

Issues related to public morality in terms of swimming and bathing arose in a variety of spheres of public life in London, Ontario during the late nineteenth century. This concern existed as a part of the broader system of social reform and regulation represented through the bylaws that were passed to control deviant and immoral behaviours. Local bylaws legislated against a wide range of inappropriate activities. These included, for example, the posting of indecent placards, possessing or selling indecent and lewd books, indecent exposure anywhere within the city, and bathing or washing in the Thames River or any other public water in the city between six a.m. and eight p.m. These regulations, which effectively defined appropriate social behavior, focussed specifically upon swimming and bathing as one of the important issues of social and moral concern. The extent to which various groups and individuals either supported or challenged these regulations provides critical insight into the ongoing conflict that surrounded the need to balance the desire for swimming and bathing opportunities, while considering the moral implications of doing so.

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Outdoor Pack-Style Speed Skating: Exploring the Rise of a Winter Sport

Chicago has had an unusually prominent position in the history of speedskating in the United States, having produced champions throughout the last century on the same level as two other speedskating centers – upstate New York and Minneapolis-St. Paul. Chicago first achieved national recognition with the success of four-time national champion Bobby McLean (1911-1914), and in every Olympic Games from 1924 through 2002 the city generated representatives, notably J. O’Neil Farrell, Eddie Schroeder, Ken Henry, Diane Holum, Leah Paulos, and Andy Gabel. In 2002, Shani Davis and Becky Sundstrum were on the U.S. team. For much of the sport’s history in Chicago, competitors raced in packs and outdoors. That is not largely the case today, where much of speedskating is done inside and against the clock, in a form called metric skating.

The pack-style speedskating in Chicago began to emerge in the 1890s, primarily among the Norwegians in the Humboldt Park

area who formed many skating clubs to advance the sport. Competition rapidly spread throughout the city in the next few years, and by the 1920s there was an array of formal competition conducted by private clubs, schools, the Catholic Youth Organization, and the Chicago Park District. The premier competition was the Chicago Tribune Silver Skates (1917-1974) attracting up to 60,000 fans during its heyday in the 1920s and 1930s. The demand for racing skates made the city the home of three major skate manufacturers.

This paper explores the reasons why Chicago in particular became one of the predominant speedskating centers in the last century. Three principal factors – physical (climatological), demographic (population size and Norwegian element), and cultural (clubs, schools, municipal support) – were conducive towards the city becoming a speedskating power. With regard to climate, it may seem self-evident that cold weather cities produce speedskaters, but this subject demands a more subtle approach, namely that climatic conditions can be fully appreciated as a factor only when combined with other factors, such as demographic and cultural. Thus, Chicago’s sufficiently inclement cold weather provided more outdoor ice surfaces than most other cities of the northeast. The city’s largest Norwegian population base outside of Minneapolis St. Paul originated and developed the sport to provide the impetus for further expansion of the sport into the sizable population at large. Finally, the cultural base of private and public institutions (clubs, schools, municipal government, and newspapers) helped immeasurably to spread the sport beyond the Norwegian base.

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**The 1920 Olympic Gold Medal and the
“Breakthrough Kinesis” of American Scientific
Oarsmanship: The Comparison of American and
British Rowing Strokes and Nationalism**

This paper addresses two voids in sport history literature regarding, the American rowing stroke as it differs from the British rowing stroke, and how that difference is defined and identified in the paper as “breakthrough kinesis.” The evolution of the American rowing stroke is important to sport historians because it