Basketball and Athletic Control at Oberlin College, 1896-1915

By Marc Horger
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

The early history of basketball remains a remarkably unexamined subject. This is unfortunate, because the game has the potential to be part of a wide variety of historical discussions. Its origins as a tool of physical education pedagogy, for instance, suggest its capability to speak to the complex interconnected relationships between professionalization, expertise, scientific knowledge, and reform ideology. Its popularity and rapid spread among diverse categories of people suggest a window into questions of race, gender, and ethnicity, as well as into the dynamic between entrepreneurship and the development of sport and recreation. Perhaps most interestingly, its characteristics as a game form and its use as an agent of acculturation and value transmission on city playgrounds and in YMCAs suggest connections to issues of social and institutional organization, the nuanced dynamic between organizers and organized, the role of the individual within an organizational structure, and the role of organizational structures themselves in early 20th-century American culture. These and a host of other vital and timely historical debates can be engaged using the game form and organizational structures of basketball as a prism.[1]

This essay does not purport to do all of these things. It does, however, use the emergence of basketball as an intramural and intercollegiate sport at Oberlin College as a means of addressing a few of them, especially issues of institutional control, reform ideology, and gender. While Oberlin was not a particularly influential institution in terms of the larger development of intercollegiate sport, a few of its unique institutional characteristics make it an interesting venue for examining the emergence of basketball within a specific context. Oberlin had by the turn of the century a strong physical education tradition, an outgrowth of the contemporary ethos of professional physical education emerging simultaneously at colleges and normal schools around the country—and the ethos basketball was invented to serve. This tradition tied into an older tradition of physical work indigenous to Oberlin. It also had a long history of coeducation, an established program of female as well as male physical education, and a program of women's

basketball that predated the introduction of the game for men. Oberlin therefore allows us to examine the relationship of basketball to the interrelated issues of education, reform ideology, professional expertise, organizational control over competitive sport, and gender, and to do so at an institution where the development of men's and women's basketball can be examined side-by-side.

Basketball was introduced to Oberlin men in 1902, and by the end of the decade it had become the second most important intercollegiate sport at the college. This essay argues that a confluence of interests between students, physical educators, and faculty/administration within the game form of men's basketball made possible its relatively quick and uncontroversial establishment as a fixture in student life at Oberlin. Basketball satisfied the interests of students by providing an additional avenue for intercollegiate athletic competition; it advanced the interests of Oberlin physical educators by expanding the institution's athletic offerings (and, they hoped, its level of athletic participation); it fit into faculty/administration efforts to attract a greater number of men to Oberlin by advertising its athletic and physical education opportunities; and it did these things within a framework of organizational control over competitive athletics that faculty and physical educators considered sufficient to control the "excesses" of athletic competition.

Basketball for women, introduced six years earlier than the men's game, developed along a different path and served a slightly different set of interests. Student athletic boosters called for men's basketball as an avenue of intercollegiate competition, institutional prestige, and school spirit; basketball for women was introduced from the top down by physical educators, and did not develop into a means of defining or representing the Oberlin community to the outside world. Competition was strictly intramural and only other women were allowed as spectators. Basketball for women did become a locus of community spirit and competitive expression, but only among women and only within the bounds of Oberlin. The game form itself was also markedly different, reflecting the opinion of physical educators that physical exertion and competitive sport provided a different set of potential benefits and posed a different set of potential dangers for women than for men.

This essay will also attempt to connect the development of basketball, as well as Oberlin's structures of institutional control over athletics, to larger reform trends in American culture. Oberlin's efforts to use institutional means to control the "excesses" of intercollegiate athletic competition and to shape athletic sport toward useful social and educational ends exhibited much congruence with currents of thought associated with the oft-maligned but still useful term Progressivism.[2] There was in the Oberlin system a desire to simultaneously broaden participation and centralize control; a desire to shape "natural" competitive impulses to desirable social and educational ends by blunting their excesses within wisely designed institutional structures; and a desire to foster the internalization of certain values through external organizational means.

To trace these developments most effectively, it is necessary to examine the institutional contexts within which basketball developed at Oberlin: a well-

developed philosophy of professional physical education, a previous history of intercollegiate athletic competition, and a mixed student-faculty system of control over athletics with which Oberlin administration was largely comfortable by the time basketball was introduced at the turn of the century. This essay will lay out these contexts individually before moving on to the development of the game itself.

Before beginning, it is important to note that another aspect of Oberlin's unique educational history did not impact the development of basketball there in any appreciable way—its long commitment to racially integrated education. No black basketball player appears in this period, and only a small number of black athletes turn up in other sports. The limited amount of information available about the place of blacks in student life suggests that by the turn of the century informal Jim Crow mores had begun to take hold among white students even at this longtime institutional friend of equal access for blacks.[3] In 1906, in fact, recently hired director of athletics C.W. Savage elected not to hire a black football coach, a man Savage himself thought was the best man for the job, specifically *because* of Oberlin's reputation as a friend of black education. "If the colored question were not so firmly attached to Oberlin reputation [sic]," Savage wrote to graduate manager George Jones, 'I would say, hire him by all means; but under the circumstances, I hardly think it would be wise." Despite the fact that Savage felt "[n]one of the other applicants so far as I can learn, measure up anywhere near him," he was not hired.[4]

Physical Education at Oberlin

Physical work of one sort or another had been a central element of Oberlin's education philosophy from its founding in 1833. All students were required to perform four hours of manual labor daily, labor which Oberlin guaranteed to provide. Manual labor remained a central tenet of Oberlin's educational ideology through the Civil War, though the work itself became harder to come by, by 1856 the college gave up on its earlier promise of guaranteeing all of its students Oberlin-arranged work. By the latter decades of the century, manual labor gradually gave way in the educational routine to an emerging commitment to organized, supervised physical education.[5]

The initial impetus for this shift came from students. A small gymnasium for men was built in 1861 by student subscription (the college agreed to provide land but refused to fund construction), but the Civil War all but killed interest in its use; it was torn down two years later. A more substantial and more permanent men's gym was built in 1873, by which time Oberlin's manual labor program had atrophied almost completely and gymnastic work had become more popular generally. Control of this facility passed from the student Gymnasium Association, which had raised the money to build it, to the college proper in 1877, and a gymnasium requirement of one sort or another faded in and out of the curriculum periodically throughout the 1870s and 1880s.[6]

Oberlin women, however (Oberlin had been coed since 1837), were the first to receive full-time professional instruction in physical education. A small separate

gymnasium for women was built in 1881 (replacing an older building that burned the year before), and in 1885 Oberlin hired a full-time professional to run it: Delphine Hanna, hired as Instructor in Physical Training. Hanna was one of the first and best-educated female physical educational professionals of the day, graduating from the Brockport State Normal School in 1874 and the Sargent Normal School at Harvard in 1885; she later earned an M.D. at Michigan in 1890. After trying and failing to obtain work teaching at normal schools in New York, Oberlin hired her provisionally, at very low salary, for one year. She stayed until 1920, moving up to Director of Physical Training, Women's Department, in 1887 and receiving a full professorship in 1903.[7]

Hanna's professional philosophy stressed expanding the influence of physical education through teacher training classes and organizing physical education along scientific lines. In addition to organizing and leading gymnasium classes for women (125 her first year) and a special class for local public school children, Hanna taught a physical education training course for men in which under-graduates were trained to provide knowledgeable instruction for classes in the men's gymnasium. Her instruction for women featured physical examinations and anthropomorphic measurement, and after 1900 Hanna's anthropomorphic charts were used widely by other colleges.*

A full-time professional to run physical education for men soon followed. In 1892 Fred E. Leonard was hired as Professor of Physiology and Director of Men's Gymnasium. Leonard was an Oberlin graduate who had been active as a student gymnasium supervisor, one of the undergraduates trained each year by Dr. Hanna to provide rudimentary supervision for men's physical training. Leonard had been student director of the gymnasium his senior year. After several years of advanced training in physical education and a stint as a YMCA physical director in Brooklyn, Leonard was hired, as a full professor, to teach classes in physiology and to direct physical education for men. His outlook on physical training and its place in education shaped physical education at Oberlin until his death in 1922.[9]

That outlook, consonant with the outlook emerging in prominent college gymnasiums and YMCAs around the country, stressed professionally trained supervision, rational organization, and scientific principles. It also stressed the importance of physical education to spiritual and intellectual as well as physical development and aimed to extend the benefits of physical education to as many students as possible. No student was allowed inside the gymnasium without a comprehensive physical examination and evaluation. Gymnasium work was never conducted without supervision (provided by Leonard and by undergraduate and graduate instructors trained for the work). The necessity of going about physical work in a rationally organized manner in order to achieve its maximum benefit was stressed. Vigorous physical work was considered a necessary balance in the educational routine against the supposedly feminizing influences of intellectual activity and religious training, and the benefits of physical education were seen to go beyond the physical condition of the body to the edification of the whole Christian man. It was a philosophy of physical education, in short, entirely

congruent with the physical training philosophy of the YMCA, which the game of basketball was invented to serve. The congruence is less than accidental; Luther Halsey Gulick, chief architect of the YMCA's "three-sided nature" philosophy of physical work, was briefly an Oberlin student and a member of Hanna's physical training course, an experience Gulick considered formative. In addition to being influenced by Hanna, both Leonard and Gulick were general products of the same professionalized ethos of physical education emerging at the time.[10]

The degree to which Oberlin's attitude toward physical education for men can or should be attributed directly to Hanna is difficult to determine. Ellen Gerber has argued that "[wlere one to trace their students, and their students' students, a family tree of famous physical educators could be constructed, with Hanna in reigning position," a conclusion Gerber bases in part on Hanna's influence on the formative years of Leonard and Gulick. A (very) tenuous line of influence can even be drawn from Hanna to basketball itself, if one remembers that James Naismith was a student of Gulick at the time he invented the game. This sort of reasoning, however, is easy to overstep. Clearly Hanna was a major influence on Leonard, though Gulick was at Oberlin only briefly and received the vast majority of his training and experience elsewhere. Furthermore, Hanna wrote and spoke little, making it difficult to pin down her philosophy with much more specificity than it is sketched out here. In the end, the most accurate thing that can be said about Oberlin's philosophy of physical education-for men and women-is that it was in line with the same ethos emerging throughout the profession in this period.[11]

This philosophy approved of competitive sport as a means of achieving the goals of physical education, but in a limited way. Here was a paradox: competitive sports offered great benefit to those who competed in them, in fact more benefit than ordinary gymnastic work, because participation in them was considered "natural," an organic expression of an individual's own recreative impulses, and therefore more likely to achieve lasting results. But because not all were suited by talent or inclination to participate, reliance on sport for physical training meant that those least in need of physical training received the most benefit. It was the man *incapable* of playing football or baseball from lack of physical fitness or lack of skill, in other words, Leonard sought most urgently to reach. Leonard sought therefore to encourage as broad a participation as possible in competitive sport at the class and intramural level, and to offer organized classwork for those without the talent or inclination to compete at all. Competitive intercollegiate sport was a positive thing if offered in conjunction with these broader physical education opportunities, as long as it was not the only thing a college relied upon to provide students with physical training and as long as it was controlled in such a way as to maximize the physical benefits and minimize competitive excess.[12]

Football and Institutional Control

When people spoke of such "competitive excess," of course, they generally had in mind the growing roughness and excessive thirst for victory at any physical

or educational cost increasingly associated with football. By the middle of the 1890s, Oberlin had both an established intercollegiate football program and a mixed system of student-faculty control over athletics that left it largely at peace with football during the professionalization and brutality controversies of the 1890s.[13]

Intercollegiate athletics had arisen at Oberlin much as they had at other colleges, largely through student initiative and under student control. A student Athletic Association formed in 1881 with the purpose of bringing Oberlin the joys of intercollegiate baseball competition. Oberlin faculty had resisted student petitions for intercollegiate baseball from as early as 1869, but now relented, and intercollegiate baseball under student control quickly became a fixture of student life. Athletic Association requests for intercollegiate football, however, continued to draw faculty vetoes until 1890, when the association was permitted to schedule a single outside game with Western Reserve University. This game was canceled by a Thanksgiving blizzard and never played, but precedent had been set; the faculty permitted a full schedule for the fall of 1891.[14]

Oberlin football quickly evolved into a quality game. The 1891 team went only 2-3, but the following year they hired an outside coach—none other than John Heisman, fresh from an illustrious playing career at Penn and at the first stop on a soon-to-be-legendary coaching career. This team, on which Heisman also played (by enrolling in a postgraduate art course), went 7-0 and outscored their opponents 262-30, including a 24-22 victory over emerging western football power Michigan. The 1893 team went 6-l and defeated both Chicago and Illinois. Although Heisman left after 1894 (and coached only two games in 1893, not uncoincidentally the two against Chicago and Illinois), the program remained strong through most of the 1890s. Oberlin continued to schedule, though increasingly not to defeat, larger eastern and western schools like Cornell and Michigan throughout the decade, and to handle the smaller Ohio schools which made up the bulk of their schedule with varying degrees of ease.[15]

Football's emergent success led the faculty to impose a greater degree of control over intercollegiate athletics. Through 1893, athletics had remained almost completely student-run. The Athletic Association, membership in which was open to all, met semi-annually and voted on officers, team captains, and team managers. Team managers handled the daily nuts-and-bolts of scheduling and team management; a student treasurer disbursed funds with authorization from the president and secretary; coaches were paid out of association funds, accrued mainly from gate receipts but occasionally augmented by special student subscriptions and fundraisers. The association also organized and oversaw class athletics. The faculty committee retained veto power over the association's actions.[16]

In 1894, the faculty added another layer of oversight. An athletic advisory board was formed to oversee the activities of the association, made up of three faculty members, three student members chosen by the captains of the varsity and class teams, and three alumni. Primary responsibility for scheduling and nuts-and-bolts daily management was also transferred in 1899 to a graduate

manager, George Jones '94, who delegated responsibility to undergraduate team managers as he saw fit; financial responsibility was split between an undergraduate and graduate treasurer. By the turn of the century, coaching was done primarily by Oberlin alumni. The system of control in place by 1900, in short, was a mixed one, a balance of student enthusiasm for competitive sport and faculty concern for controlling its excess.[17]

Edwin Fauver, football and baseball coach from 1900 to 1905, personified this mixed system. "Win" was a recently graduated Oberlin football hero, the quarterback on Oberlin football teams that went 12-2-1 in two years and outscored their opponents 142-6 in 1898. Fauver also played four years of varsity baseball and was one of *four* Fauver brothers who had outstanding athletic careers at Oberlin in the 1890s—including his twin brother Edgar, who also played two years of varsity football and four of baseball. After a year teaching physical education at Alma College, Win was hired in 1900, along with brother Gar, to coach Oberlin's varsity football and baseball teams.[18]

On the surface, the Fauver twins seemed the archetypal rah-rah 1890s football stars turned professional coaches. They led the 1901 squad to a (self-styled but more-or-less legitimate) Ohio Championship and capped the season with an aggressive exhortation to students and faculty in the student newspaper (the Oberlin *Review)* to intensify support for football in the name of school spirit and institutional prestige. "The scrubs have done their share..." wrote Win. "However, there are men in school who did not do what they could. It is to be hoped that next year a man will have to play foot ball or take gymnasium work." Win also suggested that Oberlin consider discontinuing class football altogether, in order to free up more men to help prepare and perhaps compete on the varsity squad. Brother Gar, in an equally aggressive article entitled "Oberlin's Foot Ball Needs," called on the college to provide its football program with two things all football coaches have been calling for since the beginning of time: more money and a larger coaching staff.[19]

The Fauver twins, Win and Gar, circa 1900.

Yet the gridiron was not the only institutional connection the Fauver twins had to Oberlin. In addition to being employed (and paid) by the Athletic Association to coach football and baseball, they

were also employed simultaneously (and paid simultaneously) by Oberlin proper in two other capacities—as instructors in the men's gymnasium (which they had been as undergraduates, with training from Leonard), and as academic instructors in Oberlin Academy (Win as a tutor in history, Gar as a tutor in Greek). The Fauver twins, in other words, had simultaneous personal commitments and financial dependencies to three different institutional outlooks concerning the role of athletics in college life: the boosterism of the Athletic Association, the physical education philosophy of Leonard, and the educational outlook of Oberlin proper.[20]

Oberlin faculty and administration were largely happy with this mixed system, an attitude evident in its public defense of college football during the 1890s-provided, of course, that football was carried on under wise and judicious institutional controls like its own. "An undiscriminating condemnation of foot ball would be most unreasonable," argued Oberlin president William Ballantine in his 1894 annual report, providing the institution took care to reduce the game's negative influences and preserve its positive benefits through wise and judicious controls. Oberlin had largely done so, Ballantine believed, much to its own benefit. "The manly and honorable bearing of our teams and student crowds has called out deserved praise."[21]

These, then, were the contexts in which basketball developed at Oberlin: a physical education philosophy committed to expanding access to athletic sports; a brief but largely successful history of intercollegiate athletic competition; and a mixed system of control over athletics with which the faculty was generally satisfied.

The Precipitate: Warner Gymnasium

In 1900, $50,000 dropped into these contexts from the benevolent checkbook of Dr. Lucien C. Warner for the construction of a new men's gymnasium. Warner was a successful New York businessman and philanthropist, an Oberlin alumni trustee, and a previous benefactor—a similar gift in 1883 built a concert hall for Oberlin's conservatory of music. He was also at the time the chairman of the YMCA International Committee. His gift met with great enthusiasm on campus. "Upon the announcement of the gift at chapel, a great burst of enthusiasm greeted it," said the Oberlin *Review.* "The men applauded, shouted, and gave the college yell for Dr. and Mrs. Warner."[22]

In a short speech at the groundbreaking ceremony, Warner spoke about the value of his own experiences in field athletics and manual labor at Oberlin in the 1860s, and Warner's lifetime of involvement with the YMCA certainly suggests that he indeed had some level of commitment to physical work as an important element of the complete education of the Christian man. But his gift was most likely spurred less by personal philosophy and more by the fact that by 1900 Oberlin faculty and administration considered the construction of a new men's gym the foremost educational need of the college. The gym built with Warner's gift, in fact, had been in the works throughout the 1890s, waiting only for the

money necessary to build. The faculty voted as early as 1890 that a report be prepared regarding the size requirements of a possible new gym, and a gym proposal outlined in 1893 matches almost exactly the description and dimensions of the building eventually built. Architectural plans were commissioned as early as 1897. The new Warner Gymnasium was finished and occupied by December of 1901.[23]

A new gym was considered so essential partly because of the desire to extend physical education to as many people as possible and the plain inadequacy of the old facility, but also because of faculty concern over the growing percentage of women in the college. In 1895, the ratio of men to women in the college proper was 225-146; by 1897, however, the split was 214-214, and by 1900 women outnumbered men 228-197. Faculty and administration feared this development would lower the prestige of the institution and upset the balance between men and women they deemed necessary to successful coeducation. Their fears were never articulated with more clarity than this. Certainly, however, they stemmed at least in part from the common notion that intellectual work was a feminizing influence to begin with, coupled with a belief that the primary educational purpose of Oberlin was to train men to be good Christians active in the world of affairs. To become primarily a women's college would lower their prestige in this respect and make it ever more difficult to attract high-quality male students. An expansive physical education program met this problem two ways, by drawing more men to Oberlin and by masculinizing them once they arrived. Replacing Oberlin's cramped and outdated gym with a modern facility comparable or superior to the physical education facilities increasingly available at other colleges was therefore considered an essential element of efforts to attract more men to Oberlin.[24]

Leonard certainly expressed these sentiments in the speech he gave at the alumni dinner after the gym's official presentation in June of 1902.

> [T]oo much scholarship may lead to unwholesome effeminacy and over-refinement, to a disinclination to undertake what is difficult or disagreeable.... There is still rough work to be done in the world, and a place for the primitive manly virtues—self-control, robust self-reliance, presence of mind, physical courage, and indomitable will. These qualities develop in an *active* life; they are not the product of the classroom or study.

Overheated expressions of the need to instill manliness in American men through fierce and brutal physical competition, associated for instance with the athletic outlook of Theodore Roosevelt and some other contemporary apologists for the roughness of football, did not generally typify the rhetoric of athletics and physical education heard at Oberlin. The above, in fact, is the boldest such statement I have discovered. The association of competitive sport and physical work with virility and manliness was, however, a basic if muted assumption of Oberlin's drive to attract men. Warner Gymnasium, Leonard added later in his speech, would be a powerful force for doing just that.[25]

A yearly publication entitled "Physical Education for Men at Oberlin College" was produced to advertise the facility. This photo-filled brochure showed off the

facilities of the new gym, outlined Oberlin's philosophy of physical education and system of control over intramural and intercollegiate athletics, and aimed at convincing men interested in athletics and physical culture that Oberlin was equipped to meet their interests. Warner Gymnasium was indeed an impressive structure, particularly when compared with the building it replaced. Its main hall was five times as large, and its locker room was larger than the whole of the old building and equipped with lockers for more than 400. It also featured a running track suspended above the main floor, an indoor baseball cage (itself also larger than the old gym), a physical education library and reading room, a large office for the Director of Athletics, modern shower facilities, and a trophy room in which the recently won 1901 state football cup was proudly displayed.[26]

The completion of the new gym brought an immediate call for the establishment of men's basketball from the student body, or at least from the Oberlin *Review.* This sentiment had not been expressed earlier for the simple reason that the old gymnasium was too small to even consider playing basketball in; its ceiling, for instance, was only 13 feet high. The push for basketball was in large part emulative: Oberlin needed a competitive basketball team as an avenue of competition and a matter of prestige *vis a vis* other colleges (here the *Review* had in mind not just other Ohio colleges, but also more prestigious Eastern schools like Harvard and Yale), and it was the duty of students to support such a team in the name of supporting the school. Because few men in the college had any previous experience in the game, however, the Athletic Association deemed it best to play only interclass games in 1902 in the hope of scaring up sufficient talent to form a credible varsity the next year. Lack of basketball experience among the student body did not dissuade the ever-confident *Review,* however, that ultimate success was possible. Despite Oberlin's start from scratch, the *Review* declared, "with proper training and faithful work it is possible to have a varsity which can successfully compete with the largest eastern colleges." Class captains were chosen, teams were organized, and Leonard set aside eight hours of gymnasium time a week for practice.[27]

The extensive fouling and sloppy play chronicled in the coverage of the 1902 class season suggests that the game was indeed novel to many. At the completion of the short class season, however, the champion freshmen felt confident enough to schedule a game with an outside team, a freshman team from Western Reserve. The Oberlin freshmen won this contest 37-11, aided by the fact that Reserve was unused to playing on a floor as large as Warner Gymnasium. Three hundred or so students and spectators turned out to watch the contest, which the *Review* hailed as proof that Oberlin had both the athletic talent and fan interest necessary to support a varsity in 1903. "Last week's game shows what our standing might be with other colleges," said the Review, "and every man who has within him the possibilities of a player, as well as every man who has played this year, should plan definitely and do what he can to make a good varsity team next year." At their annual meeting in June, the Athletic Association approved an amendment making basketball a department of the association alongside football, baseball, and track.[28]

The following year the athletic advisory board recommended that basketball be adopted as a varsity sport on a one-year trial basis, and the faculty agreed to approve a six-game schedule with outside teams (the schedule expanded to eight by season's end). No alumni or outside coach was secured; coaching responsibilities fell to team captain G.R. Brown, captain of the previous year's class champions and one of the few Oberlin students with previous basketball experience. The team's chances of reasonable competitive success were boosted by the matriculation that year of three players with previous competitive basketball experience. A hoped-for contest with Yale never materialized (and may have been only wishful thinking), but Oberlin did schedule Allegheny College, a team with an established program that competed successfully with the larger Eastern colleges Oberlinites were so eager to measure themselves against.[29]

The first season was a competitive success by any rational standard. Though Oberlin was defeated handily by Allegheny (fresh from a win against eastern power Penn), and was unprepared for their rough, physical style of play ("some of their tactics seemed to be questionable," complained the *Review),* Oberlin went 5-3 overall. A 37-16 drubbing by Ohio State in Columbus was rationalized by the fact that the Ohio State baskets were decidedly nonstandard (indeed they were; the homemade rims were backed by a thin iron strip rather than a proper backboard) and by the fact that Oberlin had defeated them at home a few weeks before (where Oberlin's large floor may have been almost as much of a home-court advantage as eccentric baskets). Their third loss, 39-17 at Western Reserve, was likewise soothed by a return victory at home.[30]

More encouraging from the standpoint of the sport's permanency was the fact that the games were attended well enough to pay for themselves. The *Review* noted crowds of a few hundred a game, and at year's end the basketball department of the Athletic Association showed a modest profit of $82.44. It was enough to convince the advisory board and the faculty to make varsity basketball permanent and allow the team an official coach for 1904—the versatile Win Fauver, now in charge of football, baseball, *and* basketball. Under Fauver's reins, the 1904 team went 4-4 and again showed decent student interest and a small budget surplus. The *Review's* post-season claim that Oberlin had the second-best team in the state was somewhat preposterous, but its simultaneous assertion that basketball had become "permanently established in Oberlin as the winter athletic sport" was a quite sensible one.[31]

Oberlin's quick embrace of men's basketball was a result of a confluence of interests between students, physical education professionals, and administration within the game form. Students embraced the game because it provided another outlet for emulative intercollegiate athletic competition in a season currently without it; it made that competition, in fact, year-round. "[I]t will keep up the interest in college sport throughout the year and thus do away with the necessity of a revival for next season," said the *Review,* adding that it also allowed Oberlin to expand its competition to schools it did not otherwise meet in intercollegiate competition.[32] Emulative competition against other schools had been a large element of student support for football (and baseball and track) in the 1890s,

The 1903 Oberlin basketball team, the school's first varsity squad. Top row, left to right: Howard P Grabill, Robert M. Case, John G. Olmstead, Arthur S. Barrows. Bottom row, left to right: George A. Vradenburg, Harlan W. Peabody, George R. Brown (ream captain), Harry S. Sandberg.

and continued to be into the 1900s; it was also part of the reason why Oberlin continued to schedule schools like Michigan and Cornell long after it was competitively unwise. This notion stressed the necessity of Oberlin to compete athletically against other schools "of its rank" (which generally meant schools above its rank) as a matter of institutional prestige and the duty of students to contribute to the effort both individually and as a community. Typical of this attitude is the following *Review* exhortation to flush out talent for the baseball and track teams:

> Mere sentiment and the most loyal support of these teams from the bleachers, will not be of use in obtaining the desired end. Every man in school should thoroughly test himself. and if any athletic ability is found he should consider it a duty as well as a pleasure to develop it to its utmost for the interest of his college.[33]

It is easy to caricature this sort of Gay Nineties, rah-rah college life impulse, or to write it off as a simple manifestation of over-enthusiastic and unrepresentative student newspaper boosterism. A series of things, however, suggest that intercollegiate athletic competition was seen by many in the student body as an important, even essential, element of community self-definition, and that the

expansion of such competition was considered beneficial to Oberlin's prestige as a national institution: the frequency and earnestness with which students were exhorted to support athletic teams in any way possible, even against their own personal inclinations, in the names of school spirit, school prestige, and school duty; the constancy with which they were urged to compare Oberlin to other institutions (especially to "the large Eastern institutions") in terms of prestige and innate value through the prism of athletic achievement; the eagerness with which Oberlin continued to schedule or attempt to schedule teams "at the highest level" in all branches of sport despite their increasing uncompetitiveness at that level; the degree to which other extracurricular activities like debate and oratory also served as agents of inter-institutional competition; even the frequency with which the goings-on of student life at other colleges, mostly the prestigious Eastern and Western ones, were dwelled upon in the student newspaper.[34] Coupled with this was a sense of emulation—if Harvard and Yale, or even Western Reserve, have basketball teams, it is necessary for Oberlin to have one.

It is interesting to note that this push for basketball as an index of institutional prestige came just as the split between institutions like Oberlin and the schools her students sought to equate her with—the old-line elite colleges-turned-universities of the East Coast and the rising multiversities of the Wes—was widening immensely, both academically and athletically. Increasingly, it would be regional liberal-arts institutions like Ohio Wesleyan and Western Reserve, and not national megaschools like Harvard or Michigan, that belonged in a discussion of Oberlin's peers. The football team's disastrous record against big-time programs after 1895 was already beginning to bear this out on the athletic field. The concurrent effort of Oberlin administration to re-dedicate the school to a liberal arts ideal in a university age was doing the same in the classroom. "Oberlin is not a university," said president John Henry Barrows in 1900, dedicating Oberlin instead to the task of becoming "the best of the Christian colleges of the world... where the spirit of a liberal culture shall ennoble gymnasium, athletic field, and the toils of the hand, as well as the halls of science, language, and philosophy."[35] This was a noble reassertion of Oberlin's traditional educational goals; it was also the pragmatism of a small institution finding itself in an era of large ones. There is reason to suspect that some students saw basketball as an opportunity to show that in a new avenue, Oberlin might yet be able to run with a few of the big dogs.[36]

This view of basketball as an important new means of demonstrating institutional prestige may or may not have been representative of the student body at large; a student newspaper is hardly a balanced source of student opinion. The nature of the institutional structures through which athletic innovation moved at Oberlin, however—innovation proposed through a student association in which membership was unrestricted and voluntary, their decisions subject to regulation by advisory board and faculty—suggests that it would take unusually strong and active student *opposition* to this outlook to stop its expression. The Athletic Association, in short, was filled with enthusiastic boosters of athletics likely to share the rah-rah worldview and with the institutional means to put it into action;

those who might not subscribe to this vision had little opportunity or inclination to fight it actively. Who among the Athletic Association would oppose an expansion of athletics, especially if it did not entail a financial liability?

One small group did, but on the grounds that the establishment of basketball as an officially recognized sport threatened their own prestige. In March of 1903, a small group of football players tried to revoke the Athletic Association's previous decision to grant a full varsity "O" to basketball players, suggesting some sort of lesser "O" award that would distinguish basketball from the more established sports. John Olmstead, one of the young first-year basketball players, smelled vindictive jealousy. "Now a few fellows," he wrote his parents, "specifically football men, headed by a sore-head who tried for center on the basket ball team but could not make it are trying to revoke the former action." Whatever their motive, sore-headedness did not prevail; Olmstead and his teammates got their O's, and basketball maintained equal billing in the association.[37]

The physical education department embraced basketball because it broadened the variety of athletics available at the college and increased participation in them. Construction of the new gym had done this independent of basketball, of course, just as had been hoped. Leonard estimated that the number of men, college and academy, participating in organized gym classes of one sort or another jumped from 160 to 374 in the first year the gym was open (117 of whom were Academy men required to attend). By 1904, 487 out of 588 men were enrolled in such classes, fully one-half of them college men enrolled voluntarily either for their own benefit or for elective credit. Leonard also estimated that by 1904 almost 92 percent of college men made use of the gym in one way or another, either in organized classes, team athletics, or personal use. Even if these numbers were inflated, as they likely were, their plausibility indicates that Warner Gymnasium indeed had great impact on the number of Oberlin men participating in some sort of supervised or organized physical work.[38]

Basketball advanced this cause in and of itself, particularly when class games are taken into consideration. Win Fauver's contention that 80 men participated in basketball in one form or another in 1904—10 varsity players, 10 academy players, 40 men on class teams, and 20 "unclassified" strays—may be a work of optimism, and many of those who participated were likely already participating at some level in other team sports, but the introduction of a popular new game undoubtedly expanded participation to some degree and involved people in sport year-round who would otherwise have done nothing during the winter. Basketball as a game form also fit perfectly the educational prerogatives of professional physical education philosophy, for the simple reason that it was invented specifically to do so. Fred Leonard had every reason to be pleased about basketball's rapid and successful adoption among Oberlin men.[39]

Oberlin faculty and administration were willing to embrace basketball for a variety of reasons, the foremost of which was that it emerged within a framework of organizational control over athletics with which they were largely satisfied. New president Henry Churchill King (inaugurated in 1902) continued to reiterate the belief that Oberlin's system, in which faculty members played an integral

part, went far toward mitigating the excesses and abuses that characterized athletics at other schools. "[O]ur arrangements here are such... that, if there is anything specially at fault, the College must be held directly responsible for it. Students cannot well be bought up for our athletic teams without our knowledge."[40] The chances of this sort of excess were further diminished by the fact that basketball did not yet involve the financial stakes of football (or even baseball), nor did it come with the additional baggage of excessive roughness and occasional death that continued to plague football.[41] Faculty, in short, had no reason to fear basketball.

Expanded athletic offerings also, of course, dovetailed with the original intent of faculty and administration for building Warner Gymnasium, namely to attract more men to Oberlin. Male enrollment did indeed increase in the years immediately after 1900, from a low of 197 in 1900 to 242 in 1902 and 279 in 1904. Female enrollment, however, increased just as fast—from 228 in 1900 to 257 in 1902 to 354 in 1904—making it difficult to access the effect of the gym, and leaving faculty with much the same situation with regard to balance. Nevertheless, King noted with approval Leonard's annual reports enumerating the broad participation in class and varsity sports. 'The last point is especially worth noting, as against the common criticism that a very small number of college men really take part in athletics."[42]

Faculty and administration also had an interest in promoting intercollegiate athletics as a demonstration of institutional prestige and as a means of representing Oberlin to the larger community, though not for exactly the same reasons or with the same focus as student boosters. Students emphasized Oberlin's necessity to compete with and succeed against colleges "of its rank" in all areas of student life and the duty of Oberlinites to pull together in support of this endeavor. The administration perspective certainly did not reject these prerogatives. Occasionally, in fact, the faculty committee voted to rearrange class schedules in order to facilitate participation in and attendance at Oberlin sporting events. But administration saw intercollegiate athletic competition principally as a means of demonstrating Oberlin's wise system of athletic *control*—and its purported beneficial effect on the sportsmanship and character of Oberlin athletes and positive statement of Oberlin's overall educational virtue—rather than as an avenue to pursue prestige through victory. It was the system of control over athletics, for instance, and not competitive success on the field, that was emphasized as the primary selling point of Oberlin's athletic program in the "Physical Training for Men" bulletins put together to advertise Warner Gymnasium. The periodic pronouncements of support for athletics that pepper the annual reports of this period emphasized Oberlin's rational system of faculty control, downplayed victory as an index of athletic success, and hailed the comportment of Oberlin athletes in road contests as a force for establishing the college's positive reputation among outside observers. Broad athletic offerings stripped of "excess" by rational controls, in short, spoke to the virtue of Oberlin as a whole. Basketball, a sport with great potential for broadening participation and little potential as yet for fostering excess, fit these prerogatives quite nicely.[43]

Notions of control, in fact, permeate the rhetoric of athletics and physical education floating around Oberlin throughout this period—control over the recreative impulse in order to channel it toward constructive ends, control over athletic sport to blunt the excesses of unrestrained competition (both athletic and pecuniary), control over roughness and creeping professionalization, control over the people in control. This outlook is hardly surprising, of course, coming as it did from an educational mouthpiece of American Congregationalist Protestantism. Recall that "self-control" was the first of the "primitive manly virtues" Leonard believed were developed in a physically active life. The mindset that sees self-control as a "primitive" virtue fast in society's progression from brute physicality to cultivated intellectual civilization is likely to find the importance of self-control everywhere it looks, and to look everywhere. It is a mindset familiar to students of this period of American middle-class social and cultural thought.

What is interesting, however, is the degree to which inculcating old-fashioned, internalized *self*-control on an individual basis is not really what they had in mind in the case of athletics. What they had in mind was institutional control over group behavior, the erection of institutional structures in which participants that behave *without* such an internalized ethos will still be held within the bounds of proper behavior dictated by such an ethos. In other words, athletes playing within proper structures of institutional control can just play; the system of control, not the restraint of the player, blunts the risks of excess.

It is perhaps unsatisfying to stamp this "social control" in the conventional sense, since what went on within the context of Oberlin (and college athletics in general) was really the education of elites by elites, and not, say, the assertion of cultural control over a subordinated "other" by dominant groups. The process is not dissimilar, however, to the methods by which elites often tried to educate non-elites in their own image, such as the organized play movement of Luther Gulick.[44] Natural youthful impulses are channeled toward an ethos of self-control and restraint through the implementation of wise structures of institutional organization, structures that take the very "naturalness" of the competitive and recreative impulses and make them benefits rather than drawbacks. Self-control and restraint are taught not so much by teaching self-control and restraint, but by rigging the institution to do it automatically by redirecting "natural" behavior to more desirable social and/or educational ends.

First But Not Foremost: Women's Basketball at Oberlin

Basketball for women at Oberlin was even more a matter of educators encouraging physiological improvement and social development through "natural participation within institutional restraints, primarily because the women's game was more directly controlled by physical educators and much less a product of student prerogatives. Women had been playing the game at Oberlin at a competitive organized level since at least 1896, when Hanna first began organizing dorm and then class teams and staging brief series each spring for intramural championships. Women's basketball, of course, was not uncommon at the time;

by 1900 it was played in various modified forms at a host of women's colleges and physical training schools around the country. "It is by far the most popular game that women play," said Sendra Berenson in 1901, the Smith physical educator who introduced a modified version of the game at Smith as early as 1892.[45]

Basketball for women at Oberlin took on a very different form from that which basketball for men would become, for a variety of reasons. First of all it was primarily an outdoor game, a means by which women might obtain some of the physical benefits of outdoor sport and some of the cooperative benefits of team competition afforded men by baseball and football—without, of course, the same degree of roughness, strenuousness, or invidious competition. Contemporary boosters of basketball for women insisted that the game's popularity with women and with women's physical educators lay in the way the game form struck a balance between physical vigor, teamwork, and control over excessive exertion and enthusiasm-and the way the game form could be easily modified to shift this balance toward even greater emphasis on teamwork and restraint.[46] Practice games and instruction for beginners at Oberlin were often conducted semi-inside (on the hardwood floor of a roofed outdoor skating rink) but only as preparation for the regular outdoor series. "[A] hardwood floor," Hanna argued furthermore, "is a dangerous place to play a matched game." Encouraging outdoor activity on the part of women was one of Hanna's pet goals throughout her career. In 1897 she began keeping track of the amount of time each female student spent outdoors, and strongly encouraged participation in activities like hiking, bicycling, skating, and tennis. Basketball was therefore adopted specifically to be the primary outdoor game. (It was also, therefore, not hindered by limited physical facilities as the men's game was.)[47]

More fundamentally, women's basketball was not seen as an avenue of inter-institutional competition or a barometer of institutional prestige. Competition was strictly intramural, no outside games were sought and occasional offers from outside parties were not acted upon. It was used as a means of fostering community self-definition, by both student and faculty, but not at the level of Oberlin as a whole. This was partly because only other women were allowed as spectators, likely as much because of the less restrictive gymnasium clothing worn as because of the nature of the spectacle. It was also, however, because Hanna and others used basketball to encourage *class* spirit among women, focused on inter-class competition, not school spirit among Oberlinites focused on victory over other institutions. It was designed to be genuinely competitive; scores and records were kept, sound principles of play were encouraged, stories were printed in the *Review,* champions were named. But it was not conceptualized, either by students or faculty, as a means of representing Oberlin to the outside world. It was also not called for from below by students, though it was rather quickly embraced. It was introduced by physical educators, primarily in the interest of achieving physical education goals.[48]

While the exact rules of play used are difficult to determine from limited and sketchy accounts, evidence suggests that Oberlin did not formally adopt any of the more severely modified rules for women designed to decrease physical

exertion and force teamwork associated with people like Sendra Berenson (whose "line game" divided the court into three sections and prohibited player movement across lines) or Clara Gregory Baer (whose "Basquette" divided the court into a separate box for each player, the ultimate application of separate spheres to sport). The rules used and the style of play encouraged, however, had much the same effect. Seven players per team were used (a player in front of each basket was added), and game accounts make it clear that the ball, not the players, moved up and down the court during play. Oberlin sent a representative—Alice Bertha Foster—to the conference in 1899 at which Berenson's line game was agreed upon and published as the "official" women's rules, but Foster dissented, arguing that a time limit for holding the ball and a "no snatching" rule were just as effective and less restrictive. The effect of these sorts of rules on the flow of the game, of course, was largely the same: lots of passing, a quicker game with less running, and an even greater dependency on teamwork for success.[49]

Finally, and perhaps most interestingly, women's basketball does not seem to have influenced the introduction or development of men's basketball in any appreciable way. Oberlin men looked outside Oberlin when calling for the introduction of basketball, seeking what they saw at YMCAs and other colleges "of their rank" around the country. Furthermore, there is no evidence that basketball had to overcome notions that it was a feminine or feminizing game. It arose, in fact, in conjunction with an effort to attract more men to the college, and there is no evidence that anyone involved saw tension between basketball as a male versus as a female game. In fact, the women's game at Oberlin eventually drifted closer toward the men's game, at least as a game form. In 1906, when the college enclosed the skating rink completely and converted it into a new women's gymnasium, basketball for women moved inside; it also eventually moved to five-person teams. In 1906 Oberlin also began what soon became a major campus event: the Yale-Princeton game, wherein two all-star teams faced off as "Yale" and "Princeton," in front of a packed house waving the appropriate school colors and chanting the appropriate school cheers. The women's game remained, however, strictly intramural. It is also worth noting, in the context of educational priorities and Oberlin's efforts to draw more men to the school, that physical education facilities for women remained relatively meager and underfunded in this period, despite the growing preponderance of women in the college.[50]

Though the two games had little direct impact on one another's development within the context of Oberlin, they did represent essentially similar phenomenon: efforts to set up structures of control within which players could simply play, "naturally" and un-self-consciously, and the rules imposed upon them would make that behavior edifying. The difference was that athletic sport promised different benefits and threatened different excesses for women than for men. The rules under which women played increased the game's cooperative tendencies at the expense of individual play, downplayed the necessity of victory and the aspect of public spectacle, and above all sought to provide healthful exercise while guarding against "excessive" physical exertion. The women's game was also, both because its rules were more restrictive and because physical educators had more control

over those rules since competition was exclusively intramural, much more explicitly an agent of physical education purposes.[51]

C.W. Savage and the Centralization of Athletic Control for Men

Once men's basketball was firmly established as a competitive varsity sport, its development continued to be shaped by the institutional developments that contoured all of Oberlin athletics. The first was the introduction of inter-institutional athletic control in the form of the Ohio Athletic Conference (OAC), formed in 1903. Oberlin had been a part of a track-only organization, the Ohio Inter-Collegiate Athletic Association, since 1896, but the OAC was an attempt to standardize eligibility rules and requirements for intercollegiate competition between a series of Ohio institutions across the board for all sports. Oberlin, Kenyon, Ohio State, Ohio Wesleyan, Case School, and Western Reserve were charter members, and membership had expanded to nine by 1907 and 12 by 1910. Members agreed to abide by a series of jointly drawn eligibility rules for players in all athletic contests with one another, most of them designed to prevent professionalism, college-hopping by players, and use of players not enrolled as genuine full-time students. The original rules limited eligibility for varsity play to four years, and in 1906-7 limited it to three years and declared freshmen ineligible. While not a conference in a modern sense (institutions continued to make their own scheduling arrangements, for instance, merely attaching a copy of the OAC rules to each individual contract, and schools in the conference did not play every other school each year), the majority of Oberlin's subsequent competition was conducted with member schools (many of whom Oberlin had played regularly anyway). President Barrows hailed the OAC as much-needed reform that would keep Ohio athletics above reproach for years to come. "All that is dishonorable, unsportsmanlike, ungentlemanly, or unnecessarily rough, in any branch of athletics, is particularly and expressly condemned," declared a statement released by the conference along with its first rules in 1902.[52]

Even more significant for Oberlin was the hiring in 1906 of C.W. Savage to be the full-time director of athletics, a move that centralized athletic control in the hands of a faculty member with full professor status. Savage, like Fauver, was an Oberlin product with ex-football-hero credentials. He was a halfback on Oberlin's first two teams in 1891 and 1892, running the ball behind a series of innovative if brutal Heisman wedge formations. After graduation in 1893 he stayed at Oberlin for three years to teach Latin and Greek at the Academy and to coach and manage Academy athletic teams. He spent two years as a graduate student at Harvard, six years as an instructor at Shadyside Academy in Pittsburgh, and a year at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York in order to prepare himself for his work at Oberlin, which included teaching in Dr. Hanna's Teachers' Course in Physical Training. He remained Oberlin's director of athletics for 29 years.[53]

Savage's appointment was a mark of Oberlin's desire to exert a greater amount of faculty control over athletics, but it was also a response to practical con-

siderations: Win Fauver quit in 1905 to enter Columbia Medical School in pursuit of a further career in physical education, leaving gaping holes in the coaching and administration of Oberlin athletics and in the teaching of physical education in the men's gymnasium. Graduate manager George Jones, who was responsible for most of the daily dirty work of scheduling and administering (and who was also made Oberlin secretary in 1899), also sought relief from his workload with the Athletic Association. "The appointment of a member of the faculty to give the larger part of his time to the interests of the athletic teams," Jones wrote in his annual report the year of Fauver's resignation, "would be a wise step.... and such an appointment would be a great relief to me personally." Leonard made a similar request in his own report. They were both obliged.[54]

Savage moved simultaneously to recast Oberlin athletics in the physical education model of "the greatest good for the greatest number" and to centralize control over that good and those numbers in his own office, with varying degrees of success. Control over athletics was already, as we have seen, *de facto* centralized to a good degree in administration or proto-administration hands. Jones handled scheduling, arrangements, and general correspondence with outside parties (and was, as secretary after 1899, now part of Oberlin administration), and by 1900 the Advisory Board met weekly to sign off on association expenditures. The association met only twice yearly, to elect captains and officers and to propose innovation (like basketball), and occasionally in special session. Savage's appointment, however-and his replacement of Jones as Graduate Manager in 1907—made it *de facto* official.[55]

Savage's primary desire was to remove the necessity of funding athletics through gate receipts, an arrangement Savage considered the root of the overcompetitive evils of football and the main barrier to de-emphasizing varsity sports to the benefit of the larger body of students. "If I may be pardoned for my diversion," Savage said in the middle of his 1909-10 annual report,

> let me at this point call your attention to the altogether precarious and undignified system under which we are still carrying on our sports here. By special subscriptions, chapel appeals to college loyalty, rallies and clap-trap advertising methods, we exploit our student body in the hope that we may persuade or bull-doze a sufficient number of them into attending athletic events to furnish us with the revenue necessary to maintain our teams, our plant, and our athletic prestige. To my mind such a state of affairs is deplorable.

This was only the most colorful of his annual condemnations of receipt-funded athletics. By removing the need to produce winning teams in order to raise money, and by finding an alternative method that provided a more secure and more regular source of funding, he believed that it might be possible to limit intercollegiate varsity competition and divert time and resources toward expanded intramural offerings.[56]

Oberlin's athletic program was hardly the hotbed of shady recruiting, high-priced professional coaching, and big-money public spectacle that some college programs had become by this time, but the need to win in the name of financial

solvency had produced abuse nonetheless. In October of 1905, for instance, a special meeting of the Athletic Association was called to convince and/or coerce a recalcitrant S.D. Morrill to come out for the football team. His support was needed, Graduate Manager Jones argued, because he was essential to making Oberlin football a box-office draw and a competitive success. When Morrill continued to refuse, Jones abandoned personal persuasion and tried punitive legislation: "Mr. Jones moved that it be the sentiment of the association to ignore any one in the affairs of the association who is disloyal to the interests of our athletic teams." This surreal motion passed. At the regular meeting a month later, the Association repudiated the rashness of its previous decision, but not its essential surreality. A motion carried that the previous legislation "be resented," "inasmuch as there was no definite definition of loyalty given." No record exists as to whether or not Morrill also received the dreaded silent treatment on campus.[57]

Part of the problem was exactly that Oberlin was not a hotbed of big-money spectacle. By 1907 the Athletic Association groaned under a debt of over $1,500. Basketball, as has been noted, was a modest financial success, but football, the association's primary source of revenue (about $3,000 a year on average) was up and down every year, depending on team talent and weather. And baseball and track were big losers. After three profitable seasons at the turn of the century, baseball lost money every year until World War I; track lost $1,341.08 between 1901 and 1907. The Association had only two profitable single years overall between 1901 and 1907.[58]

Oberlin students proposed solving this problem in 1907 through taxation. A mass meeting of Oberlin men on June 6, 1907, adopted unanimously a resolution petitioning for a $3 annual fee to be added to the term bill for the support of athletics, every student receiving a universal season ticket to all athletic events (except basketball, for reasons of space) in exchange. College and conservatory women unanimously upheld the resolution in a mass meeting two days later. The athletic advisory board reported against this plan, citing a variety of reasons—students, or more correctly their parents, they argued, should not be *compelled* to support athletics; if support was indeed unanimous, it should be given voluntarily, it set bad a precedent for similar schemes to fund other extracurricular activities like literary and debating societies—and the trustees tabled it indefinitely. Savage's own various suggestions—a voluntary universal season ticket, a permanent endowment, a special fund to wipe out the debt, the transfer of coaches' salaries to Oberlin's general fund—went no farther.[59]

Another innovation never made was one Savage believed was already in place when he was hired—the elimination of paid coaches. "I was surprised to learn," Savage wrote Jones the spring before beginning work in 1906, "...that the Ohio colleges had not done away with the professional coach as I had understood." President King, comfortable in the belief that faculty control buffed the roughest edges off of football but convinced that a return to pure amateurism could sand it clean, tried to convince Savage to push Oberlin ahead on its own. "Do you think it is entirely out of the question for us to get on at once with voluntary coaching under your supervision?" King wrote Savage. "Ought not the game to come back

to a real sport and not to a professional encounter between men professionally trained?" Yes, responded Savage, but not yet—and not at the expense of his authority. "I hardly believe that the time is ripe for this at Oberlin. It would certainly place me at a disadvantage at the very outset of my work and probably greatly lessen my influence over the men of the institution." It would also, Savage believed, force him to do much of the coaching himself, a job, he made clear, he had not signed on for.[60]

King never got his pure amateurism. What he did get, by and large, were low-paid Oberlin alumni coaches (and occasionally experienced undergraduates). After 1910, coaches were granted faculty status as instructors and formally made directly answerable to Savage, though still paid out of Athletic Association money. Savage also conquered the association's debt in 1911, not through innovative funding but by continuing to hire inexpensive coaches and by greatly reducing guarantees to visiting teams. Savage funneled this surplus into the construction of new athletic fields, in conjunction with an alumni fund-raising drive to provide expanded athletic facilities for intramural use. And in 1915, the faculty made a small ($100) but philosophically significant appropriation making it possible for one of the assistant varsity coaches to devote his spring exclusively to intramural instruction.[61]

These and other solutions to the problem of how competitive athletics fit into Oberlin's larger institutional picture represented more than just a move toward a physical-education-oriented vision of what sport should do for the college man. They also represented pragmatic responses to the problem of where small-college athletics fit into the emerging world of big-time collegiate sport. Just as Oberlin sought to redefine itself educationally as a Christian liberal arts institution in a university age, it also sought to reposition itself athletically as a pure alternative to the corrupt, win-or-else model of collegiate sport, a model Oberlin lacked the size, money, and physical talent to emulate. Savage and King, like others in their positions at small institutions around the state and around the country, sought an alternative vision of collegiate sport.

Basketball grew slowly but steadily in this period into the second most important intercollegiate sport at Oberlin. By 1907 the basketball team played a 12-game schedule each year, five more than the football team and usually one or two more than the baseball team, mostly with other small Ohio colleges but also including a two-or-three game Eastern trip each year to play schools like Syracuse, Cornell, Rochester, Army, and Colgate. Fan support increased steadily. Annual basketball receipts soon exceeded baseball receipts, and Savage thought it necessary to write the architects who designed Warner Gymnasium's balcony/running track to make sure it was capable of supporting the large crowds being loaded onto it to watch games (it was). The basketball department of the Athletic Association lost money only once (in 1905) from 1903 until World War I. Basketball also became the most popular intramural sport, accounting for 20 different teams over the course of 1915-16.[62]

Coaching, however, remained an inexpensive alumni affair. Savage coached the team himself in 1907 (much to his dismay, no doubt), then replaced himself

with a string of young alumni coaches, seldom more than a year or two beyond graduation, usually also football or baseball coaches, and never paid more than $150 for the season (football coach Harvey Snyder received $875 in 1910). In 1910 and 1911, the basketball and baseball teams were coached by undergraduates, George Vradenburg in 1910 and Glen Grey in 1911. Furthermore, while receipts rose and profits remained consistent, the overall amount of money basketball generated remained well below that of football In 1915-16 football receipts totaled $6,992.43, basketball receipts $1,811.23. From a standpoint of prestige, revenue generation, and concern about potential abuse, basketball remained a distant second to football.[63]

Conclusion: Basketball at Oberlin College

The development of Oberlin athletics, particularly but not exclusively in the case of Savage, manifests a great congruence with certain currents of thought commonly associated with Progressivism—the desire to simultaneously broaden participation and centralize control over that participation, the grounding in an ethos of scientific-professional training, the imposition of organizational structure as a means of reform, the desire to eliminate the worst excesses of invidious competition and aggressive masculinity while still retaining their benefits. And in a significant way, physical educators envisioned competitive athletics and physical education as a means of reform: reform on an individual level, by improving physical health and encouraging necessary and/or desirable social values, but carried out through organizational and institutional means.

The success of the game of basketball for men at Oberlin suggests that the game fit these prerogatives quite well—just as it was designed to. The focus of institutional control over athletics was to blunt competitive and pecuniary excesses; basketball's easy acceptance was in part because basketball came largely without these excesses. It also filled a vacuum in student life, providing an outlet for intramural and intercollegiate competition in a season without it. It was a moderate but consistent moneymaker for a strapped Athletic Association. And, of course, the game form itself had appeal for players. People played in growing numbers, not just at Oberlin but around the country, at the intercollegiate and intramural level. The successful establishment of basketball for men at Oberlin was a product of the confluence of these interests within the game form.

Basketball for women at Oberlin represented a fundamentally different phenomenon from the men's game as spectacle and as a focus of student life. In fact, it was not intended as spectacle; nor was it an avenue by which Oberlin or Oberlinites sought to represent themselves to the outside world. But as pedagogy, the women's game was much the same phenomenon. The women's game, in fact, was an even better example of the effort to improve physical health and encourage desirable social values by placing people within organizational structures of control in which "natural" behavior would be directed toward beneficial ends. And while the women's game was introduced from the top down, by physical educators interested in pursuing physical education goals, its success was no less due to its popularity with players as a game form.

1. My thinking about the usefulness of basketball, and sport in general, to larger historical questions has been influenced by several articles by Steven Hardy; see esp. his "Entrepreneurs, Organizations, and the Sport Marketplace: Subjects in Search of Historians," *Journal of Sport History,* 13 (Spring 1986), pp. 14-33; "Entrepreneurs, Structures, and the Sportgeist," in Kyle, D.G. and Stark, G.D., eds., *Essays on Sport History and Sport Mythology* (Texas A&M, 1990), pp. 45-82; and "Games, Structure, and Agency: Historians on the American Play Movement," *Journal of Social History* (Winter 1983), pp. 285-301 (with Alan G. Ingham). For starting points on the early history of basketball, see James Smith, *Basketball: Its Origins and Development* (New York: Association Press, 1941); and Albert Applin, *From Muscular Christianity to the Marketplace: The History of Men's and Boys' Basketball in the United States, 1891-1957* (Ph.D. diss., University of Massachusetts, 1982).

2. "Progressivism" is a notoriously slippery historical concept, and my use of it here draws on insights from a variety of sources. The most important and influential of these is Robert Wiebe's *The Search for Order, 1877-1890* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), which emphasizes the role of professionalization and the creation by a "new middle class" of new organizational structures to reform and re-order society Richard Hofstadter's seminal yet oft-criticized *The Age of Reform* (New York: Vintage Books, 1955) sees Progressivism in part as an effort to protect traditional middle-class Protestant ideals through new institutional means, an interpretation that fits quite well what Oberlin physical educators sought to do with competitive athletics. Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York Alfred A. Knopf, 1963) also stresses the importance to Progressivism of professional expertise. Important insight comes also from John Burnham in Buenker, Burnham, Crunden, *Progressivism* (Cambridge: Schenkman Publishing, 1977), who stresses the role of science as an avenue of uplift; Robert Crunden, also in Buenker, Burnham, Crunden, *Progressivism,* who stresses the importance of a "displaced Protestantism" to the Progressive impulse; and Arthur Link and Richard McCormick in *Progressivism* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1983), which stresses the notion of control.

   John Barnard's *From Evangelicalism to Progressivism at Oberlin College, 1866-1917* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1969) has traced a shift in Oberlin's educational outlook and general worldview from evangelicalism to the social gospel in the late 19th century, a shift he sees culminating in the installation of Henry Churchill King as President in 1902. While Barnard does not discuss the role of Oberlin's physical education philosophy in this shift, I believe the emergence of a professionalized ethos of physical education at Oberlin in this period fits Barnard's analysis.

3. For the history of integrated education at Oberlin, as well as for evidence of creeping Jim Crowism in student life there after the turn of the century, see W.E. Bigglestone, "Oberlin College and the Negro Student, 1865-1940," *Journal of Negro History* 56 (July 1971), pp. 198-214, and James Oliver Horton, "Black Education at Oberlin College," *Journal of Negro Education* 54 (Fall 1985), pp. 477-499. For instance, by the turn of the century blacks were regularly excluded from literary societies, and the few that were admitted were generally admitted only after alumni pressure forced a society to grudgingly reconsider. In 1910, only one of the 254 students in regular literary societies was black and two black-only societies had been formed. See Bigglestone, pp. 201-207.

4. C.W. Savage to George M. Jones, April 12, 1906, in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), Oberlin College Archives (hereafter O.C.A.).

5. Robert Samuel Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College From Its Foundation Through the* Civil War, 2 vol. (Oberlin: Oberlin College, 1943), v. 1, pp. 34-43, 341-351; James Fairchild, *Oberlin: The Colony and the College* (Oberlin: E. J. Goodrich, 1883), pp. 9-49.

6. Frederick David Shults, "The History and Philosophy of Athletics for Men at Oberlin College" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1967), pp. 37-41; Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College,* pp. 351-354.

7. Ellen Gerber, *Innovators and Institutions in Physical Education* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1971), pp. 325-31; Frances Juliette Hosford, *Father Shipford's Magna Charta: A Century of Coeducation at Oberlin College* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1937) pp, 156-58.
8. Gerber, *Innovators and Institutions,* pp. 325-31.
9. Frederick David Shults, "The Life of Fred Eugene Leonard, M.D.: His Contributions and Influence on the Profession of Physical Education" (Master's thesis, Ohio State, 1959).
10. Shults, "Life of Fred Eugene Leonard" ; "Oberlin College Men's Gymnasium—Retrospect and Prospect" (June 1893), typed manuscript in Leonard papers (Subgroup 1, Series 10, Box l), O.C.A.; C. Howard Hopkins, *A History of the YMCA in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951), pp. 246-270; Gerber, *Innovators and Institutions,* pp. 325-31, 348-56; Naismith, *Basketball.*

    The rhetoric of Leonard (and of others at Oberlin speaking about physical education at this time) exhibits congruence with both the "three-sided nature" philosophy of man's physical, intellectual, and spiritual balance and with the notion that the period between the ages of 15 and 25 is developmentally the most important period in life and therefore the period in life when organized physical education is most important, two ideas associated with Gulick's philosophy. See, in addition to above, Oberlin *News*, December 20, 190l; Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals: Organized Playgrounds and Urban Reform* (Philadelphia: U. of Pennsylvania Press, 1981). See also note 12, below.
11. Gerber, *Innovators and Institutions,* pp. 325-31 (quote p. 325); Naismith, *Basketball;* Hopkins, *A History of the YMCA in North America,* pp. 246-70.
12. Leonard's papers in the Oberlin Archives contain innumerable outlines and abbreviated texts of speeches he gave on physical education at various times, from which my understanding of this aspect of his philosophy has largely been drawn. See esp. Leonard papers (Series 4, Subseries 2, Box 3), O.C.A.
13. See Ronald Smith, *Sports and Freedom: The Rise of Big-Time College Athletics* (New York: Oxford Press, 1988), esp. pp. 88-98, 147-174, for a discussion of professionalism in college football and the brutality controversies spurred by the growing use of wedge formations and mass plays in the 1890s.
14. Shults, "History," pp, 66-76.
15. Wiley Lee Umphlett, *Creating the Big Game: John W. Heisman and the Invention of American Football* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1992), pp. 29-40; Oberlin *Review,* December 17, 1898.

    Oberlin's success against major football programs declined precipitously after the mid-1890s. In 1899 Oberlin lost 58-0 to Chicago and 81-0 to the Carlisle Indians; between 1895 and 1902 Oberlin was defeated by Michigan four times by a combined score of 131-6. Oberlin *Hi-oh-hi* (1904).
16. "Constitution and By-Laws of the Oberlin College Athletic Association 1892," booklet in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.
17. Oberlin College *Annual Report* (1894, 1906-07); Oberlin *Review,* October 2, 16, 1895, December 17, 1898; "Constitution and By-Laws of the Oberlin College Athletic Association, also Constitution and Rules of the Advisory Board" (n.d.), booklet in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.; Shults, "History," pp. 240-246.
18. Oberlin *Review,* December 17, 1898.
19. Oberlin *Review,* December 19, 1901.
20. Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1900-1905).
21. Oberlin College *Annual Report* (1894). The Oberlin *Review* excerpted these comments in 1895 for the edification/persuasion of students, running them alongside Theodore Roosevelt's famous 1895 remarks praising the manliness of college football. Oberlin

Review, March 20, 1895.

22. Oberlin *Review,* March 3, 1900; Lucien C. Warner, *The Story of My Life During Seventy Eventful Years* (New York: Privately Printed [!], 1914), pp. 201-206; Hopkins, *History of the YMCA in North America,* pp. 410, 428.

23. Oberlin *News,* June 29, 1900, December 20, 190l; Oberlin College *Annual Report* (1897); F.F. Jewett to F.E. Leonard, 3/18/90, in Leonard papers (Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box 3), O.C.A.; "Oberlin College Men's Gymnasium—Retrospect and Prospect" (June 1893), typed manuscript in Leonard papers (Subgroup 1, Series 10, Box l), O.C.A.

24. Furthermore, the overwhelming preponderance of women in the conservatory of music (made a separate body in 1865) meant that even in 1895 more than 100 more men than women populated the educational community as a whole. Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1895-1900); Warner, *The Story of My Life...,* p. 206. The overbalance of women in the conservatory (366-72 in 1895) was partially offset by Oberlin Academy, a sister preparatory institution that was 178-138 male in 1900. Varsity athletes were sometimes drawn from academy ranks. In 1895 the total enrollment in all Oberlin departments was 1,422, only 371 of whom were in the college proper.

    For a useful discussion of contemporary fears about the "feminizing" influence of excessive intellectual activity, as well as the related debates concerning the wisdom of higher education for women and obsession with "balance" in education, see Roberta J. Park, "Physiology and Anatomy are Destiny!?: Brains, Bodies, and Exercise in Nineteenth Century American Thought," *Journal of Sport History,* 18 (Spring 1991), pp. 31-63.

25. Manuscript of a speech dated June 25, 1902, in Leonard papers (Series 4, Subseries 2, Box 3), O.C.A. For an excellent discussion of football and manliness, see Michael Oriard, *Reading Football How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1993), esp. pp. 189-276.

26. Oberlin *News,* December 20, 1901; "Physical Training for Men at Oberlin College" (1902), copies in Leonard papers (Series 4, Subseries 2, Box 3), O.C.A.

27. Oberlin *Review,* January 16, 1902.

28. Oberlin Review, March 27, April 3, 1902 (quote April 3); Minutes of the Oberlin College Athletic Association, June 6, 1902, in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box 1). O.C.A.

29. The players were John Olmstead, George Vradenburg, and Harry Sandberg, all of whom had experience at the Y.M.C.A. level in their hometowns (and all of whom were classed in Oberlin Academy rather than in the college proper). Oberlin *Review,* November 30, December 12, 1902, March 19, 1903; FL. Olmstead to LA. Olmstead, November 27, 1902, in Olmstead papers (Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.

30. Oberlin *Review,* January 22, March 5, 12, 19, 1903 (quote March 5); J.G. Olmstead to LA. Olmstead, March 16, 1903, in Olmstead papers (Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.; Bob Hunter, *Buckeye Basketball* (Huntsville, AL: Strode Press, 1981), pp. 13-33. It is interesting to note that Oberlin's baskets were also nonstandard, at least according to Allegheny, who levelled the same complaint against Oberlin in victory that Oberlin levelled against Ohio State in defeat. Oberlin *Review,* March 19, 1903.

31. Oberlin *Review,* December 3, 10, 1903, March 24, 1904, "Statement of Athletic Operations, Oberlin College Athletic Association" (1904), in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.

32. Oberlin *Review,* November 30, 1902.

33. Oberlin *Review,* February 20, 1902.

34. These tropes are ubiquitous in the rhetoric of the *Review* during this period. For particularly good examples, see esp. Oberlin *Review,* December 19, 1901. For the importance of these sorts of student life activities to the formation of colleges as cultural communities, see Oscar and Mary Handlin, *The American College and American Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970), pp. 56-60.

35. Oberlin College *Annual Report (1900).*
36. See especially Laurence Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), and Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 329-54, 440-61, for the growing split between college and university in this period. See note 15 for Oberlin's poor record against major football teams after 1895.
37. J.L. Olmstead to LA. Olmstead, March 2, 1903, in Olmstead papers (Series 1, Box l), O.C.A. Olmstead's "O" certificates themselves survive in this collection.
38. Oberlin College *Annual Report* (1903-04). The two most likely ways for Leonard to arrive at his 92% figure would be either to count the number of men paying the $2 gym fee and taking a physical (prerequisites for using the gym), in which case his number is accurate but perhaps unrelated to how many people actually used their privileges, or by attempting to piece together how many men actually participated in various activities throughout the year, in which case he would be prone to double-counting and faced with the question of how much "participation" constituted participation. Even so, the larger point that participation grew manifestly still stands.
39. Edwin Fauver, "Athletics 1903-04" (1904), manuscript in Leonard papers (Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.
40. Oberlin Colleger *Annual Report* (1903-04).
41. As a point of comparison, the Athletic Association's revenue from basketball in 1904 totalled $682.30 for eight varsity games and a handful of class games (only about $20 came from class games); football revenues in the fall of 1903 totalled $3,799.18 and baseball revenues in the spring of 1904 totalled $1,792.75. The *Review* reported 14 men killed around the nation and many more seriously injured playing college football in 1903. "Statement of Athletic Operations, Oberlin College Athletic Association" (1904), in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.; Oberlin *Review,* December 3, 1903.
42. Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1900, 1901-02, 1903-04, 1904-05); quote 1904-05.
43. Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1900-1905); Oberlin *Review,* November 27, 1903; "Physical Training for Men at Oberlin College" (1902, 1908), copies in Leonard papers (Series 4, Subseries 2, Box 3), O.C.A.

    Faculty committee minutes relating to athletics are transcribed in an appendix to Shults, "History"; the nearly illegible originals are on film at O.C.A. For examples of action taken by the faculty committee to facilitate varsity athletic participation and/or support, see pp. 242-248.
44. For the organized play movement, see esp. Dominick Cavallo, *Muscles and Morals.*
45. Sendra Berenson, ed., *Line Basket Ball, or Basket Ball for Women* (New York: American Sports Publishing Co., 1901), pp. 5-6; Betty Spears, "Sendra Berenson Abbott: New Woman, New Sport," in Joan Hult and Marianne Trekel, eds., *A Century of Women's Basketball* (Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance, 1991), pp. 19-38; quote from Berenson.

    The earliest reference to intramural basketball competition among women at Oberlin I have found is from 1896. However, vague references to an unexplained outdoor game called "battle-ball" date from 1894 and 1895, and one of the 1896 basketball reports in the Oberlin *Review* called the game both "battle ball" and "basket ball." If "battle-ball" was indeed some type of basketball, women's basketball at Oberlin then dates to 1894. See Oberlin College *Annual Report* (1894), *Oberlin Review,* October 10, 1895, May 13, 27, 1896.
46. See Berenson, ed., *Line Basket Ball*
47. Oberlin College *Annual Report* (1897); Minnie Lynn, "An Historical Analysis of the Professional Career of Delphine Hanna" (Master's thesis, Penn State, 1937), pp. 47-55; quote from annual report.

48. Oberlin *Review,* May 13, 27, 1896, June 1, December 17, 1898, May 25, 1899, May 24, 1900, Lynn, "Historical Analysis," pp. 47-55.

49. Berenson, ed., *Line Basket Ball,* pp. 8-10; Oberlin *Review,* May 13, 27, 1896, June 1, December 17, 1898, May 25, 1899, May 24, 1900. Nine-woman teams were used in 1896.

50. Oberlin College *Annual Report* (1905-06); Oberlin *Hi-oh-hi* (1907); Dorothy Niehus, "The Development of the Physical Education Program for Women at Oberlin College Since 1837," (Master's thesis, Ohio State, 1942), pp. 116-51. By 1906, Hanna had developed a series of other outdoor offerings, including tennis, horseback riding, skating, and golf.

51. See Berenson, ed., *Line Basket Ball,* for examples of how contemporary physical educators viewed the potential benefits and dangers of basketball as an activity for women. See also Donald Mrozek, *Sport and American Mentality, 1880-1910* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983), pp. 136-160.

52. Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1901-2, 1906-7, 1909-l0). The conference's founding meeting was held in 1902; the rules adopted went into effect Jan. 1, 1903.

53. "Relations of Mr. C.W. Savage to Oberlin Athletics," typed manuscript in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.; Minutes of the Oberlin College General Faculty Committee (reprinted in Shults, "History," p. 338). Savage was also selected in 1905 to represent Oberlin and the state of Ohio at the National Intercollegiate Foot Ball Conference (which became the NCAA), where he was placed on the football rules committee and where he remained for 23 years.

54. Oberlin College *Annual Report* (1904-05).

55. Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1905-07); Minutes of the Oberlin College Athletic Association and Athletic Advisory Board (1892-1906), in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.

56. Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1909-10).

57. Minutes of the Oberlin College Athletic Association, October 2, November 11, 1905, in records ofthe Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.

58. "Statement of Athletic Operations, Oberlin College Athletic Association" (1901, 1903-07), in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box 1), O.C.A.; Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1907-17); Oberlin *Review,* December 11, 1902.

59. "Report of the Advisory Committee on Athletics, June 22, 1908"; Untitled resolution of the men of Oberlin College and "Meeting of the Board of Trustees, November 13, 1908," typed manuscripts in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5. Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.; Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1907-12).

60. C.W. Savage to G.M. Jones, April 12, 1906, in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.; C.W. Savage to H.C. King, June 28, July 7, 1906; H.C. King to C.W. Savage, July 2, 1906, in King papers (reel 41), O.C.A.

61. Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1909-15). A significant exception to the alumni coach policy was Harvey Snyder, football coach from 1906 to 1910 and a Harvard product. No undergraduates coached after coaches were given instructor status in 1910-11.

62. C.W. Savage to Patton & Miller, Architects, December 15. 1909; Patton & Miller, Architects, to C.W. Savage, December 23, 1909; 'Statement of Athletic Operations, Oberlin College Athletic Association" (1903-07, 1909-11); in records of the Department of the Secretary (Group 5, Subgroup 1, Series 1, Box l), O.C.A.; Oberlin College Annual *Reports* (1906-11, 1915-16).

63. "Report of the Director of Athletics," Oberlin College *Annual Reports* (1906-16). It is important to note that coaches who coached more than one sport were paid for each sport; the amount allotted to the basketball coach *for basketball,* however, never exceeded $150. Note also that Vradenburg, while an undergraduate, was an exceptionally experienced one; he was one of the Academy men on the first team in 1903.