
CHAPTER ONE

Urbanization, the Technological Revolution, and the Rise of Sport

Sport in the industrial United States was dramatically shaped by urbanization and technological innovation. It was in cities where major amateur and professional sports as well as many popular recreational sports achieved their modern form. Most top athletes were born and reared in cities and played at urban sports facilities ranging from billiard parlors and bowling alleys to arenas, racetracks, parks, and baseball fields. Yet the city was more than a place with a large population that provided a home for players and spectators, and playing sites for athletic contests. Cities performed an active role in the evolution of athletic institutions and sporting cultures that developed in interaction with the principal elements of urbanization.

The city's influence on sport dated back to the colonial era, when 5 percent of the population lived in urban sites. In towns such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Charleston, the relatively concentrated populations provided tavern owners sponsoring sports events with a potential market and facilitated the formation of mid-eighteenth-century sports clubs. Residents relied on their municipal governments to regulate semipublic institutions (particularly taverns), public space (parks and streets), and Sabbath behavior to protect community norms and morality when threatened by the growing sporting interest.

Urbanization did not proceed rapidly in the early-nineteenth-century walking city, but beginning in the 1830s, the pace of urbanization accelerated greatly. During that decade the urban population increased by 63.7 percent; then 92.1 percent in the 1840s, the highest in American history, and 75.4 percent in the 1850s. Population and physical expansion increased dramatically in established cities, accompanied by the appearance of hundreds of new cities. Between 1830 and 1860, New York, the nation's largest city, grew from 202,000 to 814,000; Philadelphia from 161,000 to 566,000; and Brooklyn from 15,000 to 267,000. The town of Chicago in 1833 had merely 300 inhabitants, but it grew to 109,000 in 1860, making it the ninth largest city in the United States. By 1870, one-fourth of the national population was urban, and fifty years later, most Americans were living in cities.

The industrial radial cities of the late nineteenth century grew through annexing outlying communities, made possible by rapid mass transit systems that enabled residents to live even farther than walking distance from their jobs. The central business district (CBD) formed the nucleus of this city. Its property became extremely expensive, shaping the CBD into a highly specialized center of business, culture, and entertainment, that housed corporations, banks, and offices of professional people in newly built skyscrapers, as well as department stores, hotels, museums, theaters, and railroad stations. The high cost of land pushed heavy industry out toward cheaper peripheral areas and satellite cities and dispersed city dwellers into concentric residential zones surrounding the downtown. The first residential belt in the city was the slum, a heterogeneous, impoverished area filled with the latest arrivals to the city. It had poor-quality housing, inadequate urban services, and high mortality and crime rates. The next district was the zone of emergence, an area of upper-lower-class neighborhoods, often second-generation Irish and Germans, that was safer and healthier than the slums. Families lived in modest homes on small lots. The third residential region was known as the suburban fringe. These homogeneous, middle-class, white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) localities had large, single-family homes on substantial, grassy, tree-lined lots, employed servants, and were blessed by excellent schools and other public services, as well as low rates of crime and mortality. Middle-

class husbands at first rode street cars and cable cars to their downtown jobs, but by the 1890s they were traveling by more efficient, electrically powered trolley cars. Boston and New York even had subways by 1904. Beyond the city limits were the suburbs proper, which included wealthy bedroom communities like Evanston and Lake Forest, whose residents rode trains to downtown Chicago to work, but also industrial suburbs like Gary, Indiana, and Cicero, Illinois, whose working-class residents worked close to home in local factories.

The rapid pace of urbanization influenced the rise of sport in several ways. The problems created by urbanization, such as rapid social change, growing social divisions, sedentary middle-class lifestyles, and the expansion of crowded, disease-ridden slums led Jacksonian reformers in the 1830s and 1840s to develop a positive sporting ideology that justified widespread participation in sport. The new sports creed portrayed humane, non-gambling athletic competition (or “clean sport”) as socially useful recreations that would improve the health, morality, and character of alienated, poor inner-city residents and revitalize the hard-working middle class who spent little time in the fresh air engaged in exercise or physical labor. These beliefs also prompted a park movement to preserve and create public space for outdoor recreation, especially crucial for slum residents who lacked access to open space and fresh air. Empty lots, formerly used for playing areas, were lost to urban development as cities became more crowded, significantly limiting outdoor space for sport and thereby hindering participation. The push for uplifting sports and breathing spaces enabled reformers by the turn of the century to use sports to acculturate immigrant children by teaching them traditional American values.

Urbanization also had an important impact on the rise of spectator sports. The growing populations of cities created potential markets for spectator sports, although the expanding size of cities made accessibility to arenas and sports fields problematic. Along with public parks, these semipublic facilities became important city institutions that contributed to the urban booster spirit and publicized a town’s progressive qualities. Star athletes became local heroes who were seen as role models, and city teams became a source of community for rootless urbanites, promoting a sense of hometown pride.

The Industrial Revolution contributed to the rise of sport in many ways, most directly through technological innovations. The four main contributions of modern technology to post-1870s sports were a) improved communications that provided fans with timely information about sporting events; b) transportation innovations that reduced the cost of travel to contests by participants and spectators; c) the mass production of inexpensive sporting equipment, which encouraged participatory sport, along with d) the invention of new types of sporting equipment.

Urban Reform and the Ideology of Sport

The emergence of a sports ideology justifying athletic participation as a positive force led to sport becoming one of the most popular American amusements. The idea that sport needed to be a beneficial and uplifting institution was rooted in Puritan values that required all pastimes to be moral, revitalizing recreations. The new positive sports creed that emerged in the Jacksonian Era was closely tied to other reform movements that promoted political democracy, social justice, and economic opportunity to address the problems created by the rapid rate of urbanization. The threat of class conflict was exacerbated by growing extremes of wealth and poverty. The urban population was becoming far more heterogeneous because of Irish and German immigration—in 1850 half of Boston's heads of households were immigrants. Traditional values and norms seemed to be breaking down, reflected by skyrocketing crime rates because of widespread poverty and transiency, especially among unsupervised young men who joined street gangs. Urban riots became commonplace due to such factors as anti-abolitionism, racism, and nativism. Disastrous public health problems characterized city life. Impoverished, overcrowded slums had inadequate sanitation and polluted water, insufficient supplies of nutritious food, and poor medical care, resulting in terrible epidemics and high mortality rates. Thus it was hardly surprising that social critics compared city life unfavorably to rural society, whose homogeneous residents presumably enjoyed closer interpersonal ties and whose lifestyle was portrayed as healthy, honest, self-reliant, hardworking, and nonmaterialistic.

Reformers sought to improve urban life for civil and religious reasons. Secular reformers were prompted by unsettling urban conditions, their social conscience, and a desire to implement republican virtues, such as self-improvement and good character. Religious reformers, inspired by the Second Great Awakening (ca. 1820s–1840s), sought to fight sin and to prepare a more perfect society for the impending Second Coming of Christ by promoting order, building character, encouraging Victorian morality, and improving public health. The reformers sought to alleviate social problems through voluntaristic societies that tried to educate the public against such vile behavior as intemperance and prostitution, and by pressuring municipalities to provide such basic services as water, sanitation, compulsory education, police and fire protection, and access to public parks.

Those reformers who identified physical fitness as a potential instrument of positive social change developed the positive sports creed that justified the uplifting value of proper physical activity. This ideology evolved slowly from: the rhetoric of eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers such as Dr. Benjamin Rush; the sporting traditions of ancient Greece, where fitness and education went hand-in-hand; and the ideas of early-nineteenth-century European educators such as Pestalozzi and Guts Muths, who emphasized physical activity in their new model schools. The American fitness movement began in the 1840s under the leadership of liberal clergymen such as William Ellery Channing, a Boston Unitarian; scientists such as Lemuel Shattuck, the founder of statistics, journalists such as William Cullen Bryant of the *New York Evening Post*; physicians such as Bronson Alcott; and health faddists such as Sylvester Graham, inventor of the Graham cracker.

Proponents of the sports creed described urban males as unhealthy, unproductive, and often absent from work. They were particularly critical of money-hungry, middle-class office workers who spent the entire day huddled over their desks. Fresh-air sports were recommended as a substitute for the healthier lifestyle of the yeoman farmer, serving the dual purpose of providing exercise and teaching urbanites the traditional moral values of idealized American farmers. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, a Boston fitness advocate, who ran

and rowed for his own health, criticized the inactive middle-class lifestyle in his column “The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table” in the inaugural volume of the prestigious *Atlantic Monthly* (1858). He pointed out that the contemporary social elite found sports and exercise socially unacceptable. The doctor disparaged “the vegetative life of the American” compared to the robust life of the English gentry. Holmes foresaw the impending rapid demise of his countrymen, certain that “such a set of black-coated, stiff-jointed, soft-muscled, paste-complexioned youth as we can boast in our Atlantic cities never before sprang from the loins of Anglo-Saxon lineage.” He recommended participation in sports that sustained Victorian values such as hard work and sobriety.

Holmes’ concerns were seconded by fellow Boston Brahmin Thomas Wentworth Higginson, a Unitarian minister and prominent abolitionist and feminist. In “Saints and Their Bodies,” which also appeared in the initial volume of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he reproached unfit bourgeois Americans for being too concerned with making money and not enough with their mental and physical well-being. Higginson recommended enjoyable and health-enhancing outdoor activities and exercises. He wanted required exercise in schools, and he urged men to leave their office woes behind them and meet him at the local gymnasium for a good workout.

Jacksonian reformers, particularly feminist and educator Catharine Beecher, a leading advocate of domesticity and author of *Course of Calisthenics for Young Ladies* (1832), pointed out that women also needed physical fitness, perhaps even more than men. The older sister of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, Catharine encouraged women to walk, perform calisthenics, and do housework to enhance physical beauty and reproductive capacity. Reformers argued that athletic participation could prevent or cure chronic frailty and illnesses such as nervousness, indigestion, palpitations, and headaches. In 1830, for instance, the *Journal of Health* recommended horseback riding and dancing as a panacea for “women’s ailments.” By the 1850s, physicians and editors of popular periodicals such as *Harper’s Weekly* and *Godey’s Lady’s Book and Magazine* were recommending gymnastics and moderate exercise to promote femininity, beauty, and grace.

Concerns over the health needs of urban residents led to the public health movement. Physicians believed that sound diets, fresh air, and moderate exercise could build up resistance to potentially fatal diseases. As urban space became more precious, reformers turned to parks for breathing space, especially for the urban poor. Shattuck proposed in 1850 that since “intellectual culture has received too much and physical training too little attention,” governments should appropriate funds for “open spaces [that] would afford to the artisan [sic] and the poorer classes the advantages of fresh air and exercise, in their occasional hours of leisure.”

Participation in sports would benefit society by promoting traditional American values, teaching valuable new virtues, and developing higher standards of character. By the 1850s certain social critics, frightened by the growth of urban anomie, identified sport as an institution (along with the family, police, and asylums) that would protect communities and alleviate the urban crisis. Exercise would promote manly qualities, especially courage and self-discipline. It would also help bring families closer together because fathers would make time to play and communicate with their sons.

The sports creed offered a solution for the problem of vile slum amusements. Cities were perceived as cesspools of depravity where unsupervised young farmers had gone for work and excitement. Freed from the traditional customs and social control mechanisms that regulated small-town life, they were attracted to such pleasures of the male bachelor subculture as music halls, saloons, brothels, gambling houses, and blood sports. In rat baiting, for instance, gamblers bet on the time it would take a terrier to kill all the rats confined in a pit. Perhaps the most famous locale in the Civil War era for such ignoble sports was Kit Burns’ Sportsman’s Hall, a popular three-story barroom with a rat pit on the first floor, frequented by New York City’s best-known rogues. Burns himself was one of the last leaders of the notorious Democratic Irish Dead Rabbits Gang. He also had an arena behind the main building that held up to four hundred spectators. One of his strangest attractions was a man known as Jack the Rat, who bit off the heads of mice for ten cents, and the heads of rats for twenty-five cents.

Reformers wanted to shelter urban youth from such loathsome pleasures. They criticized such degenerative diversions for hardening men's souls toward brutality and offering instant gratification through gambling. By the 1830s, reformers concluded that wholesome sports substituted for ignoble amusements could restore participants and spectators and prepare them for more useful lives. Reformers such as Reverend Channing recognized that lower-class urbanites had a great need for leisure, and he promoted such moral entertainments as the legitimate theater, classical music, and exercise as alternatives to vile diversions.

Noted Unitarian social reformer Rev. Edward Everett Hale of Boston was the foremost advocate of rational recreation (moral entertainment that was useful in such ways as promoting good health and self-improvement). He knew that city dwellers could not readily go fishing, hunting, or enjoy other traditional, uplifting rustic pleasures, and he advocated wholesome alternatives. Hale had no confidence in commercial entertainments that catered to the lowest tastes to secure the largest possible audiences, so he sought church-state cooperation to promote wholesome recreation. He advocated muscular Christianity, recommending that clergymen promote ameliorative sports such as cricket and football to improve health, develop courage, and build character.

Muscular Christianity was a mid-nineteenth-century English philosophy that focused on harmonizing one's mental, physical, and spiritual dimensions. It advocated clean sport and exercise to develop moral, devout, and physically fit men. Muscular Christians such as Higginson repudiated the conventional wisdom that "physical vigor and spiritual sanctity are incompatible." The connection between morality and exercise was popularized by Thomas Hughes' best-seller *Tom Brown's School Days* (1857), a fictional account of Rugby, an English private school that emphasized athletics to build character.

Muscular Christianity fit in well with the Victorian disdain of libertine behavior. Its alleged benefits, which included increased potency, assuaged upper-class New Englanders' fears of depleting their sexual energies. This was particularly important in the late nineteenth century, when it seemed to old-stock Americans that their race was declining in numbers in comparison to the population

of immigrant groups. Muscular Christians saw sport as a promoter of manliness, a check on effeminacy, and an alternative to sexual expenditures of energy. Moral men would earn their manhood on the playing fields, not in the bedroom. As historian Charles Rosenberg points out, "The manly Christian gentleman was the athlete of continence, not coitus, continuously testing his manliness in the fires of self-denial." Sport would enable sedentary middle-class men to maintain such "manly" physical characteristics as ruggedness, robustness, strength, and vigor rather than degenerating into foolish fops.

The muscular Christian philosophy was a cornerstone of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), an evangelical organization founded in London in 1844. The YMCA was brought to the United States seven years later to help farm youth adjust to urban life in a moral milieu. By 1860, the YMCA movement supported moral athletics and gymnastics as "a safeguard against the allurements of objectionable places of resort," and soon established facilities where white-collar males could enjoy exercise with their peers in a pleasant environment. In 1869, for instance, the New York YMCA opened a gymnasium, bowling alley, and baths. The YMCA soon expanded its mission to reach more men and older boys through gymnastics and calisthenics classes.

The YMCA was the primary institutional supporter of muscular Christianity. It sought to develop Christian gentlemen through its philosophy that a strong mind and healthy body supported the spirit. The Christian gentleman was honorable, exercised self-control, avoided sentimentality or yielding to pain, abstained from sex outside of marriage, and, like Frank Merriwell, the hero of late-nineteenth-century juvenile literature, used his strength to protect others. The YMCA's work was supplemented at the end of the century by institutional churches that sought to bring the social gospel of Christ to alienated and impoverished inner-city parishioners by providing various social services, including accessible gymnasiums where they sponsored athletic programs. At a time when Protestantism was often perceived to have become overfeminized, the institutional churches used sport as a carrot to attract male parishioners.

By 1892 there were 348 YMCA gyms, 144 full-time physical education leaders, and about 250,000 members. The fitness pro-

gram's emphasis shifted from gymnastics to team sports, reflecting a growing interest in athletic competition, and led to the invention of basketball in 1891 and of volleyball four years later at the International Young Men's Christian Training School (founded 1885) in Springfield, Massachusetts. Basketball was invented by thirty-year-old James Naismith as a class project to develop an indoor, nonviolent winter game. The YMCA established the Amateur League of North America in 1895, and its teams competed with colleges and athletic clubs in basketball, swimming, and track-and-field. Top players were recruited by free memberships, room and board, and travel allowances. The most outstanding YMCA team was the Buffalo German YMCA basketball team that captured the gold medal at the 1904 Olympics. By 1911, however, the YMCA deemphasized competition among top athletes to focus on serving the greatest number of participants.

The Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), founded in London in 1855, came to the United States in 1858. The YWCA lagged behind the YMCA in sport but nonetheless was a leader in promoting women's athletics. The YWCA was founded to protect middle-class young women from the contaminating effects of city life by educating and housing them in dormitories. Historian John R. Betts found that by 1890 physical education had become a crucial part of the YWCA movement. The Boston YWCA, at the forefront of women's sports, first held athletic games in 1882. Two years later it constructed a new building that included a well-equipped gymnasium. YWCAs emphasized gymnastics and dance, along with other feminine sports such as swimming, golf, and tennis. By 1916 YWCAs enrolled over 58,000 girls in physical training programs.

Sport and Urban Space

The changing spatial patterns that accompanied urbanization had an enormous impact upon athletic participation. Overpopulation, urban development, and municipal codes that regulated streets, roads, and docks made it harder to find a place to play ball, ride horses, or swim. Furthermore, the pristine countryside became more and more distant, lessening opportunities for traditional field and

stream sports. These trends first appeared in New York, and soon thereafter in other crowded cities such as Jersey City and Newark. By the mid-nineteenth century New York had already lost traditional sporting sites, where cricket had been played and trotting horses raced, to new buildings, streets, and railroad tracks. Local sportsmen moved their outdoor contests to the nearby cities of Brooklyn and Hoboken. These trends occurred later in less densely populated cities like Chicago, which in 1870 still had ample baseball fields in open prairies a mile from the town center.

One prime example of the impact of changing land use patterns on New York's sporting activities can be seen in the history of a single block at Twenty-seventh Street and Fourth Avenue in the Madison Square neighborhood. In 1842, it was a vacant lot where respectable, middle-class young men played a ball game for exercise and fun. Three years later, Alexander Cartwright, Jr., and his associates organized themselves into the Knickerbocker Base Ball Club and drew up formal rules of play for baseball. Later that year, compelled to move from their old location by the northward expansion of New York's residential and commercial properties, the Knickerbockers rented space at Hoboken's Elysian Fields, where they staged their first games.

Madison Square became the site of prestigious hotels and luxurious town houses, and the old ball field became the site of Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt's train station, freight shed, and stable. In 1871 Vanderbilt, one of the richest men in American history (worth \$100 million at his death in 1877, the equivalent today of \$20.366 billion) relocated his depot to the new Grand Central Station, then leased the old site two years later to impresario P. T. Barnum. In 1874 Barnum opened the \$35,000 Great Roman Hippodrome for his circus. After just one season he leased his structure to bandmaster Patrick Gilmore, lyricist of the popular Civil War song "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." Gilmore staged various events including religious revivals, the first Westminster Kennel Show in 1877, long-distance races, and boxing matches. In 1878, an executive of the dog show operated the facility, which was taken over one year later by the commodore's grandson, William K. Vanderbilt, who inherited \$55 million. He took over the building and renamed

it Madison Square Garden. William K. emphasized sports promotion at the arena, especially boxing. At that time the neighborhood was the center of the city's social and sporting life, with elegant theaters, shops, and restaurants.

The growth of cities also created a crying need for public play space. This became an important municipal problem, especially in rapidly growing older and densely populated northeastern cities. Even Boston Common, the finest northern public park at midcentury, rapidly became inadequate as the metropolitan area's population quadrupled between 1830 and 1870. By the 1840s a municipal park movement was underway in overcrowded New York, led by journalist William Cullen Bryant and landscape architect Andrew Jackson Downing. In the 1850s, the park movement comprised a broad-based coalition of social reformers, physicians, labor leaders, urban boosters, businessmen, and professional politicians. Advocates claimed that public parks would improve public health and cut down on sick days by increasing access to fresh air. They also hoped to alleviate class conflict and improve order by enabling social classes to mingle. The lower classes would supposedly learn proper social behavior from their social betters. In addition, proponents anticipated that public parks would encourage citizens to support their municipality on other issues in return for providing them with an important service. Park supporters further asserted that parks would aid the local economy by providing jobs, raising property values and taxes on adjacent land, and boosting New York's public image. The Tammany Hall machine, which controlled a major segment of the Democratic Party, anticipated gaining patronage jobs, which was crucial during the Depression of 1857.

The park movement scored a signal success with the construction of the 843-acre Central Park in 1857–58, then on the outskirts of New York's residential sections. The Park Board held an open competition for the park's design, which required a wooded area, a formal English garden, and a parade ground for cricket. The winning sketches were produced by Frederick L. Olmsted, a well-known journalist with political connections, and his partner, landscape architect Calvert Vaux. The inexperienced Olmsted was subsequently hired to supervise construction. Olmsted never built the cricket

field because he believed the park should be reserved for receptive recreation (pleasure derived from enjoying beautiful scenery) rather than active recreation. Vigorous sports were fine, but not on Central Park's green grass. "Keep off the Grass" was Olmsted's credo. The Park Board did permit ice skating and boating, which did not mar the park's natural beauty. Central Park was considered an elite park during its first decade because of Olmsted's recreational philosophy, its remote location, and popularity with wealthy owners of horses or carriages.

The completion of Central Park demonstrated how an independent government agency could administer projects, and it encouraged municipalities to use urban planning to protect the environment. Moreover, Central Park became the model for the many large suburban parks built after the Civil War. Olmsted went on to become America's greatest landscape architect, designing parks for Boston, Brooklyn, Chicago, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

The newly built suburban parks were mainly middle-class resorts despite the democratic ideology of park reformers and Olmsted's own expectations that they would be used by everyone as urban populations expanded toward the outskirts of town. Upper- and middle-class residents were most likely to live near these parks and, in any event, could afford the cost of travel there. Furthermore, the parks were several miles from inner-city neighborhoods, which made them inaccessible to poorer folk who could not afford the cost of riding there even after mass-transit routes were in place. Speedy electrified trolley systems developed in the late 1880s and 1890s did not help the poor access parks because the five-cent fare was too steep. An 1890s survey of Lower East Side New York youth discovered few of them had ever been to Central Park because of its inaccessibility even though their own neighborhoods had no parks. Furthermore, the enforcement of blue laws that proscribed many popular amusements on Sunday, the one day working men and women were off from work, and the presence of unfriendly police at the parks discouraged the working class from visiting city parks

If the truth be told, middle- and upper-class citizens preferred that the "riff-raff" stay out of the parks, particularly when lower-

class individuals sought to use them for vigorous sports contests and rowdy parties. As upper-lower-class neighborhoods expanded in the direction of suburban parks, sections of the parks were often considered home turf by the dominant local ethnic group, typically the Irish, who would intimidate interlopers. In such cases, historian Roy Rosenzweig notes, “Parks were providing a setting for precisely the sort of behavior they were supposed to inhibit.”

In the mid-1880s, pressure from middle-class park users for more active recreation led to their greater use for baseball and other sports. Baseball diamonds were constructed, soon followed by tennis courts that occupied little space and required limited maintenance. By 1885, Central Park had 30 tennis courts, and 125 of them seven years later. Chicago’s South Park system had 100 courts by 1905, and more than 300 ten years later. The first public golf course, which required a lot more land and expensive upkeep, was introduced in Boston in 1898. Twenty years later there were about fifty public golf courses throughout the nation that mostly catered to the middle class.

At the same time that suburban parks were under pressure for more active use, reformers launched a complementary small park and playground movement aimed at serving inner-city residents. These small-scale facilities were located in inner-city neighborhoods where they would be readily accessible. They would provide fresh air, uplift children, and keep the poor out of middle-class parks. Park development, especially in the Northeast and Midwest, had fallen behind the growing needs of the slums, where nearly every lot was used for residential, commercial, or industrial purposes. For instance, Chicago’s world-renowned suburban park system comprised 1,500 acres, second only to Philadelphia, yet the city’s indigent neighborhoods were largely ignored. Three of Chicago’s largest communities did not have a single park in 1900, despite a combined population of 360,000, with a high rate of disease and crime.

The use of public parks became a class issue in the 1880s, particularly since the suburban parks were largely inaccessible and inner-city boys had few places to play. Working-class residents of Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts, became increasingly resentful of limited access to their cities’ beautiful middle-class parks and of restrictions placed on park use. Historians Stephen Hardy and

Roy Rosenzweig who respectively studied the small park movement in those two cities, found that both cities' working-class residents responded to the unfair situation by actively fighting for small neighborhood parks. Community organizations lobbied their ward committeemen and councilmen to seek appropriations for neighborhood parks and pass laws permitting their use as athletic fields and children's playgrounds. The local activists used their influence with Democratic Irish machine politicians to build modest neighborhood parks that fulfilled their needs for breathing space and recreation.

Despite the determination exercised by Boston's and Worcester's working class, nationally the impetus for the small-park movement in the 1880s came mostly from middle- and upper-class outsiders. In New York City, for instance, support came from reform-minded politicians such as Democratic Mayor Abram Hewitt of New York (1886–87), charity organizations such as the Children's Aid Society, social gospel ministers who wanted to bring Christ's message to the unchurched, crusading journalists, and landscape architects. The movement came to fruition around the turn of the century, led on the local level by progressive middle- and upper-class organizations such as the Outdoor Recreation League (1898), and nationally by the Playground Association of America (1906). The PAA was a coalition of progressives, particularly businessmen, settlement-house workers, and community leaders. They encountered opposition to small parks from machine bosses who preferred larger projects that involved more patronage, slum dwellers who wanted any available land reserved for cheap housing rather than baseball diamonds, and especially from proponents of cheap and limited government.

Small-park advocates believed that playgrounds should be more than merely safe places for inner-city children to play. These reformers believed that they knew what was best for inner-city youths and intended to use small parks to uplift or control second-generation kids. Slum children would be protected from their neighborhoods' deleterious influences and gain a positive alternative to the vile amusements of the streets. The Progressives were convinced by sociological evidence that adult-directed team games were more effective than independent play in teaching inner-city youth such important values as obedience, self-sacrifice, and hard work. Play-

ing sports like baseball and basketball would improve morals, fight juvenile delinquency, and Americanize recent immigrants.

Settlement house leader Jane Addams of Chicago's Hull House successfully prodded the municipality to become the national model for small parks. The city established a special commission in 1899 that in five years opened nine small parks, each less than five acres in size. Thereafter the state legislature empowered the city's three park boards to issue bonds for recreation centers as large as sixty acres, complete with field houses, swimming pools, and athletic fields. These new facilities helped increase Chicago's park use fivefold between 1905 and 1916. President Theodore Roosevelt, honorary president of the Playground Association, described these new parks as the greatest municipal accomplishment of his day. The number of cities with supervised recreation programs rose from fewer than 10 in 1900 to 41 in 1906, and 504 by 1917. City parks became an enormously popular progressive reform that promised a relatively inexpensive way to assimilate immigrant children and promote order in the inner city.

Sport and the Promotion of Public Pride

Another function of sport was to engender pride in one's hometown (boosterism) and country (nationalism). According to conventional wisdom, people could more easily identify with their neighborhood, city, region, or nation when they cheered for athletes or teams who represented them in sporting competition. Any leading late-nineteenth-century metropolis was expected to have such cultural institutions as art museums, symphonies, and universities, as well as public parks and major league baseball teams. No large eastern or midwestern city was truly "major league" unless it had a major league franchise and a first-class baseball field. The absence of a major league team in Buffalo in the early 1900s reflected poorly on the eighth largest city in America, especially since Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, and St. Louis had two teams each. Only New York, the nation's leading city, had three major league teams in 1903. Local boosters in smaller cities had more modest ambitions. They regarded their baseball team's minor league level and the extent of hometown

support at the box office as an index of the community's progressive character. Atlanta, for instance, had a population of 89,872 in 1900, yet had a professional team in the Class B Southern League along with New Orleans, whose population was triple that of the Gate City. Atlantans demonstrated their hometown spirit with large turnouts on opening day that often surpassed that of New Orleans.

New York, befitting its status as the nation's leading metropolis, usually hosted the most important American sporting events, including amateur track-and-field championships, boxing matches, Ivy League football title games in the 1890s and, beginning in 1915, the U.S. National Tennis Championship. Other cities staged the occasional special event to bolster their status, such as the 1904 Olympics in St. Louis, or contests that became annual affairs like the Indianapolis 500, which began in 1911. On the other hand, few large cities supported disreputable sports such as prizefighting, which created a negative public image. Towns that advertised themselves through boxing were small, obscure communities, such as the Nevada towns of Carson City, which hosted the world championship heavyweight title match between Jim Corbett and Bob Fitzsimmons in 1897, Goldfield, location of the Battling Nelson–Joe Gans lightweight title bout in 1906, and Reno, site of the Jack Johnson–Jim Jeffries heavyweight bout in 1910.

In the early 1900s, cities began to build municipal stadiums to provide a facility to house important local amateur sporting events to promote tourism and bolster their civic image. The first was Buffalo's 12,000-seat Pan American Exposition Stadium, built in 1901 for the so-named world's fair. It hosted events ranging from a major eastern track meet to a day of traditional Irish Games. It was surpassed in 1915 by San Diego's 23,000-seat Balboa Stadium (1915), built for the California Panama Exposition.

In the 1920s, the construction by municipalities and other local governments of public outdoor facilities became relatively commonplace. The first important facility was the Rose Bowl in Pasadena (1922), which seated 40,000, but eventually seated more than 100,000. The Baltimore Stadium was also built in 1922, mainly for football. These two were followed the next year by the Los Angeles Coliseum, built jointly by the city and Los Angeles County in 1923

to seat 75,000—raised to 101,000 for the 1932 Olympics—at a total cost of \$1.9 million. Next came Chicago’s 75,000-seat Soldier Field in 1924, expanded to seat 100,000 by 1927, at the very high cost of \$8.5 million. The Philadelphia Municipal Stadium, opened in 1926, eventually seated more than 120,000.

Along with fostering local pride, sport also provided a valuable means to demonstrate national self-esteem. Nineteenth-century American sportsmen measured themselves against British standards and made a giant leap forward with America’s victory in 1851 over the finest British yachts in the Royal Yacht Squadron’s “One Hundred Guinea Cup” race. Nine years later, Americans took great pride when American boxing champion John C. Heenan earned a draw in his fight against English titlist Tom Sayers for the world championship.

As will be discussed later (in chapter six), in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, national pride in American sport and athleticism expanded well beyond old grudges with “mother England” into the wider world. International tours by professional baseball players spread American culture east and south, with the quintessentially American game of baseball soon becoming popular in Japan and enormously so in the Latin-American Caribbean basin. Finally, with the inauguration in 1896 of the modern Olympic Games, Americans were quick to take an interest. Only ten years later, a functioning United States Olympic Committee sent its first official, publicly financed, uniformed team to the unofficial intercalated (interim) games in Athens.

The Technological Revolution and the Rise of Sport

Sport and the Communications Revolution

Sports journalism played a key role in generating and sustaining popular interest in sport. In the days before radio and television, Americans depended on daily newspapers for their sporting news. In a nation of 75 million people in 1899, the average daily newspaper circulation was 15 million, led by the *New York World* at 600,000. Publishers devoted a growing amount of local news coverage to sports because it sold papers. In the 1920s, for instance, sporting

news comprised 40 percent of local news in the *World*, and 60 percent in the *New York Tribune*.

American newspapers in the early republic were expensive and primarily served readers interested in business and politics. By 1831, however, penny newspapers had emerged, written for the masses, such as the *New York Sun* and the *Philadelphia Ledger*. They covered such popular topics as crime, gossip, horse races, and prizefights that reporters “accidentally” encountered. In the 1840s, James G. Bennett’s *New York Herald* emphasized sport and other popular subjects to build circulation, sending up to eight reporters to cover a sporting event. The entire front page on May 5, 1845, was devoted to the Fashion-Peytona match, one of the five great North-South horse races of the antebellum era. Readers were naturally informed about the outcome of the race, but also about crowd composition, wagering, and the ambience at the Union Course. Bennett made excellent use of the latest technological innovations, such as telegraphy, which helped journalists quickly report major events at distant sites, and the speedy rotary press (1846) that printed 20,000 sheets an hour. As a result, Bennett built the *Herald* into America’s most popular paper by the Civil War with a circulation of 60,000.

Subsequent inventions further speeded mass production of newspapers and cut costs. Improved presses printed on a continuous roll of cheap, pulp-based paper, cut it into sheets, and folded it, while the Mergenthaler linotype machine (1886) mechanized typesetting. Along with excellent distribution systems and the rise of yellow journalism, these inventions facilitated a boom in the penny press that resulted in huge circulations. Yellow journalism emphasized sensationalism, with large, misleading headlines, faked interviews, more than ample use of graphics, and melodramatic stories often focusing on such popular topics such as crime, sports, and sex. In the 1880s the number of New York City dailies rose from thirty-three to fifty-five, and circulation almost doubled, to nearly 1.8 million. The *New York World*, purchased in 1883 by Joseph Pulitzer, became a model for other publishers by drastically cutting production costs, using lots of illustrations, and stressing yellow journalism. Pulitzer raised the *World’s* circulation from 15,000 to 250,000 in just four years.

The *World* established the first sports department and, according to literary critic Michael Oriard, the first distinctive sports page (1896), which other papers quickly emulated. Pulitzer also pioneered sensationalist evening editions aimed at working men as well as entertainment-oriented Sunday editions with special sports coverage. He and his competitors enhanced the sports section with expensive engravings that by themselves told complete stories independent of any reporter's narrative. Halftone photographs were added in the late 1890s to further lighten up the printed page and bring readers some of the excitement of the playing field.

The baseball writer was the star of the sports page. He helped popularize the sport and linked the home team to fans who followed professional baseball in the media even if they seldom attended games. English immigrant Henry Chadwick, originally a cricket expert, was the first baseball journalist and the inventor of the all-important statistic, the batting average. Chadwick started covering baseball for the *Herald* in 1862, and also wrote for other newspapers and sports weeklies, especially *The Sporting News*, which began in 1886. He edited the first baseball guide, the *Beadle Base-Ball Player* (1860–81), and then the *Spalding Official Baseball Guide* until his death in 1908. He was a staunch proponent of sportsmanship and rule reforms. As a member of the rules committee of the amateur National Association of Base Ball Players, founded in 1857, Chadwick led the effort to make baseball manlier by advocating the fly-out rule, adopted in 1864, which required a fielder to catch a batted ball without a bounce to record an out. He established a widely emulated, straightforward manner of reporting a game's major events, but in the late 1880s a more entertaining and creative style was developed in the competitive Chicago newspaper market. Leonard Washburn began the trend in 1886 by spicing up his stories with an appealing, light-and-breezy tone soon adopted by Finley Peter Dunne (though he was best known for the character he created, "Mr. Dooley," a South Side Irish saloon keeper who pontificated in dialect on various political and social issues). Another member of the so-called "Chicago School of Sports Writing" was Charles Seymour, who employed slang, metaphors, and similes instead of dry and formal reporting.

The first major sports weeklies were John Stuart Skinner's rurally oriented *American Turf Register and Sporting Magazine* (1829), which emphasized horse racing, and William T. Porter's more urbane *Spirit of the Times* (1831), which promoted angling and horse racing, but also covered cricket, rowing, and yachting. Porter aimed his weekly, which cost \$10 for a one-year subscription, at gentlemen of property and standing. By the mid-1850s the *Spirit* had a weekly circulation of 40,000 copies. Other urban periodicals included George Wilkes' sensationalist *National Police Gazette* (1845) which began as an anti-crime tabloid, and Frank Queen's *New York Clipper* (1853), a popular advocate of baseball and a leading defender of prizefighting. In 1856, Wilkes sold the plebeian *Police Gazette* and bought the *Spirit*, which in a slightly altered form remained in business through 1902. The *Spirit* covered track-and-field better than any other magazine and was the preeminent horse-racing weekly of its day. The *Police Gazette* fell on hard times until Irish immigrant Richard Kyle Fox took it over in 1877. Fox emphasized crime, sex, and working-class sports, primarily boxing. He made the *Police Gazette* the bible of boxing and promoted several major matches. Fox donated jeweled belts to honor champions in different weight classes, as well as medals and trophies for other sports, such as pedestrianism and weight lifting, both of which were popular with the male bachelor subculture.

The *Gazette* was printed on garish, red-tinted paper and amply illustrated with sketches of athletes and scantily clad women. Its average weekly circulation stood at 150,000, one of the highest of any American weekly, topped by a 400,000-copy print run following the Paddy Ryan-Joe Goss boxing championship in 1880. By comparison, the circulation of *Harper's Weekly*, a prestigious middle-class opinion maker, was only 85,000. The *Police Gazette* was extremely influential among working-class sports fans, whose interests it irreverently and constantly defended. The magazine was ubiquitous in saloons, barbershops, hotels, and other centers of the male bachelor subculture, where each edition passed through dozens of hands.

Popular general-interest periodicals provided considerable sports coverage as well, especially baseball. In addition, by the 1890s, these

magazines were second to the daily press in the coverage of football, but still mainly emphasized baseball. The more high-brow weeklies and monthlies like *The Independent* were much more critical of sports than the hugely successful middle-brow magazines such as *Colliers* or the *Saturday Evening Post*. In the early 1900s, middle class periodicals enjoyed a remarkable surge in readership. For instance, the *Saturday Evening Post* had 1 million subscribers by 1913.

Communication innovations not only enhanced and made sports reportage more accessible, but they also had a big impact on illegal gambling. In the late nineteenth century, Western Union, which controlled the nation's telegraph lines, sold information on sporting events not only to newspapers, but also to poolrooms (illegal off-track betting parlors), billiard halls, and saloons where a lot of betting on sports occurred. The bet takers needed instant reports about baseball games, boxing matches, and especially horse races to prevent cheating by their clients. By 1891, Western Union's racing department was its most profitable, earning \$18,000 a week just from New York City poolrooms. In the early 1890s New York tracks temporarily barred Western Union because they were losing too much of the betting business to off-track sites. Wire-service employees responded by initiating several imaginative schemes to secure racing results, including sending in female agents with carrier pigeons hidden under their dresses to forward the outcomes. In 1904, the racing bureau was bringing in \$5 million a year, but one year later the moral opposition of Helen Gould, daughter of robber baron Jay Gould (who had at one time a controlling interest in Western Union), and other major stockholders forced the telegraph company out of the racing business. A new racing wire was established that ended up six years later in the hands of Chicago bookmaker Mont Tennes, who thereafter monopolized racing news for sixteen years. Along with the telegraph, another communication innovation that had a great influence on illegal gambling was Alexander Graham Bell's telephone, invented in 1876. Gambling syndicates at first used the telephone to warn poolrooms about impending raids, and later to distribute race results from a central office to neighborhood bookmakers. It was not until the 1920s, however, that bookmakers used the telephone to take bets directly from their clients.

Sport and the Transportation Revolution

Transportation innovations, especially the railroad and the trolley car, were crucial in facilitating the rise of sport. The railroad substantially shortened long-distance travel, making it easier for top athletes to compete in distant cities, outdoorsmen to reach far-away hunting and fishing sites, and the rich to get to their remote exclusive resorts. The development of mass transit within cities also had a huge impact, by greatly increasing access to sporting facilities, particularly for spectatorial events.

As early as the 1840s, New York horse-racing fans used railroads to reach distant racecourses at the outskirts of town like the Union Course in Queens County. The railroad's potential to stimulate long-distance trips for sport was initially demonstrated in 1852, when the Boston, Concord, and Montreal Railroad sponsored the first American intercollegiate athletic contest, a Harvard-Yale crew race at Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire, where the railroad hoped to promote tourism. The competitors were given a free vacation for their efforts.

Shortly after the Civil War, trains played an important role in the growth of baseball. The 1869 national tour by the undefeated Cincinnati Reds, the first all-salaried team, was made feasible by railroads, and one year later, Harvard's nine toured by rail as far west as Milwaukee. The first professional teams in the National Association of Professional Baseball Players in 1871, as well as its successor leagues, depended on trains to complete long-distance trips that might start in Boston and end in St. Louis. Rail lines competed for the baseball trade by offering teams special rates and proudly advertising their patronage. Local rail lines solicited business by selling reduced-rate tickets to fans or by running special trains to the ballparks.

Railroads contributed significantly to the survival of prizefighting, universally banned until the 1890s. Even major bouts, including heavyweight champion John L. Sullivan's title defense against Jake Kilrain in 1889 for a record \$20,000 purse, had to be clandestinely staged. The sporting fraternity gathered for the bout in New Orleans, and on July 7, 2,000 boxing fans who had paid \$10 to \$15 for excursion tickets were whisked out of town on three trains on an

unannounced route. The trains stopped after crossing the state line into Richburg, Mississippi, where a ring was laid out the next morning. This was the last heavyweight championship fought under the London Prize Ring rules of 1838. Pugilists brawled bare-knuckled and were permitted to tackle their opponents, but were forbidden from hair-pulling or head-butting. Rounds were unlimited and lasted until one fighter was downed. He then had thirty seconds to come to the middle of the ring and resume fighting. The Sullivan-Kilrain bout lasted for about two hours, until the challenger failed to appear for the seventy-sixth round.

Railroads had a major impact on horse racing by transporting trotters and thoroughbreds across the country to compete at various racecourses. This made feasible the creation of harness racing's Grand Circuit, a regular schedule of racing dates at major eastern and midwestern tracks. Trains also brought spectators to suburban racetracks as well as to more distant, out-of-town tracks. In 1870, for instance, the Harlem, Rensselaer and Saratoga Railroad shipped thoroughbreds from New York City to Saratoga Springs at cost in an effort to promote the resort and thereby increase future ridership.

The railroads recognized that racing was good for business, and they employed their political influence on behalf of the turf. The Pennsylvania Railroad, for example, did considerable business in the late nineteenth century carrying New York and Philadelphia bettors to neighboring New Jersey tracks. The Penn's lobbyists in Trenton were among the strongest supporters of racing from the mid-1880s until the state banned horse-race gambling in 1894.

Railroads also catered to cyclists, anglers, hunters, and other sportsmen by offering special rates or free baggage. Touring cyclists going to rustic destinations could bring their bicycles on board without any charge, while the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad, known as "the Route of the Sportsman and Angler to the Best Hunting and Fishing Grounds of Virginia" and West Virginia, proclaimed, "Guns, fishing tackle, and one dog for each sportsman carried free."

The emergence of mass transit in antebellum New York and Philadelphia, the nation's most populated cities, was tied to the physical growth of the walking city. The horse-drawn carriage (omnibus) and the horse-drawn streetcar that rode over rails were mainly used be-

tween 1850 and 1880 for going to work, shopping, or recreation. New Yorkers, for instance, rode streetcars to reach Central Park, located several miles north of the principal residential areas. They also commuted by ferry to popular Brooklyn and Hoboken athletic fields.

As walking cities grew into radial cities, urbanites increasingly had to travel farther than they could comfortably walk. Big innovations after the Civil War greatly enhanced the speed and comfort of mass transit, primarily by supplanting horse power with mechanical power. The first big advance was the cleaner and faster cable car, introduced in 1873 in San Francisco to replace horses that struggled to climb the city's steep hills. However, they were expensive to set up, requiring the digging up of streets and the laying of lengthy cables that connected each vehicle to its steam-driven power source. Furthermore, the system was unreliable, and when a cable broke, it put all of the cars on that route out of commission. In other cities, the cable car was quickly surpassed by the electrified streetcar, first employed in South Bend, Indiana, in 1882, although the standard system was not implemented until 1888 by Frank Sprague in Richmond, Virginia. Sprague's big innovation was the use of an electric pole ("trolley") to connect the vehicle to an overhead DC electric source. Within a few years it virtually eliminated all competition, although in Boston the subway was introduced in 1897, followed by one in New York seven years later. This circumvented the dilemma of trying to move large trolleys on overcrowded downtown streets. The principal transit routes extended outward from the central business district toward middle-class residential neighborhoods and anticipated sites of development at the urban periphery. Lines often terminated at a distant suburban park, and sometimes at ballparks. Trolleys made sports facilities and municipal parks very accessible to middle- and upper-lower-class urbanites.

Mass-transit traction companies frequently encouraged traffic by developing recreational sites near their terminals. Over one hundred lines sponsored amusement parks that included roller-skating rinks, shooting galleries, and arenas for bicycle, dog, and foot racing. Their success encouraged traction interests to support professional baseball. Streetcar companies subsidized club-owned teams and built ballparks at the ends of their routes. Historian Ted Vincent found

that in the late nineteenth century, transit firms in seventy-eight cities were financially involved in professional baseball. Streetcar interests even owned or sponsored major-league teams. Cleveland fans in the late 1890s could buy a round-trip ticket and admission to the ballpark right on the trolley, both of which were owned by the Robison family. The close ties between rapid transit and baseball provided a nickname for Brooklyn's team in the 1890s when they played in Brownsville at Eastern Park. The club became known as the "Trolley Dodgers," or Dodgers for short, because fans walking to the field had to be careful to avoid getting struck by passing trolley cars.

Lights, Camera, Action

Certain technological innovations contributed to sports development by recording outstanding achievements and preserving great athletic moments. The measurement and evaluation of athletic feats was greatly enhanced by the stopwatch, which originally recorded times in fifths of seconds, and the camera, which helped determine winners of close horse races. Motion pictures provided a means to keep a permanent visual record of a sporting event in action. In 1889 Thomas A. Edison invented the kinetoscope, the first practical motion-picture camera. In 1894, one of his first subjects was boxing matches, because he felt there was a market for fight films. Three years later the James Corbett–Bob Fitzsimmons heavyweight championship fight was filmed, grossing \$75,000.

The introduction of electric lighting had an important impact on the viewing of indoor sports. Indoor arenas were originally poorly lit by dull, flickering, and dangerous gas lamps. Edison's incandescent light bulb, invented in 1879, was a superior alternative, emitting an adjustable and consistent illumination that used independently operated outlets. In 1880 William K. Vanderbilt's Madison Square Garden became one of the first semipublic buildings to use electric lighting. Vanderbilt admired the quality of incandescent lighting, and he also wanted to advertise Edison's Electric Light Company, which his family helped to finance. Athletes complained, however, that the lights were too bright, and the Garden returned to gas until 1885. Nevertheless, electric lighting was clearly superior to other

forms of illumination, and by 1890 its use became commonplace at leading indoor sports facilities. Historian John R. Betts believed that the improved lighting systems helped draw athletes and spectators to athletic clubs, armories, and sports arenas.

Artificial lighting was seldom used out-of-doors, although the first night baseball game was played in Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1883. The quality of the illumination was originally inadequate for baseball, but the technological problems had apparently been resolved by 1909, when an amateur game was played under artificial lighting at Cincinnati's Palace of the Fans. One year later a semipro night game at Chicago's Comiskey Park drew 20,000 spectators. Still, conservative baseball-team owners did not implement night baseball until the Depression.

Technological Innovations and Sports Equipment

One of industrialization's principal influences on sport was the fabrication of cheap sporting goods and the invention of new and superior equipment. Factories utilized the American system of manufacturing, which involved strict division of labor and standardization of parts to mass produce sporting goods and sharply lower consumers' costs. A top-of-the-line major league baseball manufactured by Spalding cost \$1.25 in 1892, but customers could buy a lesser Spalding baseball for as little as five cents. Consumers in the late nineteenth century had several options when it came to buying the equipment they needed, ranging from specialized sporting goods stores to mail-order catalogues like those of Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. A shop-at-home buyer perusing his Sears, Roebuck catalogue in 1895 had more than sixty pages of sporting goods to choose from. A new option emerged in the early 1900s when Macy's established the first sporting-goods section in a department store.

Albert G. Spalding was the preeminent manufacturer of sporting goods. Originally an outstanding pitcher for the Boston Red Stockings of the National Association from 1871 to 1875, Spalding compiled a record of 204–53, over fifty more victories than anyone else. In 1876 he became player-manager of the Chicago White Stockings of the new National League, where he went 47–12, and

led the NL in wins. When Spalding came to Chicago he opened a sporting-goods store and a publishing company that printed a full line of sports guidebooks. These books instructed readers how to play a particular sport, provided them with information about its rules, history, and records, and advertised Spalding's products. Spalding expanded his firm into a well-integrated and efficient sporting-goods company that manufactured athletic equipment. By the 1890s he nearly monopolized all aspects of the sporting-goods industry. He increased market share by advertising heavily in sporting magazines and sponsoring tournaments to promote his merchandise. A. G. Spalding and Brothers became closely identified with the governing agencies of various sports by publishing their guidebooks and rules, and by becoming their official supplier of equipment, a status that seemingly certified their products' quality. Spalding employed the same business methods as other captains of industry who restructured their businesses to control the supply of raw materials and the distribution of finished goods. For instance, Spalding bought his own lumber mills to guarantee a steady supply of wood for manufacturing baseball bats.

Entrepreneurs developed new products that improved the performance of sandlot players as well as elite athletes. For example, the speed of racing crews was enhanced in 1870 by the introduction of sliding seats, and subsequent innovations such as swivel oarlocks, and smooth, lacquered, lightweight racing shells. Harness racing was dramatically enhanced by streamlined sulkies with pneumatic tires (1888) that cut the mile record by about five seconds. Baseball was improved by the introduction of the catcher's mask and chest protector, enabling the receiver to move closer to the batter. Ball games were ameliorated by the use of vulcanized rubber that produced more elastic and resilient balls. A particular improvement came in golf, the new rubber-cored golf balls of the early 1900s enabling players to hit up to seventy-five yards farther than with the old gutta-percha ball, a development that required architects to design larger golf courses.

The bicycle was one of the most important of the new sporting goods, providing urbanites with personal transportation to go wherever and whenever they wanted. A "machine in the garden,"

the bicycle enabled millions of middle-class men and women (who could afford its high cost) to escape modernity and the crowded industrial city for pastoral landscapes and a slower pace of life on a vehicle that was itself a testament to modern technology. The first bicycle was Pierre Lallement's velocipede, invented in France in 1865. He brought the "boneshaker" (nicknamed for the quality of its ride) to America one year later. A riding fad began in 1868 in eastern cities that caused many municipalities to pass regulations curtailing cyclists who interfered with horseback riders and pedestrians.

The velocipede was superseded by the English ordinary, an odd-looking vehicle first exhibited in 1876 at Philadelphia's Centennial Exposition. It had a large front wheel, sixty inches in diameter, and a tiny rear wheel that lightened the machine's weight. The ordinary had some distinct disadvantages. A new bicycle cost a steep \$100, was hard to master, uncomfortable to ride, and dangerous to maneuver. Most riders were middle-class daredevils who had conquered the difficult techniques of mounting, riding, and braking, and traveled at high speeds. Manufacturer Albert A. Pope championed the ordinary by promoting cycling magazines and cycling organizations. In 1878 he established a cycling club in Boston, the first in the United States, and also helped organize the League of American Wheelmen. The LAW was a national pressure group with the goal to galvanize riders into a voting bloc to rapidly secure access to city streets and parkways. The league also provided other services such as publishing road maps and evaluating routes to make cycling more enjoyable.

The invention of the English safety bicycle in the late 1880s created a secure, comfortable, easy-to-ride, lightweight vehicle with equal-sized pneumatic tires and efficient coaster brakes. Although the newer bicycles were still not cheap—a medium-quality vehicle cost \$100—cycling rapidly became enormously popular. The new vehicle led to a new bicycle fad in the mid-1890s enjoyed by some 4 million cyclists. By 1896, 1.2 million bicycles were produced annually, and at the turn-of-the-century Americans owned 10 million bicycles. Riders often joined cycling clubs that provided them an instant community of people who shared the same passion. There were over 500 cycling clubs by 1895. One of their duties was to sponsor races for their members, including 100-mile events (known

as a “century”). Just completing the course was victory enough for most riders. There were other local amateur events, such as the annual fifteen-mile Chicago-to-Pullman Race that attracted up to 400 participants.

Manufacturers promoted the safety bicycle by subsidizing professional riders whose victories ostensibly confirmed their machine’s high quality. Six-day indoor bicycle races dated back to 1879, and ten years later, the first professional women’s six-day event was staged at New York’s Madison Square Garden. Major races at the Garden in the 1890s drew up to 10,000 spectators. In addition to the long-distance events, professional sprint racing was also very popular. The sprints were dominated by African American Marshall “Major” Taylor, world champion in 1899 and American champion in 1898 and 1900.

Cycling was the most popular physical activity among middle-class women. Most health professionals and other advocates applauded cycling for women because it provided exercise, an affordable and independent mode of transportation, and an escape to the countryside. Cycling necessitated the wearing of less-restrictive sports clothes that signified women’s growing liberation from Victorian patterns of dependence and subservience. Riders discarded corsets and floor-length dresses for slightly scandalous bloomers and split skirts. Conservative critics found the sport stressful and feared it might encourage housewives to shun domestic chores. Detractors also pointed out that cycling threatened Victorian respectability by fostering coed activities and making women too independent and visible. No woman challenged prevailing criticisms about cycling more than Annie “Londonderry” Cohen Kopchovsky, a first-generation American, and a married woman with three children, who bicycled around the world in 1894–95!

Historian Richard Harmond has pointed out that safety bicycles epitomized progress, symbolized the victory of technology over environment, and provided a means to escape the negative features of urban industrialization. The bicycle was a machine, yet it freed people, albeit temporarily, “from the disruptions and stresses of a machine-based society.” Nature became more accessible for riders who exercised while enjoying visions of beauty and peace of mind.

These could be brief jaunts or more substantial tours on well-organized routes, along which riders could stay at LAW-approved inns.

By the turn of the century, well-to-do men seeking a more exciting and prestigious experience turned to the more complex, speedier, and expensive automobile, which originally cost several thousand dollars. The car's early history recapitulated that of the bicycle, which it displaced as the primary mode of individual transportation. By World War I the bicycle was mainly a toy for children. The automobile and the internal combustion engine were invented in Germany in the late 1880s, and their cars set the early standard. Several of the first American automobile manufacturers, including Henry Ford, came from the cycling business, and they applied their experience to car production. They tested their vehicles and advertised their quality by participating in car races, starting in 1895 with a fifty-three-mile round-trip contest from the South Side of Chicago to Evanston. Six cars started the race, which was won by automobile manufacturer Charles Duryea. Only one other car finished. Henry Ford got into the racing business seven years later. He originally drove his own cars before turning them over to professionals such as Barney Oldfield. Races in enclosed ovals were sponsored by local boosters in Atlanta, Daytona Beach, and Indianapolis to promote tourism and draw attention to their cities. The first Indianapolis 500 in 1911 drew 80,000 spectators. There were also road races that tested endurance and publicized the need for good highways, such as the long-distance Glidden Tours inaugurated in 1904.

The first race across the United States was in 1905 from New York to Portland, Oregon, by two old runabouts, later described as "motorized buckboards," which the winner completed in forty-four days. Just three years later, six cars set out west from New York to cross the continent and then the world, ending in Paris, 22,000 miles away. (They ferried across the Pacific.) The race was won by American George Schuster in a Thomas Flyer. The following year, Alice Huyler Ramsey, at the age of twenty-two, became the first woman to drive across the United States in her Maxwell DA, doing so in fifty-nine days.

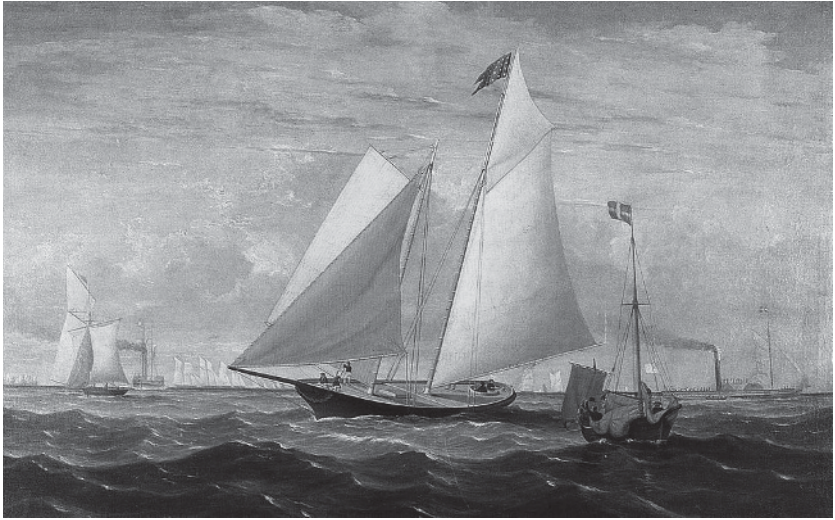
By the 1920s, cars were readily available mainly because of Henry Ford's innovative production and marketing of the Model T,

which brought the cost down to \$290, as well as an improved standard of living, installment buying, and the emergence of a second-hand market. Car racing remained a significant sport in the 1920s, but the automobile's primary role in sport was mainly transporting fans to ball games and golfers to the links.

Conclusion

The unparalleled rate of urbanization and industrialization in the nineteenth century and the emergence of a positive new sports creed in response to the problems created by rapid urban growth shaped the emergence of American sport in the period between 1850 and 1920. Justification for widespread sporting interest came from the new creed that encouraged physical fitness and athletic competition in nongambling, humane sports as a substitute for traditional vile amusements and the lost pastoral life. Sports were seen as a partial antidote to such urban problems as the antisocial behavior of the male bachelor subculture, unacculturated immigrants, high rates of disease, and the fear of declining vitality and manliness among middle-class urbanites. Yet as cities grew, access to healthful outdoor playing space became more difficult because of competing needs for ever-more-valuable space. Urbanites in the industrial city relied heavily on public parks near their homes for sporting opportunities.

Cities provided an ample market in a physically concentrated area to encourage industrialists to manufacture sporting equipment; and sufficient numbers of potential ticket buyers stimulated entrepreneurs to promote commercial spectator contests. It was in the cities where major technological breakthroughs were employed to facilitate the growing interest in sport, ranging from communication and transportation innovations to mass production of sporting equipment. Once a sound base was established for the rise of a modern sporting culture, people from different social classes and ethnic groups operating within the constraints of the industrial radial city shaped the emergence of sport as a popular mass institution.



The Yacht *America* Winning the International Race, 1851. Commodore John Cox Stevens of the NYYC and five others formed a syndicate and hired George Steers to design a 101-foot yacht to race in England. *America* won the race around the Isle of Wight against fifteen British rivals in a huge upset, demonstrating the prowess of American seafarers and naval architects. This was the first major victory of American sportsmen over Great Britain. Painting by American Fitz Henry Lane. *Courtesy, The Athenaeum.*

William Walker Martin (1860–1942) on an ordinary bicycle with its large front wheel and small rear wheel. Martin was an outstanding professional rider who, in 1891, won a six-day professional race at Madison Square Garden, New York, covering 14,66 miles, for which he earned \$2,000. Considered the long-distance champion of the world, in 1894 he won the 10-mile and 20-mile world championships. *Library of Congress, (LC-USZ62-105442)*

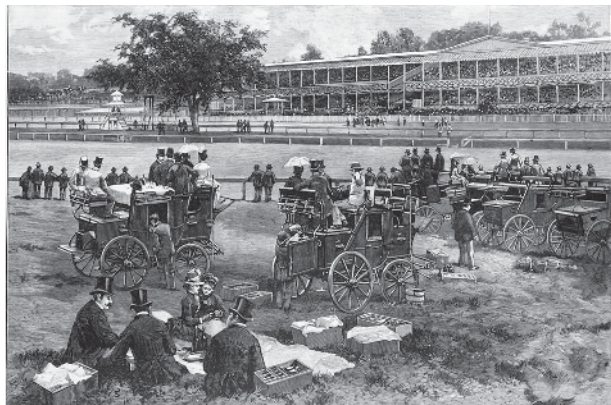




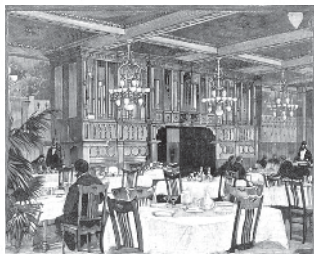
Indianapolis 500 in 1913. Ten of 27 cars starting the third Indy 500 race finished the entire distance. The race was won by Jules Goux of France, driving a Peugeot in 6 hours: 35 minutes and leading for 138 laps. He earned \$21,165—more than double the second place finisher. *Library of Congress, (LC-DIG-ggbain-13113)*



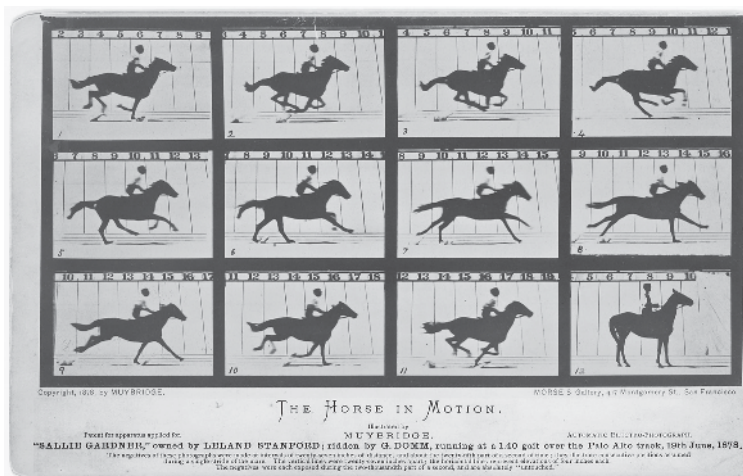
Central Park, Winter. The Skating Pond. Currier & Ives lithograph, 1862. Co-ed ice skating became a popular fad in the early 1860s following the construction of New York's Central Park. It was one of the few active pleasures that men and women could enjoy together. *Library of Congress, (LC-DIG-pga-00646)*



In 1886, elite racing fans rode their luxurious carriages to Jerome Park in New York, dressed in their finest attire. They had the option of watching from the infield or the lavish clubhouse. Drawn from photographs by Bidwell. "Coaches at Jerome Park on a Race Day." Harper's Weekly 30 (19 June 1886): 389. Library of Congress, (LC-USZ62-10637)



The Morris Park Racetrack's \$240,000 clubhouse opened in 1891 in what is today part of the borough of the Bronx, New York. The six-story building, open year-round, had sixty-rooms, including forty-two bedrooms. It combined the finest features of the country club and the downtown city club including a huge ballroom. The piazza overlooking the race course seated 1,000 people. "The Club-House of the New York Jockey Club," Harper's Weekly 335 (29 June 1891): 465.



The Horse in Motion. “Sallie Gardner,” owned by Leland Stanford, running at a 1:40 gait over the Palo Alto track, 19th June 1878. These photographs were taken by Eadweard Muybridge (1840–1904), a noted British photographer who pioneered the study of animal and human locomotion in the late 1870s, employing multiple cameras to capture motion in stop-action photographs. His work demonstrated that running horses actually have all four feet off the ground at one moment. *Library of Congress, (LC-DIG-ppmsca-06607)*



Upper-class racing fans enjoyed a gracious ambience at the Saratoga Racetrack on 5 August 1905. The day’s highlight was the Saratoga Special for two-year-olds, won by Mohawk II, owned by state racing commissioner John Sanford. *“The Racing Season at Saratoga: The Running of the ‘Saratoga Special,’”* Harper’s Weekly 49 (19 August 1905): 1191.



Isaac Murphy, America's Leading Jockey of the Nineteenth Century. Murphy (1861–1897) won three Kentucky Derbies (1884, 1890, 1891), and four of the first five American Derbies (1884–1888) in Chicago. The most respected and admired African American athlete of his era, he reportedly won a remarkable one-third of his races, with earnings that ranged up to \$20,000, excluding bonuses. Murphy holds records that remain unbeaten to this day. *Library of Congress, (LC-USZ62-50261)*



One of the earliest photographs of women playing golf, at the Jackson Sanatorium in Dansville, New York, 1890. Established in 1854, Jackson was renowned for its health-inducing waters. The women wore long dresses and shirtwaists which was the accepted costume for female golfers. *Library of Congress, (LC-USZ62-63587)*



Twenty-year-old Francis Ouimet, a local boy, at Brookline Country Club at the 1913 U.S. Open. He was the first American amateur to win the event, defeating renowned British professionals. Ouimet's success helped to bring the sport into the mainstream. *Library of Congress, (LC-DIG-ggbain14173)*



Men and women playing and watching tennis on public courts at New York City's Central Park in the early 1900s. The middle-class had been playing the game on public sites for around two decades. *Library of Congress, Detroit Publishing Company Collection, (LC-D401-17424)*



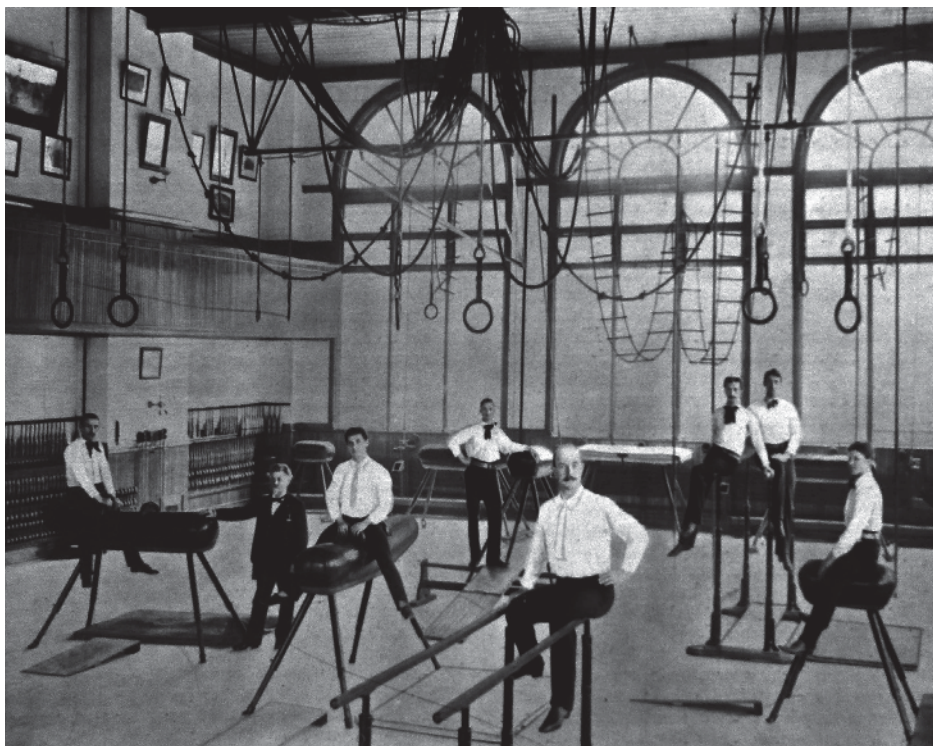
Boys Playing Ball in a Boston Alley. Space in inner-city neighborhoods was at a premium. Youths playing baseball had to be creative in inventing their own ground rules to adapt the game to the available spaces, such as the narrow alley in this Lewis Hine photograph. *Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Cornell University Library (5780PB32F25B)*



The “Manly Art of Self-defense” Newsboys’ Protective Association, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1908. Lewis Hine was an investigative photographer for the National Child Labor Committee, and documented working and living conditions of American children in the early 1900s. Newspaper boys sold papers on city streets at the turn of the century, earning about thirty cents a day. They were often living on their own, and needed to defend themselves against bigger boys who would steal their papers. *Library of Congress, (LC-DIG-nclc-03176)*



The *National Police Gazette* Appeals to the Male Bachelor Subculture. Publisher Richard K. Fox overtly sold sports, violence, and sensuality to his working-class readers. It was renowned for its engravings and photographs of scantily clad women, notably strippers, burlesque dancers, and prostitutes. His covers seemed to just avoid violating the Comstock Law of 1873 that banned the distribution of salacious publications through the mail. *Courtesy of National Police Gazette Enterprises, LLC. Used by permission.*



Gymnastics room at Turner Hall, Milwaukee, Wisconsin ca. 1900. George Brosius (second from left, in suit) was Turner Hall's first salaried gymnastic instructor in the mid-1800s. Brosius promoted physical education in Milwaukee's public schools. A Brosius student would later introduce his training methods to West Point Military Academy. *From: George Brosius, Fifty Years Devoted to the Cause of Physical Culture, 1864–1914 (Milwaukee: Germania Publishing, 1914), p. 69. File:Milwaukee Bundesturnhalle.jpg*