



## Open War in Hockey

How the National Game of Canada is Torn by Warring Factions—Hockey vs. Baseball—A Coming Sport

By JEAN DUBUC

Some brief but luminous comments on the national game of Canada are embodied in the following article by Jean Dubuc, the famous Tiger pitcher whom we last month hailed as the "Wizard of the Slow Ball." Dubuc, as we hinted in that article, is not only a unique figure in baseball circles where his fine record has attracted literally world wide attention, but is also engaged in a variety of other ventures. And most of his efforts (needless to say) have been crowned with a substantial measure of success. Dubuc is interested in hockey in a whole-souled, enthusiastic way. As a progressive citizen of Montreal he is an active supporter of that game which appeals so strongly to the Canadian metropolis. But he is more than a mere hockey fan. Aside from his love for the sport which is great, he has financial interest in the welfare of the game through his personal holdings in the stock of the famous Wanderers, the leading hockey club of Montreal. In this article he tells of his impressions of hockey, how it compares with baseball, and gives in addition a bird's-eye view of the great hockey war which is now raging throughout Canada.

**F**OR several years it has been my pleasure to be associated with ice hockey. To me it has always been one of the greatest of games and I have watched its remarkable growth with more than average interest. The fact that I have made Montreal so long my residence and that hockey is the national game of Canada has, no doubt, increased

that interest, but I am certain that no one of the many thousand spectators who annually watch the great championship games but is deeply impressed with the magnetism of this wonderful winter sport.

My first connection with hockey was in the winter of 1910. I had some business dealing with Mr. E. J. McCafferty,

who at the time was owner of the Wanderers, the hockey champions of the world. It was on this occasion that I saw my first professional hockey game. I was immediately carried away with the sport as is everyone else whom I have ever known. It seemed to me that the game was so fascinating in every particular that it certainly offered a wide field for investment and I was very ready to embark what little money I had available toward purchasing an interest in the club.

The winter of 1910 was the first opportunity I had had to witness a real championship game, but it was not my first introduction to the sport by any means. In fact, when I was about fifteen and attending school in Montreal I played the game myself in a very amateur way and grew extremely fond of it. But I did not remain in Montreal long enough at that time to become an experienced player, though I liked hockey immensely what I saw of it.

Any discussion of hockey immediately brings up a question of its merits as compared with baseball. In many ways hockey is even superior to its great American rival. It appeals far more quickly to the spectator watching a contest for the first time than does baseball. It is easier to grasp, easier to follow. It is immensely more spectacular than baseball, far faster and flashier. The speed attained by professional hockey players on skates cannot be even remotely rivalled on the diamond.

Again, in hockey almost every man is taking part actively in the game all of the time, while in baseball there are seldom more than three or four players involved in a given play. In baseball there are a great many gaps and lapses in play, while in hockey, on the other hand, every man on both teams, except perhaps the goal tenders, is playing at full speed practically all the time. There is certainly something doing in hockey every moment of play, and to a nation which loves speed in its sports there is no game which can compare with the Canadian favorite.

Hockey depends absolutely upon consistent team work to a far greater extent than does baseball. Individual stars can shine in hockey as in every other game, but by no means to the same extent as in baseball, for instance. There one

player, particularly if he be a pitcher, may in a given game be more than a match for the whole opposing team, but he cannot by any means exert so commanding an influence in a hockey game. On the other hand, there is not the uncertainty in a hockey contest that is the strongest feature of baseball. In hockey two teams must be pretty evenly matched to furnish that element of uncertainty which is so necessary a part of the sport. If there is any great difference in team strength the stronger team will defeat the weaker almost without exception. Of course, this is not the case in baseball, for there a very weak club may under some circumstances defeat the champions of the world. It is this element of uncertainty which always gives a weak club a chance that makes baseball so strong a favorite. Another advantage of baseball is the fact that quite accurate records of the individual players can be kept. This is not the case in hockey, where the players merely assist one another toward making goals and where the records of the individual are completely lost sight of in the success of the team as a whole. Baseball is a superior game, taking it day in and day out, but I do not believe there is any game in the world, not even baseball, that compares in genuine enthusiasm with a hockey contest between two evenly matched professional teams.

Canadians have taken kindly to baseball, and I believe they follow it with as much enthusiasm as is shown in any part of the United States but for all that hockey is their national game and without question the most popular sport in Canada. No doubt the baseball interest here is somewhat lessened owing to the fact that Canadians never had a pennant winning baseball club in any league of consequence and very few first division clubs. Personally, I believe that hockey would prove as popular in the United States as it has become in Canada if the public there had an equal opportunity of witnessing games of a high calibre. Wherever it has been played in the States, particularly in Boston and Cleveland, it has been received with a high degree of favor. This has been an indication of what it might become were it as it is in Canada.

Hockey has grown greatly in the last few years. Almost since last season a

strong western league has entered the field and seems destined to compete on an equality with the National Hockey League of Canada. This western league comprises three clubs situated at Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster. These clubs have proved good money makers and their promoters have spent large sums in securing the best possible talent. In fact, a state of affairs bordering upon open war now exists between the eastern league and its strong western rival. A great many of the eastern stars have jumped their contracts and already gone west.

The management of the western affairs rests largely in the hands of the Patrick Brothers who are paying big money and seem bent upon an effort to break up the National Hockey League. Personally, I believe the pace they are setting will prove too strong for them. Their big advantage rests in the fact that they own their own rinks while the rinks utilized by the National Hockey League are invariably owned by outside parties. Even in this wholesale invasion of eastern hockey there is some little benefit. Oddly enough a loss of a few star players may be even an advantage in hockey, for it may serve to even up the playing ability of the various clubs, making the contests more exciting and consequently more profitable.

This war has been one of the strong reasons for the great increase in salaries which has taken place in the last two years. A short time ago it looked as if the hostilities between the two organizations would be ended when Mr. Lester Patrick made a visit to Montreal; but a disagreement speedily arose between Mr. Patrick and Mr. Lichtenhein. Mr. Patrick accused Mr. Lichtenhein of running affairs in the National League and the latter then signed up two players whom Patrick had on his reserve list but who had jumped their previous contracts with Mr. Lichtenhein. Mr. Patrick then began the war in earnest by signing several eastern players at increased salaries and an agreement between the two factions seems as remote as ever.

I believe the permanent prosperity of hockey depends upon artificial rinks. Playing as many of them do upon natural ice they are completely at the mercy of the weather and an open season means a



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bankrupt one. A rink using artificial ice is as necessary to hockey at its present stage of development, as are large, well equipped grandstands to a big league ball park. The western league, which at present ranks in the outlaw class, has artificial rinks, but in the East the only rink using artificial ice is at Toronto. I believe such rinks are bound to come, but at Montreal it is a serious and almost unsolvable problem to find a suitable location.

Hockey crowds cannot compare with baseball in size for the capacity of any rink yet constructed is strictly limited, but average prices range considerably higher, varying from seventy-five cents to two dollars while all tickets at the big games are strictly at a premium. Considering the number of games they take part in the players' salaries are much higher than in baseball. Salaries range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 for sixteen games or two weeks' work. The western league has given many stars of the east \$2,500 with transportation both ways and expenses. In all there are about 250 hockey

players in Canada who are entitled to rank as professionals. The player generally lasts from five to six years and then he begins to slow up. Hockey is a very strenuous game, much more so than baseball. It is particularly hard on the legs and once the professional hockey player begins to lose his speed he is through, for speed is the whole life of the game. A slow man has no place in hockey. Professionals seldom play more than two games a week. That is about all that the average man could stand, but in some cases a player could take part in three contests per week if called upon.

Hockey is passing through the same phases in its history that baseball did some thirty years ago. Perhaps the western league is destined to gain the same fame in Canadian hockey that the American League did in the baseball world when it invaded the territory of the old National. Just at present affairs are in a somewhat chaotic condition and probably will not be settled until the conflict is over. There is no reserve clause in hockey as there is in baseball, and there

is nothing to prevent a player from leaving his club at the end of his contract season or even jumping his contract altogether. The big men in the hockey world are at present grappling with this problem and they are endeavoring to devise something which will take the place of the reserve clause in baseball.

There is nothing in hockey at present to take the place of the National Commission. Consistent effort is being made to install such a commission, but with no results up to date. The entire management of hockey in the National League rests upon Mr. T. Emmett Quinn, its president, who has done a great deal to put the game on a firm foundation and was re-elected this past season at an increased salary. The main problem which is engaging all parties just now is a settlement of the disastrous war which has at present torn the hockey world into two conflicting factions. This war is only a step in its progress, to be sure, but until it is terminated hockey cannot take the important position to which it is entitled in the sport world.

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