a command, a curiosity which increased as he found it impossible to extract any further information from the French admiral or his officers beyond the statement that they were upon an ordinary cruise, an explanation which the former was not the least inclined to believe.

Firm in the belief, therefore, that some political move of great importance was afoot, if not afoot, the governor, in order first of all to gain time gave orders to go very tortoise-like on the repairs and then set to work to take the Frenchmen off their guard by giving a succession of such entertainments as both his slender means and the awful barrenness of the place would afford.

But, though at the end of two weeks the French and British officers had got upon the best of terms, the immediate destination of the French squadron remained as much of a mystery to the governor of Aden as before, and in spite of all possible delay the repairs were nearly completed.

Now, it happened that the wife of the governor possessed an Irish maid, who had been receiving attentions from one of the French petty officers—attentions which the girl did not regard seriously. It occurred to the governor that by such means something might be learned of his unexpected visitor's plans, and a private conversation between the governor's wife and her maid resulted in another between the latter and her French admirer, by which it was discovered that Perim island was the objective point.

At this information the governor opened his eyes wide indeed, for, if the Suez canal were cut through, Perim, as commanding the southern entrance to the Red sea, in the middle of the strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, would be a place of great strategic importance, over which, without doubt, it was the intention of the French admiral to hoist the tricolor.

Secretly giving orders, therefore, for a gunboat to immediately embark a detachment of soldiers and steal away in the night for Perim island, the governor then announced a farewell banquet and ball for the day but one following, a final act of courtesy with which the French admiral would willingly have dispensed, for he was anxious to sail, but which he could not well refuse on account of the use he had made of the British supplies and machinery at Aden.

So the dinner and party in due course came off, the governor being in high spirits, because in the meantime he had received the news of the occupation of Perim, which under the circumstances would surely be followed by the longest for promotion, and the French admiral was equally happy for he hoped on the morrow to add the same important little speck of land to the dominion of his own country, thereby covering his breast with the stars and himself with maritime glory.

Next day, after an interchange of cordial farewells, the French squadron sailed away to an apparently unknown destination, until, when clear of the land, the course was laid full speed direct for Perim island.

Then what were the dismay and disappointment of the French admiral and his officers when, on coming in sight of their destination, they beheld the British flag flying and a company of soldiers drawn up to give them a proper salute. It is said the French admiral was so mortified at being thus outwitted that he first flung his cocked hat overboard and then followed it himself into the sea.

Be this as it may, as Perim was clearly already occupied by the British, the only counter move which the French could make was to take possession of a strip of the foreshore on the opposite Arabian coast, where they built the fortified white house in question, but as the place was entirely at the mercy of the guns on Perim island it was shortly abandoned, to remain to this day as a monument of a French admiral's undoing.—Exchange.

In Honor of Minerva.

The most notable festival at Athens was in honor of Minerva. All classes of citizens on this particular day marched in procession. The oldest went first, then the young men, then the children, the young women, the matrons and the people of the lower orders. The most prominent object in the parade was a ship propelled by hidden machinery and bearing at its masthead the sacred banner of the goddess.

WILD ANIMALS.

Man is Steadily and Surely Working Their Extinction.

Sir Ray Lankester writes of the enormous number of living creatures which man has destroyed since he first appeared on earth: "Even in prehistoric times it is probable that man by hunting the mammoth—the great hairy elephant—assisted in its extinction if he did not actually bring it about. At a remote prehistoric period the horses of various kinds which abounded in North and South America rapidly and suddenly became extinct. It has been suggested, with some show of probability, that a previously unknown epidemic disease, due to a parasitic organism—such as those which we now see ravaging the herds of South Africa—found its way to the American continent. And it is quite possible that this was brought from the other hemisphere by the first men who crossed the Pacific and populated North America."

"To come to matters of certainty and not of speculation, we know that man by clearing the land as well as by actively hunting and killing it made an end of the great wild ox of Europe, the aurochs, or urus, of Caesar, the last of which was killed near Warsaw in 1627. He similarly destroyed the bison, first in Europe and then (in our own days) in North America. A few hundred, carefully guarded, are all that remain in the two continents. He has very nearly made an end of the elk in Europe and will soon do so completely in America. The wolf and the beaver were destroyed in these British islands about 400 years ago. They are rapidly disappearing from France and will soon be exterminated in Scandinavia and Russia and in Canada."

"At a remote prehistoric period the bear was exterminated by man in Britain and the lion driven from the whole of Europe, except Macedonia, where it still flourished in the days of the ancient Greeks. It was common in Asia Minor a few centuries ago. The giraffe and the elephant have departed from South Africa before the encroachments of civilized man. The day is not distant when they will cease to exist in the wild state in any part of Africa. And with them are vanishing many splendid antelope."

"Even our 'nearest and dearest' relatives in the animal world, the gorilla, the chimpanzee and the orang, are doomed. Now that man has learned to defy malaria and other fevers, the tropical forest will be occupied by the greedy civilized horde of humanity, and there will be no room for the most interesting and wonderful of all animals—the man-like apes, unless (as we may hope in their case, at any rate) such living monuments of human history are made sacred and treated with greater care than are our ancient monuments in stone."—Chicago News.

Thackeray on Tennyson.

Here is an offhand comment made on Tennyson by Thackeray in a letter to Mrs. Procter. Thackeray, it will be remembered, knew Tennyson from the early undergraduate days at Cambridge. Indeed Thackeray's verses "Timbuctoo" were written in good natured parody of Tennyson's prize poem. "Alfred Tennyson," wrote Thackeray, "if he can't make you like him will make you admire him. He seems to me to have the cachet of a great man. His conversation is often delightful, I think, full of breadth, manliness and humor. He reads all sorts of things, swallows them and digests them like a great poetical boa constrictor as he is. Perhaps it is Alfred Tennyson's great big yellow face and growling voice that have made an impression on me. Manliness and simplicity go a great way with me, I fancy."—Bookman.

Sea Superstitions.

One of the oldest sea superstitions has been connected with the flying of birds. If the birds flew high, that signified good weather. If they skimmed the water, that meant bad weather. There is gradually spreading among the seamen a superstition that if any animal is aboard the vessel bad weather may be deferred—even if the birds are flying close to the water—if the head of the animal is pointed aft and is held in that direction for some time.

A Wonderful Help.

"Doctor, I called to thank you for your valuable medicine," said the young man.
"So it helped you, did it? I am very glad," said the doctor, smiling.
"Indeed it helped me wonderfully," was the assuring reply.
"How many bottles did you find it necessary to take?"
"Oh, I didn't take any of it. I induced my uncle to take one bottle, and I am his sole heir."—Ladies' Home Journal.