

SPORTING GOSSIP OF WEEK

Omaha Basket Ball League Makes a Good Start on Season.

ROLLER SKATING TO BE REVIVED LOCALLY

Manager Gillan Almost Ready to Welcome the Skaters to the Auditorium, Where a Fine Risk is Waiting.

They're off: The City Basket Ball league.

While it is rather early in the game to judge of the relative merits of the teams, it is not too early to say that every team is after the pennant. The "Mixers," another association team, joined the league during the week, which makes the eighth team. The league is now complete and in full swing. The games are being played Saturday evenings at the Young Men's Christian association gymnasium and on Thursdays at the Omaha Commercial college. The games are free to the public, and all are invited to attend. The more the merrier. The standing of the teams up to Thursday evening, inclusive, is as follows:

Table with 4 columns: Team, Played, Won, Lost. Rows include Boyles, Mixers, Crescents, Straight Up, Independents, Truants, Carpenters, Omaha Com'l College.

The Omaha Curling club announces that it has come out of the innocuous desuetude and will have an artificial lake of ice at Thirty-third and Evans streets soon. The sickness of President George Anderson last winter militated against the activity of the curling club, Mr. Anderson having won the Troup medal two previous seasons, and on that account no one would take advantage of his chief officer's illness to compete for the medal. This season, however, the officers of the curling club say the "roaring game" will be much in evidence.

It has been suggested that some enterprising local manager inaugurate a series of tug-of-war matches such as were in vogue in the old Coliseum days when Tom Eck and Jack Prince gathered in a few shekels. It will be remembered that thousands went to the Coliseum to see the matches between the Danes, Swedes, Scots, Germans, Irish, English, Americans and other nationalities. Interest in the matches was kept at white heat. There is plenty of talent in Omaha from which to select tug-of-war teams. It seems that Manager Gillan could infuse a little ginger into his roller skating season by pulling off a series of matches in the same manner he says he intends to have basket ball games and polo matches. The arena of the Auditorium would be an admirable place for a tug-of-war. It just needs some one to get hold of the rope and start the thing along and there you are.

Manager Gillan of the Auditorium expects to have his roller skating rink open Monday evening, a week from tomorrow.

Sometime during the week he expects a carload of skates, more or less, and then the bell will ring for roller skating in Omaha. The Auditorium floor has been planned and sandpapered and there will be a large floor space for the skaters to roll over. A band will be in attendance and Manager Gillan announces he will introduce novelties and features from time to time. The skating season will run along through the winter, being interrupted occasionally by other events that have been booked for the Auditorium. It is believed the time is ripe for a revival of roller skating here and Manager Gillan is going to take advantage of the opportunity, so he states. He is already negotiating for several fancy skaters to give exhibitions, will have several instructors on his staff and will introduce such features as trick bicycle riding, basket ball games and other sports during an intermission of the evening skating. The hours for skating will be from 7 to 9 p. m. and from 10 to 11:30 p. m. in the last half of the sixth, when Omaha went to bat. And then Omaha made four runs and no one out, and the ball wasn't knocked out of the diamond once. If that isn't going some on a bunt, well, the Omaha fan doesn't know what is. If the American league could have seen Ikey Kahl during that performance he wouldn't have been worth 20 cents in a trade. One of Bill Rourke's hobbies is the bunt, and the team he has just won a pennant with in a heart-breaking race is the first he ever had that would work as he wanted. Take it on the run-to-third play, for example. Bill had it doped out like this: The batter gives the runner the office and the start is made. The runner is half way to second by the time the ball gets to the plate. A properly placed bunt toward third draws that baseman in and the runner doesn't stop at second at all, but keeps right on to third. By the time the third baseman has made the throw and got back to cover the bag, the runner is nearly there, and three times out of five the throw from first is bad. This makes the runner safe and gives him the further opportunity of going on home if the throw is entirely wild. After the play has been pulled off a couple of times the fielders are laying for it, and the result then is that the throw to first is made while the third baseman is thinking of getting back to the bag, and this gives the batter more than an even break on getting to first. Now this all looks mighty good in dope, and Rourke tried it. His team, after it got to going right, became a mortal terror to the infielders on the other side, and just for the reason that it bunted, bunted, bunted, all the time, and when it wasn't bunting, Joe Dolan, or Dell Howard, or Dutch or

some else was putting the ball over the fence or down in the corner for a three-bagger. Not a team played here that could stand the bunt game. Every one of them had a balloon ascension at soon as that little play was started. At the same time the men to handle bunts, so that when it came their turn in the field the other fellow couldn't get back at them, and so proficient did they become that attempts to sacrifice invariably resulted in the runner being thrown out at second. You bet, the bunt game is a beauty when it is worked right, but the play in Columbus people think so fine is no wonder in Omaha.

The expected happened at Chicago, when the American league took step to turn down the demands of the minors for an advance in the draft fee. It was the unanimous opinion of base ball men all over the country that the majors would not stand for the increase in prices proposed by the little fellows. This brings it back to the secondary draft by the AA class. That was one of the Tebeau jokers, and it's a good bet that other George will make that clause stand up, no matter what becomes of the other. The National league did just as the American did, and that will end the increase in price to be paid the minor league magnate for drafted players. Then the inward beauty of the Tebeau plan will dawn on his associates in the National association of minor base ball leagues.

All stories from the camps of the big leagues are to the effect that salaries are being pared liberally for the coming season. War figures are forgotten, and peace is brought about, the conditions under which the magnates hope to get something for themselves out of the gate receipts. It may be that the cut will not reach to the minors, but it is certain the days of fancy prices are about at an end, and that a player will have to earn his money in the future.

With a vote of four to four on the fowl strike rule, the American league referred the whole matter to the rules committee, and the expectation is that no change will be made in the playing rules. It will be up to the batter to get busy now. Some of the boys showed that it is possible to hit .300 under the present rules, and the others will have to get in line. And at that, it seems that the crowds are pretty well satisfied with the way the game was played last season. No matter how much people may talk about free hits, and about one side or the other being to touch up a pitcher the demand for a change was always heard. And it must be considered that the fielders had a great deal to do with such a matter. The diamond, as that which marked the course of the game last summer. Both infield and outfield work has been developed to the point where it requires the utmost skill to land a ball in safe territory. As was said two weeks ago, the game is one for brains and not for brawn, and nowadays and the brainy player is the one who is going to get ahead.

The determination of the National league to stick to the long schedule announced just before adjournment on Wednesday, doesn't give much promise for the post-season games, for the interleague contracts will have to be set for October, if at all. It is strange that while other leagues have the 140-game season long enough, the National should insist on having 154, it is too long, even if it be set down for two months playing. The only object is to get all the gate money possible. Last season the Western league was the beneficiary of something the public apparently didn't understand. When it was an eight-club league the schedule called for 140 games, but when it was cut to six clubs, the schedule was increased to 150 games, thereby giving the magnates just ten more throws for each club at the pockets of the public, and requiring the players to play ten more games with no increase in salary.

Percy Chamberlain has finally sold two of the best men of the last season's team at St. Joseph, Garvin, the catcher, and Hartman, the hustling middle fielder. This is taken as a further evidence that St. Joseph is not going to be in the circus next summer, but is not conclusive evidence of that fact. Garvin said while in Omaha last fall that he would not play in St. Joseph again under any conditions, that he would quit, before the winter, if he was in much the same mind, so that it doesn't follow because Chamberlain has sold them that he intends to give up his franchise. The St. Joseph team was badly off financially at the close of the season, and while the players got their money regularly, the management found a decided red ink balance when the last game was played. The sale of McBride, Garvin and Hartman will aid in erasing this, and herein lies the secret of the sale. Chamberlain expects to have a stock company with sufficient capital to send them through the season back of him before spring.

At one time last fall Papa Bill Rourke had a chance to get McBride from Pittsburgh for Omaha. This was contingent on Pittsburgh not using him. Just now the stories coming from Smoky Town are to the effect that the Pirates are going to be changed, either before the winter, or before playing season begins. The only definite changes so far given out are that "Kitty" Bransfield will be released, and "Honey" Wagner will be put on first, with McBride at short. This ends Papa Bill's dream, all his hopes, and if the circumstances recruit can hold up his end, with Dolan on first and Schipke on third, the only hole left to fill on the diamond will be second. Jack Thomas is to be used as utility man and change catcher. Rourke is still keeping some youngsters under cover, for he wants to start the season with a string of winners, and isn't inviting any onslaught from other managers by disclosing his plans.

The signing of Jack Pfeister for the coming season completes the roster of the Omaha pitchers, and assures Papa Bill Rourke that he will start the season in much better condition than he did this year. Pfeister, Quick, Companion, Sanders and Lieberhardt make a fine array of box talent, and indicates that Omaha will be in the running from the very beginning of the schedule.

Tuesday, January 18, is the date fixed by the constitution for the meeting of the Western league, and Omaha will be the place. Some very important business, aside from fixing the circuit for the coming season will come up. One of the features will be the selection of a president. The man who takes that position will have to accept a liberal cut in salary. Just now the league is paying \$2,000 a year, and \$500 for clerk hire, which is just about twice too much. The next president of the league will get about \$1,200 and will have to be one of the best paying in base ball circles, even if the work is done much better than it ever was under the reign of Sexton. It could hardly be neglected more. The air is still full of names for the place. Tebeau is back of Otto Ficht of Denver; Bill Rourke is plugging for Sandy Griswold, and Percy Chamberlain isn't see anybody but "Doc" Shively, under the insane notion that the president must be a former player outside the league. He ought to take into consideration the condition of Pat Powers, Dan Johnson, Harry Pulliam, and some of the others who are managing leagues from towns belonging to the circuit. It will be suicidal for the

valley teams to go into the season divided as to who will be president. Sandy Griswold is still the most available man for them to unite on, and they should have no trouble in tendering him the place unanimously.

The event of the week in local bowling circles was the visit of Sam Karpf, secretary of the American Bowling Congress and of the United States, to Omaha last Monday evening. Mr. Karpf's visit was particularly in the interest of the fifth annual bowling tournament to be held at Milwaukee from February 15 to 25. He worked up considerable enthusiasm among the local bowlers, whose interest in the association is increasing all over the country, much thanks particularly to the American Bowling Congress, which organization had but five leagues in 1896 as against about 700 today. Reports from different sections of the country show that the sport is being indulged in by many of the best men in the country.

A writer in the Minneapolis Tribune pays this little tribute to the game: "Bowling is truly a democratic, cosmopolitan and sociable game, serving at the same time the purpose of winter recreation and muscular exercise without any of the objectionable features found in other pastimes. It brings into play every muscle of the body, without overtaxing the strength or developing one organ at the expense of the other, and no physician has yet been found to sound a note of warning against it, while, on the contrary, physicians are giving it their unqualified endorsement. Bowling has become a reputable and fashionable recreation, and to become a good bowler is recognized as an accomplishment not to be despised."

Referring again to the national Milwaukee tournament, it can be said that it bids fair to be the greatest bowling event the country has ever yet seen. Omaha will have a good representation, the exact number of teams not having been decided on. It is quite well settled that Captain Hunt's team will be the champion, and Harry's Omahas will go, while the Omahas, Drexels and H. D. Reeds are getting into shape at the Harney street alleys, so that if their country calls them to go to Milwaukee and make Omaha famous they will go.

It is one thing to claim world's records and another thing to make them. A few days ago reports came from Schlusings' alleys in New York City to the effect that a world's record had just been established for a five-men-team in one game of ten pins, the total number of pins being 1174. This team made the "record" and the members of the team were much elated over what they thought was the world's record. But the facts of the case are that unless some of the back countries are heard from with higher figures Captain Huntington's Excelsior team of Omaha will claim the world's record for a five-men-team in one game of ten pins. The team goes to Milwaukee in February. The records at the local association alleys show that on May 27 last, while in a competition game with the Omahas, the Excelsiors rolled up a score of 1,181. This is eleven pins more than the New York brethren. Nor is this all. Another claim for a world's record will be made by the Omaha Bowling association when the teams go to Brewertown. The second record was made last May by the Excelsiors, who will claim the record of 2,500 pins for three games by a five-men-team. This is said to be something like eighteen pins more than the highest record yet reported in public print.

To a man up a tree it seems that President William H. Harper of the Chicago university wants to start something when he says, "Sports and athletics will never be on their proper plane until gate receipts are abolished and college games are absolutely gentlemen's games." It is the consensus of opinion of those who are in a position to know in this neck of the woods that President Harper's position is O. K. in theory, but N. G. in practice, at least under existing conditions. It takes money to make the mare go in college sports and unless those in charge of our seats of learning will put up the requisite coin it is up to the athletic boards to charge at the gate. As a rule receipts of foot ball games carry through the other sports of the colleges and universities, the other sports being those to which no admission charge is made.

One of Princeton's most prominent foot ball players and all-around athletes, now living in Omaha, had this to say in regard to President Harper's statement: "I have had occasion to observe the matter referred to by Mr. Harper and I can say that the fact that an admission fee is charged at the gate has no effect whatever on the player. He does not see one cent of the money, which goes into the athletic fund. The player does not know even what the receipts are, and from a purely athletic standpoint does not interest himself in the financial feature of the game. The money part of it is merely a means to an end. In the larger colleges the athletic department dining tables, which entail additional costs, coaches must be retained at large salaries and other features incidental to the sports must be kept up. It is not a rare thing for a smaller college to defeat a larger college, the latter possibly expending twice the money through the athletic board to maintain the sports, which fact I argue would show in a way that money considerations do not affect what President Harper styles 'gentlemen's sports.'"

There are no two opinions among those connected with sports of western colleges and universities in regard to the matter in question. In the case where no tuition fee is charged it is obvious that the sports must be self-sustaining and the directors of other institutions have not yet seen their way clear to maintain the athletic departments. Representatives of both the Bellevue college and Creighton university athletic boards say that the admission fee is necessary to keep up the athletics. Then another argument is advanced, namely, that inasmuch as the rules are strict about players receiving money or anything as such, for instance, a good game of foot ball is given, why should the spectator pay a charge? The money goes for a good purpose; it goes to build up a nation of manly men. The games entail certain expenses which must be paid some way, and why not by the public and through an athletic board?

Physical Director Pentland of the Young Men's Christian association says the prospects are now bright for a five-team association state basket ball league. The teams probably will be the Omaha association team and teams of the Lincoln, Nebraska university, Wesleyan and Hastings Young Men's Christian associations. The matter is now in correspondence and Mr. Pentland believes it will be past the paper stage in a week or so. On Tuesday the Omaha association first team will go to Sioux City to play the association team in the Iowa town. The Sioux City team won second honors last August at the basket ball contests at the World's fair.

Bellevue college winter athletics will take on new life after the holidays. A basket ball team is to be organized and a captain of the indoor track team elected.

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