

Ted Reeve and “Sporting Extras;” Sports Journalism or Sports History

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Ted Reeve was hired by the *Toronto Telegram* in 1928 to write a sports column to rival the *Toronto Star's* popular columnist, Lou Marsh. This paper examined a random sample of Reeve's "Sporting Extras" column by picking one column each week during the months of January, February, July and October between 1928 and 1936 inclusive. The pattern of sport in Toronto during the Depression was not altered in type but there were changes in form such as the introduction of the forward pass in football in 1931 and in preferences such as the pronounced interest swing toward professional sport. The central issue of the study was to describe the value of the sports journalism exhibited by Reeve to the sports historian looking to the column as a source of data.

It was found that “Sporting Extras” was much more subtle in tone than Lou Marsh’s often caustic and critical “With Pick and Shovel” column. Reeve used poetry, humor, stylistic devices such as alliteration and metaphors, the first person plural (we) or a variety of persona – the most common being Moaner McGuffrey and Alice Snippersnapper – to speak his most incisive opinions. Dominant male sports such as baseball, football, hockey and lacrosse were the general topics of most columns. Reeve provided insight in the evolution of certain sports, prevailing sporting values (regarding fighting, maleness, etc.), the technicalities of various sports and some criticism of time-honored issues such as amateurism, rules changes and so forth. “Sporting Extras” reinforced dominant trends and values in sport in Toronto between 1928 and 1936 and provided a window for examining reader/spectator interest in sport during the period.