

Basket Ball a Game for Athletic Young Women



Aline States, Ruth Bryan, Minnie Jansa, Alice Town, Pearl Archibald, Edna King, Loraine Comstock—Names from Left to Right.
CHAMPION CLASS BASKET BALL TEAM, UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA.

AS AN ADJUNCT to the acquisition of culture the necessity of the game of basket ball for women is a matter open to debate; as a curative for wifebeating its efficiency is beyond challenge. Not that the merry maiden who starts in to gain strength and other desirable physical and personal qualities through the medium of this pastime has in view the training of her muscles to a point where they will insure her immunity from all pending domestic troubles. Far from it. In the first place, she has at that period of her life no faith in the inevitable. Again, if that purpose were uppermost in her mind her muscles would assume far more startling proportions than they do, because of the strong influence of suggestion in such matters. The laborer who digs ditches all day long does not get as large or as shapely sinews as the athlete, because the latter is thinking every minute he exercises of how his muscles are growing and what he wishes them to become, while the workman has no special interest in his bodily efforts other than that they bring him a living. The mental attitude counts for much in such matters. So with the basket ball girl. Feminine phenomena of Sandow build would become the common product of gymnasiums were self-defence the motive for indulgence.

There are many phases to this game as a woman's sport and its effects upon her. There are also vast differences in the attitude of mothers and men toward it. Neither of these latter two classes, and more especially the men, likes the notion of dainty white wrists and ankles wrenched and strained, swollen and discolored. And when it comes to skinning pretty, rounded elbows, to bruising knees and shins that

should be immune, to bruising heads covered with precious ripples of hair and even to blackening dreamy eyes and causing piquant noses to bleed, mere thoughts of such calamities fail not to elicit a shudder and a prayer. And these things certainly come with basket ball and infrequently even more serious woes.

Brings What Others Admire.

But these same fond mothers and adoring men admire nothing so much in the world as a girl of grace and symmetry, of bright eyes and clear complexion, with every physical possibility fully developed, a girl who walks as though her feet did not hurt, who knows how to run and who is as nimble and sure of herself as a man. These characteristics, too, come with basket ball and probably more surely and quickly than in any other way in which convention permits women to cultivate them.

It is certain that basket ball is fulfilling a mission in the development of women that no other athletic sport for which they are eligible has ever been able to accomplish. This relates chiefly to the traits of self-reliance and clear-headedness. A hysterical girl who plays basket ball is a quantity difficult to imagine, for the game is the very essence of emergencies and rapid changes, which demand a cool head all the time and a quick brain.

Golf and tennis are good, but a great many very helpless and ineffective women play both, while you do not find that kind mixing in basket ball frays. The difference doubtless lies in the fact that the latter game alone contains in addition to all the strain and agility incident to nervous muscular action common to the other the subtle element of personal contact which

is so vital an influence in athletic competition. This flavor is the one thing that makes foot ball what it is, the master sport, and basket ball in a milder way embodies the same pulse of actual personal combat, man against man.

Another of the Benefits.

Combattiveness may be offensive at times, but it is at least always self-reliant, and it is only fair to presume that the women extract the latter essence to the full without absorbing at the same time the more disagreeable feature. Anyway, it is that personal strife that makes the basket ball girl independent, calm, quick and hardy as well, and as a feature to be found only in this game this component should be given due prominence in the catalogue of the virtues of the sport.

Modern aesthetes have decided that physically, a woman's dignity consists not in commanding stature, nor in Teutonic proportions, nor in habits of statuesque sedateness. They have determined, on the contrary, that with a woman, from whom so much is expected in the way of carriage and "front" generally, dignity lies all in poise. That any quality so basic and essential as this of dignity, which as far as the world at large knows is superiority itself, should be predicated on a feature so entirely external may seem strange and even incongruous, but it is so and, on the whole, it is eminently correct that it should be so. For dignity is an objective matter entirely, no one being dignified unless other people think he is so. This must, therefore, depend largely upon first impressions, and thus the physical feature predominates. Moreover, it is difficult for those who are physically inferior to feel superior, and the latter attitude comes naturally and strongly to the physically perfect. A sense of being man to man master of situations cannot but give rise to an easy dignity, which expresses itself in the one condition so aptly described as poise.

Brings Also Poise.

This poise is probably one of the greatest things that basket ball does for women. Compelled to use some scores of muscles, while other women exert only about five or six all their daily lives, these basket ball athletes learn what a wonderful thing they possess in their bodies and how marvelously they may control the treasure if they will. They have about six times the use of their limbs that other women have and are well aware of the contrast. Taught also to carry the weight of the body well forward on the balls of the feet, with inflated chest and erect head, they thus assume by compulsion a posture that is the whole framework of dignity, and the mental attitude and all the other accompaniments follow.

To see young girls, or older ones, being instructed in such modes of walking and standing is a joy to man, and the habits learned then will stick to them all through life. An era now of feminine basket ball players means a later generation of superior-looking women and a continuation of the practice will in time work a complete eradication of the opposite types now so familiar.

Basket ball may not be intrinsically



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vicious or savage, but it offers a very good opportunity for the development of both qualities, and this is the only phase of the game which it is to be hoped the American girl will avoid. Of course, there is a list of rules as long as your arm which forbids all manner of holding, hitting or other rough tactics, but the very rapidity of the game offers a thousand loopholes for escape after the seemingly innocent execution of such acts, and players with a streak of the barbarian in them, which most athletically-inclined persons possess, generally have the perception to see them and the desire to take due advantage thereof.

Men, especially, manage always to do more or less so-called "dirty work" in a hard-fought basket ball game, and the luscious with the gentle features have the same hunch now and then. Very vivid are recollections of one 'varsity player, captain of the first girls' team for several seasons, who played a forward and a fierce one. She was tall, muscular and lithe, and combined the flash-like rapidity of a panther with the accuracy of a machine.

The most promising player of the opposing team was always the object of this young woman's attentions. Charging full

tilt across the floor, she would pull back and stumble and apparently do everything possible to keep from telescoping her opponent, but was always unable to stop in time because of her own headway and the slippery floor, and after the collision the fatal elbow or knee had done its intended work in the vulnerable spots which women know women to possess. Then, of course, it was always profuse apologies and regrets and solicitations and "couldn't stop to save my life," but the other girl meanwhile was out of the game, with some substitute to take her place. And if it did not work the first time, this lady would deliberately try it again till it did or the umpire was busy.

But that's all in the game, and the girls knew it. A basket ball contest is not a dancing school, nor yet a class in etiquette, and those who go in for it generally want the full limit of all prerogatives of person and elasticity of rules. Anyway, if it does not teach them to step and say, "Excuse me!" before relieving an opponent of the ball and "Fore!" before throwing for a field goal, it at least gives them health, strength, poise and royal independence, and that is all the game was ever meant to do.



GIRLS BASKET BALL TEAM, HIGH SCHOOL, SUPERIOR, Neb.



Nathalie Merriam, Laura Condon, Bernice Carson, Ruth Beard, Clara Helmroth, Marion Connell, Fredericka McIntosh, Cora Evans, Louise Parmelee, Madeline Hills—Names from Left to Right, Beginning at Back Row.
GIRLS BASKET BALL TEAM, OMAHA HIGH SCHOOL.

Matrimonial Phase of Woman in the Industries

CHIEF of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor, H. C. Wadlin, finds that the entrance of women into the various industries of that state does not decrease marriages and presents the following statistics in support of his conclusions:

The state of Massachusetts is a stage upon which every scene in the great industrial drama is being enacted. Here the evils as well as the benefits of the industrial revolution should be plainly seen. But to answer your question statistically from data in this commonwealth—and it is solely of this commonwealth that I am speaking—we cannot rely on the general marriage rate, which is figured on the population as a whole. As we are dealing with women mainly, we must take the women as a class.

The number of women married to each 1,000 women living in the state was 16.9 in 1900. In 1860, when women had hardly en-

tered upon industry here, it was 19.6, and in 1870 it was 19.5. Clearly, a smaller number of women in proportion to our entire female population entered into marriage in Massachusetts in the latter year, after forty years of the development of the industrial employment of women here, than is found at the beginning of the period.

Bearing in mind, however, that the number of women married to each 1,000 of the female population in the state at large was 16.9 in 1900, we find the corresponding figures for Fall River, Lowell and Lawrence each, cities in which large numbers of women are industriously employed, to be, respectively, 19.8, 21.2 and 20.4. In Holyoke the figure was 17.4, and in Boston also, where large numbers of women find remunerative employment, the figure is 21.1. The general rule seems to hold in Massachusetts that the number of women married out of the entire female population is

greatest in the industrial cities and towns and lowest in the places where women have the least opportunity for employment, and, of course, the least opportunity for coming into social contact with the opposite sex.

Comparisons made some time ago for the census year 1885 showed conclusively that the presence of women in industry in large numbers did not in Massachusetts reduce the proportion of births or marriages, nor increase the number of deaths in the cities and towns wherein they were most numerous. For in fifty cities and towns having large percentages of women at work, with 54.29 per cent of the total population, there were 69.99 per cent of the births, 69.18 per cent of the marriages and but 63.53 per cent of the deaths.

The percentage of single females of all females was, in 1875, 53.41, in 1885 53.41, and in 1895 53.59, showing no material changes. The considerable number of sur-

plus women here, sometimes alluded to, comprises not those who have never married, but is largely widows.

But while this is true, marriage among women in general in the state has been somewhat retarded. The average age of women making first marriages is now 24.5, as against 23.5 thirty years ago, and whereas about 29 per cent of all women marrying was then under 20, only about 15 per cent is now under 20. But even this retardative influence works out just above those aged 25. For example, of all women marrying, 91.68 per cent were then under 25, as against 90.83 per cent now, a merely fractional change.

The figures cited show, however, that the decline in the general marriage rate in Massachusetts cannot be directly traced to the entrance of women into industry. Whoever studies the question of the effect of the industrial employment of women on the

marriage relation will need to go deeper than the mere question of marriage rate.

A scientific comparison, which would conclusively determine the factor which the industrial employment of women plays in the case, would be a comparison of the marriage rate among immigrants devoted to agriculture or merely household employments before coming here with the rate in the next generation, under a general industrial environment, or a similar comparison in a stable population, if such could be found, of the conditions existing before and after industrial development. It is, however, impossible to obtain data at hand for such comparisons and it is a sufficient present answer to your question to summarize what I have said in the sentence with which I close. I can find no evidence that in the industrial development of Massachusetts the presence in industry of women has operated to lead them to remain single.