

Claudia M. Guedes  
University of Sao Paulo

## **The Role of Mackenzie College in the Introduction of Basketball to Brazil**

During the nineteenth century, Methodist (1836), Lutheran (1845), Presbyterian (1862) and other Protestant denominations established churches in Brazil and began to extend their work and influence through the creation of orphanages, hospitals, schools, and colleges. The American schools that were opened during early days of the Republic when public education was still underdeveloped, Fernando de Azevedo has written, made a notable contribution to education in Brazil. Among the most influential has been the Kindergarten School (also called the "American School"), established in 1870. The Reverend Ashbel Green Simonton (a Princeton Seminary graduate), who had established Presbyterian churches in Rio de Janeiro (1862) and Sao Paulo (1865), wanted a small school where the children of American families living in Sao Paulo could be educated according to Christian traditions. Simonton was introduced to Presbyterian George Whitehall Chamberlain, who organized what was then a novelty in Brazil's emerging system of education. The mission of the Kindergarten School, as set forth by Chamberlain, was to bring to children "the universe of knowledge, keeping them learning through perception." It is important to make this knowledge an

acquisition free of exhausting activities, but with happiness, with their body experience, learning with their plays and achieving discipline and the use of the senses.

The American School continued to grow. In 1893 it was transformed into Mackenzie College, which today is one of Brazil's leading institutions of higher learning for science, technology, engineering, the social sciences, and physical education. Seeking someone to teach courses in the newly opened school of engineering in 1894, Chamberlain contacted August Shaw, a graduate of Letters and Arts (1893) at Yale University. Shaw brought with him not only books but also a basketball. Mackenzie College started the first men's basketball team in Brazil (1896) and had a significant role in spreading the game's traditions to other colleges and universities. This paper examines the origins of basketball – with some attention to other sports – at Mackenzie College in the late 1800s and Mackenzie's contributions to the spread of these to other Brazilian institutions in the twentieth century. The research is based upon documents located in the Presbyterian South Seminary, Campinas, Brazil, and Center of History at Mackenzie Presbyterian University, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

---