

status, intercollegiate competition became an official part of the program in 1970. At the present time students are continuing to support the interdorm, interclass and intercollegiate programs with great enthusiasm.

Various people and events have had varying degrees of influence on the crew program at Wellesley. but even with the collapse of the boathouse and the total destruction of all the equipment in 1962, crew was reinstated due to the resounding support of the alumnae and students. Although individual components were modified or eventually dropped entirely, the basic tradition of crew itself appears to have generated its own impetus for the continuation of crew as a tradition at the college. As of 1975, the strong heritage of one hundred years of rowing will enter a new century of tradition.

The Beginnings and Directions of Ms. Basketball in North America

JOHN DEWAR
Laurentian University

“If basketball did not do anything else than relieve womankind from that condition, their great lack of sportsmanship due to no experience in team games, it was well worth putting it into existence.” (Speech given at Forum, Springfield College, January 5, 1932, p. 5)

“Although basketball was originated in a men’s institution, it was scarcely a month old when it was taken up by girls.”

Both of the above statements made by Dr. James Naismith give us some insight as to how the inventor of the game perceived the function of the female in relationship to basketball. This paper will look at the early beginnings of the women’s game; the role of Ms. Senda Berenson Abbot in its development at Smith College and on the national level; and the evolution of the game in Western Canada using the Edmonton Commercial Grads team as a case study. These beginnings and the two examples of widely divergent directions taken early in the history of the game, may be compared as to merit if the observer so desires, and may also serve to indicate who might be responsible for the present position of women in basketball.

In the summer and fall of 1970 and throughout 1971 correspondence and forms were exchanged between Dorothy S. Ainsworth, professor emeritus of Smith College, and Lee Williams, the executive director of the Basketball Hall of Fame or Naismith Memorial. This relatively lengthy correspondence dealt with the possibility of Senda Berenson being considered for induction into the Hall of Fame.

Born in Lithuania in 1868, she came with her family to the Boston area seven years later. After receiving her elementary education she studied at the new Boston Normal School of Gymnastics, the first gymnastic school in the United States to place emphasis on the Swedish system of exercise. During her second year at the gymnastic school she was persuaded to accept a temporary position directing the physical education program at Smith.

This temporary appointment was the beginning of an impressive nineteen year career at the Northampton, Massachusetts women's college. Her contributions in the area of basketball established a tradition at Smith. The game was played there as early as the autumn of 1892, the first women's college game ever to be played, being held in the new Alumnae Gymnasium on March 22, 1893. The years that followed saw a number of new ideas introduced into the program at Smith College.

Senda Berenson's innovation was not limited to Western Massachusetts. She edited the Basketball Guide for Women from 1901 to 1907 and was the prime mover in consolidating the rules. The United States Women's Basketball Committee was organized by her in 1905 and she served as its chairman through 1917. In 1915, in her capacity as Editor of the Guide, Berenson promoted the playing of basketball at girls' summer camps. She was the Ms. Basketball of the pre-World War I era.

Women's basketball in 1918 was to follow divergent paths in different North American geographical settings. This study will look at two of these at the extreme ends of the competitive continuum. One will be the development of the Smith College program in the interclass tradition established by Ms. Berenson. The second will be a highly competitive "working girls" program that was developed by a Mr. Percy Page of Edmonton Grads", whose exploits have become a part of Western Canadian folklore. The immediate results of these two programs were to culminate in the period prior to World War II.

The total effects of early attitudes towards competitive basketball, played according to either men's or women's rules, influenced how the game was approached by young women. Ms. Berenson was not inducted into the Hall of Fame. Neither have any of the Edmonton Grads.

Whither now Ms. Basketball?

American Women: Early Pursuit of Olympic Laurels

by
PAULA WELCH
University of Florida

The American women's early pursuit for Olympic laurels include the first seven Olympiads of the modern era. Approximately twenty-five women represented the United States in Olympic competition that was not entirely national or international in scope. Participation occurred in three of the first seven Olympiads.

The Olympic debut of American women occurred during the celebration of the second modern Olympiad in Paris. United States Olympic officials claim Margaret Abbott as the first American woman to achieve Olympic victory for America. Abbott, of Chicago, won the women's singles golf event held at Compiègne in connection with the Paris Exposition of 1900. The women's championship round included ten entries.