

# Ice Hockey, the King of Winter Sports

*The Great National Game of Canada Starts on its World  
Wide Campaign of Expansion*

By F. C. Lane

The Baseball Magazine in this number begins its nation-wide campaign for organized ice hockey. Its efforts in the future will be directed toward the establishment of the professional hockey on a firm foundation in the United States. This is a tremendous undertaking. There are several complicated problems involved and a large number of obstacles which must be overcome, but the time is ripe for action. Already hockey is the true national game of Canada. It is the King of Winter Sports and the day has come when it should rank among the foremost of American pastimes.

**H**OCKEY is the king of winter sports. In all the round of games which depend for their existence on ice and snow, it is the only one which is at all enjoyable from a spectator's standpoint. It is the one great winter sport worthy of the name and its rise to prominence in the past few years has been the spectacular event of the sporting world.

Canada is the home of hockey. A broad fertile land teeming with possibilities, with a wealth of resources which dazzle the seeker for fortune, it was fitting that it should be the source of so really wonderful a game. The supremacy of Canadian wheat lands, of Canadian forests and stock ranches and mines is upheld in the field of athletics by its marvellous national pastime, hockey.

Canada is pictured to many observers as a bleak, forbidding country walled with impenetrable barriers of ice and devastated by sleety storms from the Arctic. Broad stretches of Canada do indeed follow such a description, but these sections are not the Canada of boundless wealth and inexhaustible re-

sources and undreamed-of prospects, which has been the home of the great Canadian game. True, the climate is a northern one and the winters are severe in some parts, but this very fact has given its people the hardihood to cope with the disadvantages among which they labored and to vanquish those disadvantages. There is a vigor in the frosty air which is revealed in the favorite sport of this hardy people, a game which thrills with matchless energy, which fairly revels in the glitter of skates, the whirl of ice flakes and the clang of steel on the frozen floors of its arenas.

Hockey is the national game of Canada. Its growth has been phenomenal. From a crude beginning it spread rapidly to the farthest confines of that mighty empire which the zeal of the Hudson Bay Company had opened to the magic touch of civilization. It speedily embraced all classes, ranks and stations in its wide list of enthusiastic supporters. It has rivalled baseball in its democracy. It is the one sport on the face of the earth today which is a worthy compeer to the prince of American



THE GREAT TOBOGGAN SLIDE AT MONTREAL.

games. The rise of hockey to a position of prominence in the sporting world has been as spectacular as one of its own contests on one of its own rinks. Starting not more than twenty-five or thirty years ago as an offshoot or development of the old Scotch game of shinty, hockey rapidly developed. It spread all over the country from coast to coast, and everywhere it was played with the same enthusiasm. Like baseball, it passed through the various stages of an amateur pastime till it reached the days when it was neither amateur nor strictly professional. Players received uncertain salaries and the profits were also uncertain. This was not desirable nor of long continuation. Fortunately the game speedily emerged into the safe haven of professionalism.

There has been much discussion of this question in the United States and professionalism has often been referred to as the grave of amateur sport. This is almost never the fact, as is abundantly shown in the case of baseball. Rather professionalism widely develops the range and scope of any sport. Professional hockey has not been of long duration, even in Canada. It has been in existence not more than five or six years, and there is at present only one large league really worthy of the name, the Canadian National Hockey Association.

This comprises six clubs: two, the Wanderers and the Canadians, at Montreal; two, the Tecumsehs and the Torontos, at Toronto; one, the Ottawas, at the beautiful Canadian capital; and one, the Quebec club, at the ancient city of provincial France, overlooking the St. Lawrence River from its impregnable bluffs.

This is the one great professional league of Canada. In addition there is a new professional league forming in the far west on the fertile Pacific slope, with its headquarters in the imperial city of Vancouver. This league consists of three clubs, embracing three cities of the section.

That the professional game has not been detrimental to the amateur is shown by the fact that the whole landscape is dotted with amateur hockey clubs. They are almost as numerous as the snowflakes on a November day in Labrador. Some idea of their almost infinite number may be gathered from the fact that in the one city of Montreal there are between four and five hundred amateur hockey clubs. Where do they all play? In the numerous rinks, on ponds and lakes and the frozen surface of the great St. Lawrence — anywhere and everywhere a polished surface of ice presents itself.

The history of hockey is one of the most remarkable in the annals of sport.

It has swept the prairie provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan and Alberta like one of their own autumn prairie fires. It has spanned the mighty gorges of the Rockies and roused new thrills and fancies on the slumbering coast of the Pacific, but just awaking to the matchless prospects of its own golden future. It has carried away both conservative eastern provinces and the enthusiastic western settlements with its overwhelming enthusiasm. It is the wonder of the sporting world.

The miners of the fabulous Cobalt region imported trained teams to battle at the national game on their fields of silver ore. Arthur Ross, the most famous of Canadian players, told me that he received on this occasion the sum of one thousand dollars for two contests in which he took part, or the regal salary of five hundred dollars an hour for the actual time consumed in play. Even the fabulous bonus to the fortunate victors in the late series for the championship of the baseball world will hardly equal this.

The past history of hockey has been a glittering success. Its present is well rounded with prosperity. Its future is assured. But that future is restricted by two handicaps which curtail in large measure any immediate prospect of growth or expansion. Fortunately, however, both are capable of being remedied. One of these handicaps is the lack of adequate rink facilities. The present welfare of hockey is far more the sport of the elements than is the case in baseball. In the great American game the conditions overhead determine the play to a large extent. In Canada it is the conditions under foot which govern the national contests. The game is played everywhere on natural ice, and so the beginning and close of the season are regulated by the condition in the frozen rinks and streams. There can be no doubt that eventually and in the very near future at that, this state of affairs will be obviated, at least so far as the professional leagues are concerned, by the erection of commodious arenas where the game will be played on artificial ice and no longer be the sport of

wayward elements. Already a magnificent new arena is being constructed at Toronto, where the game may be played under these conditions. This arena will seat in the neighborhood of six thousand people.

The second great handicap to the growth of hockey is the fact that the Canadian cities of size and importance are already, with few exceptions, included in the present leagues, and any extension of a far-reaching nature must be conducted on alien soil. We will deal with this problem a little later.

Before going any farther into a field which offers many fascinating features for investigation let us see in what way Canadian ice hockey, which is unquestionably the national game of Canada, is fitted to become the great international winter pastime. How does it compare, for instance, with the great national game of America, baseball?

Broadly speaking, there are points which favor baseball in such a comparison and there are other points in which we must admit to be fair that hockey is not only the equal but the superior of the diamond contest. It will pay the interested observer to examine these points a little more in detail.

*First*—Baseball has one immeasurable advantage over hockey in that it may be played everywhere from the Arctic circle to the heart of the tropics. Hockey, being strictly a winter sport, is limited to northern climates, even on artificial ice. This is an advantage in favor of baseball only as a world game. It does not apply, of course, to those favored regions which welcome the strenuous winter sport as well.

*Second*—Baseball, being a strictly open-air game, allows the presence of enormous crowds, which it would be impossible to seat in any arena yet constructed for the staging of a hockey contest. Hockey is therefore on the whole a more exclusive game than baseball.

*Third*—Hockey can only be played by the same team two or three times a week. Baseball, of course, is a daily occurrence. The reason for this difference is readily apparent. In hockey



TRAVELLING UNDER DIFFICULTIES IN THE CANADIAN FOREST.

every man on the ice except the goal-keeper is in constant strenuous action, and the pace the professional player travels during a match is the pace that kills. In baseball, however, only the pitcher is worked really hard all the time, and pitchers are seldom called upon to perform oftener than twice a week.

*Fourth*—Baseball, as it is not so strenuous a game as hockey, allows the players to last longer. A hockey player is old at 30, and 32 seems about the limit for a good player.

*Fifth*—Hockey is a more dangerous game than baseball. Perhaps it would be better to say that it has been more dangerous than baseball. Just now every effort is being made to eliminate the danger so far as possible and the rules will doubtless show a perceptible improvement in this respect.

*Sixth*—Baseball is a much superior game to hockey in that it allows records and comparisons of individual play by means of batting and fielding averages. Unfortunately, in hockey every position is so distinct it is hard to compare the individuals on a team, man by man, and fully as hard to compare the holder of a position on one team with the holder of a similar position on another. This feature of hockey, however, makes team play immensely more valuable than individual play. The three-hundred hitter

of a baseball team may stand out by that very fact above his fellow players, but in hockey the record of the individual is always merged in the record of the team.

So much for the advantages of baseball.

A further study of the problem reveals the fact that hockey, while it yields to baseball in interest on some points, is superior in others.

*First*—Hockey, like baseball, is a game where individual play stands out conspicuously, where every detail and feature of the game can be observed by the spectator. But hockey is a more showy, a flashier and more spectacular game than baseball will ever be. It has no close rivals in this particular. The enthusiastic baseball fan who has never witnessed a championship match between two professional Canadian teams may not admit this, but it is nevertheless the truth.

*Second*—Hockey is a much faster game than baseball, and if anything, more scientific. The tremendous speed of the trained hockey player is never closely rivaled on the diamond. There is nothing in the American game to compare with the lightning rapidity of a well-timed, well-executed play on a championship rink. The great American public, above all things, likes speed

and precision in execution. In hockey, both speed and precision reach their highest development.

*Third*—Hockey, being essentially an indoor game, is almost always played in the evening. In this respect it has a distinct advantage over baseball. Thousands of loyal fans are prevented from witnessing the bulk of the summer's games because they interfere with business pursuits. As hockey comes in the evening, however, the great mass of the population who wish to see the game are able to do so without interfering in any way with their daily work.

A brief general comparison of hockey and baseball shows each to be unrivaled in its own particular field. A striking feature of the case is that neither conflicts in any way with the other. Baseball is a summer sport, pure and simple. Its schedule does not begin until after the hockey season has closed. Its schedule ends before the hockey season begins. These two great games, therefore, do not trespass at all on each other's special territory. Both are essentially spectacular, full of thrills which fascinate the spectator. Both are scientific to the maximum capacity of human skill. Both are embodiments of the highest attainment in skilled muscles, trained minds, and all that enters into the best in athletic achievement. Both are almost universally popular on this continent, whenever and wherever they are played. Baseball is the king of summer pastimes; hockey, on the other hand, is no less the king of winter sports.

In view of all this, the average sport-lover might well ask, "If hockey is so truly wonderful a game, why has it not been incorporated among the leading American pastimes?"

This is a fair question and may be answered with little difficulty. *First*, patriotism enters very largely into the question. The American people, as a whole, are ultra-patriotic and little inclined to value institutions which have their origin outside their own country. Professional hockey is a product of Canadian energy, and the American people, carried away with enthusiasm for their own wonderful game, and the

lesser enthusiasm of the gridiron and various other sports, have not showed the good judgment which they usually display in the matter of professional hockey.

Amateur hockey has met with a very favorable reception in this country. It has become a leading game with the colleges, and now disputes with baseball and football for the most popular place in the intercollegiate contests. Amateur hockey in various cities has also been immensely popular.

In addition to the general sweeping statement of patriotic conservatism, the main obstacles in the way have been, first, lack of suitable equipment, and second, mistaken ideas in regard to professionalism.

The first of these problems is not so large at present as it has been, and is rapidly being solved by the erection of magnificent arenas in various American cities. Already there is a remarkably well equipped institution of this kind in Boston, a building which rivals the best in Canada. There is another at Cleveland, one at Chicago, one at Pittsburg, and one at New York. Others are in process of erection in various American cities. It must be remembered that the Canadian game has flourished under natural conditions. There is a stable winter which holds the ice in good condition from the time it fairly freezes until the time of the spring thaws. In Boston, New York, or almost any other of the large American cities these conditions would not apply.

Professional hockey in the United States can flourish only with permanent and well-equipped arenas, supplying artificial ice. The climate is not stable, and the weather conditions entirely unfitted for the game as played under natural conditions in Canada.

Lack of suitable equipment has been one of the main reasons for the lack of progress, but it can hardly be urged at present, as it will certainly not be an equal handicap in the future. As far as it constitutes a valid objection

to the establishment of American hockey on a professional basis, it can practically be dismissed.

As for the second great handicap, the criticism of the professional side of the game offers even less of logical objection. Those influences which have been most important in guiding the policies of hockey in this country have made several protests against the professional game. First, they have claimed that professional hockey would ruin the prospects of the amateur sport. Second, they have urged that the mere fact that professional hockey was popular in Canada was no proof whatsoever that it would be popular in the United States, and third, that even if hockey were finally incorporated among American professional sports, education of the public to its value would be a long and difficult process. It is hardly necessary to state that all of these objections are without logical foundation.

There are two great reasons for saying that professional hockey would not in any way injure the popularity of the amateur sport. First, the experience of organized baseball has disproved all such reasoning. In the days when baseball was first made a professional sport, the interest in the game, instead of being at all diminished, was tremendously increased. This growth has more than kept pace with the development of professional organized baseball. The establishment of national leagues of paid ball players gave the game an amount of advertising and a secure foundation for its future progress and development that a hundred years of mere amateur baseball could never have given. It is not too much to say that professionalism has been the life of organized baseball. Professionalism would no less prove to be the life of organized hockey.

Second, this very fact has been abundantly illustrated in the case of Canadian hockey. Montreal supports two out of the six big league clubs of professional hockey, and in this very city of Montreal, with its two big clubs,



ARTHUR ROSS,  
THE TY COBB OF CANADIAN HOCKEY.

there are between four and five hundred amateur hockey clubs.

When hockey was established as a professional sport, interest in the home pastime was everywhere strengthened. Professionalism gave it that very concrete, definite stability which could never have been attained under the shadowy, ill-defined organizations of the amateur sport. Professionalism gave a permanency, a solidity, and a stability to the institution which was vital to its subsequent development and prosperity. Professionalism furnished that very element of importance which served to intensify popular interest in the amateur contests.

As for the second great objection to professional hockey, it is only necessary to say that Canada and the United

States are one, as far as similar tastes and temperaments are concerned. The citizen of Alberta is in no wise different from the citizen of Montana. While in the eastern part of Canada, although the same identity of customs and tastes can hardly be maintained, there is nevertheless no essential difference between the Canadian and the citizen of the Union. Both nations are so much alike that they are interested to the same extent in identically the same pastimes. Baseball is as popular in Canada as it is in the United States. Hockey, on the other hand, would be as popular in the United States as it is in Canada. This has further been proved by the fact that hockey wherever played on this side of the St. Lawrence River has excited quite as much interest, all things considered, as it ever has in the home of the Hudson Bay Company.

The third great objection to the establishment of professional hockey is as easily answered. Several of the leading men in American hockey have expressed to me their opinion that hockey would ultimately be a great professional game here, just as it is at Montreal and Toronto, but they have raised the objection that the public would have to be educated and that this educational process necessarily involved a long delay.

It is my sincere opinion that this view of the question is a mistaken one. Amateur hockey has proved immensely popular in the United States almost everywhere it has been played. A good match has drawn crowded houses at a much higher price of admission than is charged for a similar match at Montreal. Furthermore, hockey is a game which appeals immediately to the person who has watched a contest for the first time. A striking illustration of this fact was given me by Mr. E. J. Shepard, president of the Montreal arena. He told me that last winter a wealthy New Yorker was visiting him at his home in Montreal, on the eve of an important hockey match. It was a bitterly cold night, ten degrees below zero, and as hockey is played in

Montreal under natural conditions at a natural temperature, it would not seem to be an inviting situation.

However, being a sporting man of pronounced opinions, and never having seen a hockey contest, the New Yorker bundled up in a heavy fur coat and corresponding fur cap, and proceeded to the arena without any special interest, or any idea of becoming interested. The progress of events is best related by Mr. Shepard himself:

"At the end of the first period of play the prominent citizen from the United States had unbuttoned his fur coat and seemed perfectly warm and comfortable, and for a beginner, seemed to be taking unusual interest in the game.

"At the end of the second period of play he had discarded the fur coat altogether, and was becoming visibly more excited.

"At the end of the third and final period, he was lost in the crowd for a moment, but finally discovered on the front row of benches with his hat off, his inside coat unbuttoned, and perspiring freely, engaged in a heated argument with the referee."

This is a typical illustration of the hold which the Canadian national game obtains even on the observer for the first time. It is no exaggeration to say that hockey makes a quicker and more fascinating appeal to the casual observer than does baseball. So much for hockey, its history, its prospects, and its reception in the United States.

Let us glance for a moment at the present situation. Hockey is a wonderful game, fascinating in its every detail, of compelling interest. It is the national game of Canada. It has within it those universal characteristics which would make it equally popular among any people of similar tastes and habits. There is absolutely no doubt that hockey has a future of excellent promise in the northern and eastern States of our own country. The objections against an immediate realization of this dream, if it be called so, are not well grounded, as has been shown. The time has come when hockey must expand if it is to

progress. Canada, with all its wonderful resources, has few cities of a size sufficient to warrant a major league hockey club. The United States is teeming with such cities.

The situation is well understood in Canada. I talked with T. Emmett Quinn, the president, secretary and treasurer of the Canadian National Hockey Association, the real leader of the professional game. He agreed with me in every particular, and assured me he would be pleased to offer any assistance in his power toward establishing a corresponding major hockey league in the United States or extending the present national league so as to incorporate some of the leading cities of the Union. The main objection to the latter plan, as he pointed out, was the fact that hockey, unlike baseball, can best be played with a limited number of clubs, preferably not over five. In baseball ten or even twelve club organizations are not unmanageable.

The leaders of organized hockey in

Canada are of one mind on this plan. They see clearly that hockey is too large a game, too world-wide in its possibilities to be - long confined to its home shores. They have eagerly anticipated its extension beyond their southern borders, and stand ready and anxious to take a hand in this extension.

The Baseball Magazine can see no worthier opening for its endeavors in the field of athletic sport than by lending its unqualified support to this movement. It has during the past month conducted an extensive campaign for the establishment of professional hockey in the United States. This campaign is aimed to embrace leading cities of the northern and eastern States of this country, which are so located as to be capable of supporting an organized league, and which have a suitable rink for that purpose. Negotiations are pending at this time, and even long before this article reaches our readers it is almost certain that a definite organization will have been established.

*(The conclusion of this article, presenting information of unusual interest, will deal with the final chapters in the campaign for the establishment of hockey on a professional basis in the United States.)*

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