

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

is integral to the “Golden Age” of athletics in America. The impact of the United States Naval Academy winning the Olympic gold medal in the men’s eight oared shell over the British is a turning point in world of rowing. impacting Americanism, nationalism, and classism.

The identification and definition of the term “breakthrough kinesis” is first used in this paper. The term is used in reference to its universal application across sports in general and specifically to the change of the physical stroke from English to American style of rowing. This unique style change, stemming from American scientific advancements, launched for the first time the American crews past their English and European competitors, yielding social consequences paralleling those of cricket as chronicled in C. L. R. James’ Beyond a Boundary. The paper focuses on the above two themes centered in the historical framework of the 1880s to 1920s. It explores the evolution of both strokes, class and nationalism as they relate to of international rowing, the U. S. Naval Academy, and the 1920 Antwerp Olympic Games.

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Gertrude Ederle and a Reconsideration of the 1926 English Channel Swim

The English Channel swim was arguably the greatest test of combined physical endurance and mental toughness in the contemporary western world. Before 1926, more than two hundred individuals made at least one thousand attempts to swim across the Channel. Only five people succeeded, all of them were men. The summer of 1926 saw a renewed rush to the Channel swim. Between July and September of that year, more than twenty swimmers, representing at least eight countries, made numerous attempts to conquer the Channel. No one succeeded until the arrival of a nineteen-year old American woman, Gertrude Ederle of New York.

On August 6, 1926, Ederle, donned a revolutionary two-piece bathing suit, waded into the water at Cape Gris-Nez, France in the early morning. Against all the odds, including the turbulent waters and a five-to-one betting ratio in London, she landed on the English shore fourteen and a half hours later. Not only did she become the first woman to conquer the English Channel, she also