

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
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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.

The third Olympiad coinciding with many events of the World's Fair in St. Louis during 1904, included women's archery competition but entries came only from the United States. Archery competition in 1904 was declared an unofficial or exhibition sport. Most of the seven archers were affiliated with the Cincinnati Athletic Club.

After the Games of 1904, American women did not appear in Olympic competition until the seventh Olympiad in 1920. James E. Sullivan, President of the Amateur Athletic Union of the United States (AAU), opposed the inclusion of women in sport. Sullivan prevented women from entering Olympic competition for a number of years. After Sullivan's death in 1914, the AAU assumed control of women's aquatics. The AAU and other organizations such as the Women's Swimming Association of New York City (WSA) influenced the beginning of Olympic swimming and diving among women in the United States. The 1920 naiads established unprecedented success winning four out of five Olympic swimming and diving events. Had it not been for the obstinate behavior of the United States Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA) regarding the scheduling of events, American women may have entered Olympic tennis in 1920. After the Games of 1920 American women entered Olympic competition in increasing numbers.

The All-American Girls' Baseball League, 1943-1954

by
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The All-American Girls' Baseball League was a bona-fide women's professional baseball league which existed in the Midwest between 1943-1954. It was originally organized by Philip K. Wrigley as the All-American Girls' Softball League, but "softball" was dropped as a descriptive term for the league after the 1943 season. The league successively was known as the All-American Girls' Professional Ball League (1944), the All-American Girls' Baseball League (1945-1950), and the American Girls' Baseball League (1951-1954). Changes in the league title were complemented by an evolution in the game from softball to baseball. Softball rules were replaced by baseball rules; softball equipment and diamonds were replaced by baseball equipment and near-baseball sized diamonds (85 ft. basepaths with 60' pitching distance); and underhand pitching was replaced by overhand pitching.

The league was created as a potential substitute for major league baseball in the event that the manpower demands of World War II caused an interregnum in the "national game." With the survival of major league schedules, the All-American Girls' Baseball League became "entertainment for war workers." After the war it was hailed as "healthful outdoor family entertainment."

League administration first was directed by Philip Wrigley (1943-1944), then by his