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# Games, Gymnastics, and Athletics on the Campus of the First State University, 1800- 1900

ANGELA LUMPKIN  
Department of Physical Education  
University of North Carolina  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

The University of North Carolina, chartered in 1789, opened its doors for classes in 1795 with no provision made for the inclusion of physical training. In 1799 the Board of Trustees stated that students were prohibited from racing horses, keeping cocks, playing cards or dice, gambling, hunting or fishing. Even their favorite game of bandy was forbidden within fifty yards of any building to prevent damage to school property. In addition to bandy, though, marbles, mumbletypeg, foot races, baseball, swimming, and card games filled the free time for the collegians, not, however, to the exclusion of mischievous devilment, such as marauding.

Student involvement in sports played a more active role when the University reopened in 1875 after its four-and one-half year closure. Baseball and football, albeit different from today's version, were vigorously adopted by the all-male student body. An outdoor gymnasium with trapeze, horizontal bars, and swinging rings set up through student

initiative in the late 1870's led to the construction of the first gymnasium in 1885. The popularity of the gymnasium during the evening hours, however, caused concern among the faculty about neglected studies. The first gymnastic contests were conducted in 1886 and included the following: horizontal bar, parallel bars, swings, ladders, Indian clubs, half-mile race, high jump, 1/10 mile dash, and tug-of-war.

The University competed in its first intercollegiate athletic contests in the 1880's - association football and rugby in 1888. The enthusiasm that resulted from these competitions was initially stifled by an 1889 University restriction from playing sports off campus. In 1890 all intercollegiate athletics were banned. But student dissatisfaction led to repeals of these actions in 1891 and to the establishment of an Athletic Advisory Committee composed of an undergraduate student, a graduate student, and a faculty member. Tennis and track joined football and baseball in intercollegiate competitions in the 1890's. The faculty and trustees attempted, however, to maintain control over athletics by requiring class attendance and adherence to studies and by forbidding out-of-state travel or overnight in-state travel by non-playing students to athletic contests.