

BUSINESS OF SPORT PAYS BIG DIVIDENDS

Crowds Get Bigger Steadily And Receipts Make Promoters Rich; Public Seems To Be Satisfied.

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 24.—Sport in the United States has grown to such proportions that it is the foundation for great industries. Primarily there is the business of presenting sporting events, those bringing the greatest financial returns being baseball and boxing. There is something in the human mind—especially, it seems in the American mind—which yearns toward physical contests when it is accompanied by skill. Every big prize fight held in the United States is attended by tens of thousands who crowd the arenas to see perhaps only a few minutes of struggle between skilled pugilists.

Ordinary baseball games are thronged by thousands, and when the world series comes the enthusiasts wait all night in line to be sure to attend on the days of the big games. Persons travel across the continent to attend the spectacles.

Some baseball clubs are more successful than others but in general it is a profitable business. Shares in the baseball clubs which usually are corporations are traded in on local exchanges just as shares in the United States Steel Corporation or the Pennsylvania Railroad company are traded in on the New York Stock Exchange. In a good season, dividends of substantial size are paid to stockholders and when a club wins a world series a regular million is cut.

The approaches to fame in the pugilistic world are not so profitable, but when a pugilist reaches the rank he and the shrewd business men associated with him enjoy big profits. Men like Jack Dempsey have become wealthy. Dempsey is rated at more than a million. Even contenders against the champions, receiving only the short side of the purse get rich returns. The promoters, managers and trainers share in the profits.

Business Back of Sports.
Back of all this is another aspect of the commerce of sport. Some one must make the implements used in sports and those who have built up established businesses reap a large profit.

Hundreds of thousands of baseballs are used every year in this country. Some are worn out and many are lost as every small boy knows. Some, still in good order, are auctioned off at benefit performances bearing the autographs of famous players. There is a steady consumption.

A baseball is an ingenious bit of manufacture. The standard baseball has a cork center about the size of a marble. This center is made from cork aged for fifteen years. Surrounding this core is a quarter inch layer of rubber of an especially resilient quality. At this stage of manufacture, the baseball is about the size of an English walnut. The next step in manufacture is the winding in coarse woolen yarn. This is done by machinery. Next, the ball is put in a machine which winds it with a finer-grade woolen yarn. A third and finer strand then is woven about the ball, gradually building up the sphere. Finally a thin layer of cotton yarn is wound around it.

The woolen yarns used are selected from the finest grades and carefully tested. They produce the greatest amount of the baseball's resiliency, even more than the cork core, according to experts.

The final step is putting on the cover. This is of horsehide. The ordinary horse is the proud bearer of about a hundred potential baseball covers. Only certain portions of the hide are used.

These portions are put in a stamping or cutting machine. A shaped knife cuts out the cover in two pieces of equal size. At the same time the cutting operation is performed, little points stamp holes around the edges for the stitches with which the cover is sewed on the ball.

About the only hand work on a baseball is the putting on of the covers. Each ball must have 216 stitches taken in it and these are done by hand. An expert workman can stitch on sixty covers in an eight-hour working day. The threads are double and waxed much like shoemakers' thread. About twelve feet of thread are used in each ball cover.

Balls form the principal item in the industry supplying the national game but the other accoutrements make up an aggregate which takes hundreds of thousands of dollars a year from American pockets, the combined business forming a substantial item in the commerce of the country.

Not Made Of Willow.
Some curious anomalies are discovered in an inquiry into the nomenclature of baseball. For instance, the sporting writer frequently refers to the batsman as the wielder of the

"willow." While baseball bats may at some time have been made of willow they seldom if ever are now. The standard baseball bat is made of the finest, straight-grained ash, the same material used by the Indians for their bows and, earlier, by the English for their longbows and quarterstaves.

The football, similarly, is invariably referred to as the "pigskin." As a matter of fact the standard football is made of cowhide. The basketball is also made of that material, while the pigskin is ignored in sporting paraphernalia, save for riding boots.

Punching bags and boxing gloves are made of sheepskin which has a softer and more pliant surface. Use of horsehide or cowhide in the manufacture of boxing gloves would leave the contestants much more badly marked up than sheepskin.

These are some of the major products of the sporting goods industry. Thousands of baseballs are used each year by the major leagues and the minor leagues are no less in the minor leagues are no less. To this must be added baseball gloves and mitts, catchers' masks, umpires' protectors, football uniforms, with all the strange armor of leather and moleskin that the modern football player dons. Then there are such games as lacrosse, hockey, handball, the track sports, including putting the shot, polevaulting, hurdling, sprinting, swimming, canoeing and literally dozens of others. Each sport has its own particular quota of equipment. Each year the expenditures of the American youth in this field increase and each year the industry grows bigger. Tennis and golf absorb hundreds of thousands of dollars a year in equipment.

The American people apparently have concluded that the millions of dollars they put into sporting goods each year must pay dividends in the form of good times and good health. Otherwise the expenditures would not continue and increase the way it does. It is all a part of that great branch of American commerce, the sporting goods business. Whether you buy a pair of dice or an eight-oared rowing shell, you are adding to the total of this big industry. There probably is no other industry from which people are more sure that they get their money's worth.

Brother Williams.
The man that gets there don't worry 'bout rain, an' don't stop to consider what he's done till he's done it; an' even then it don't look like half enough to him.—Atlanta Constitution.

British Princess To Enjoy Game Hunting On The Cold Coast

LONDON, Dec. 24.—(By Associated Press.)—Princess Marie Louise, King George's cousin, has decided to leave London in February for a month's visit to the Gold Coast of West Africa, where she will take part in some big game shooting.

Until recent years the Gold Coast was known as the white man's grave, but owing to the progress which has been made in the conquest of malaria and other tropical diseases, the district is now comparatively healthy.

The princess, who will be accompanied by a woman friend, will go to Accra, the seat of government, as the guest of the local governor.

National Editorial Association Opens Membership Drive

ST. PAUL, Dec. 24.—(By Associated Press.)—Police dogs, pure bred cattle, advertising space in trade publications and other prizes in great variety are being offered by the National Editorial Association in the membership campaign it has just launched.

H. C. Hotelling of St. Paul, executive secretary of the association, declared he expected the membership drive to be the largest and most colorful membership campaign in the association's forty years of activity.

Fifty attractive and useful prizes are being offered by the association to members sending in the largest number of new members before May 1, 1925, and announcement of the winners will be made at the annual convention in Richmond, Virginia, in June, 1925.

Vienna Has Only 3,200 Private Cars

VIENNA, Dec. 24.—(By Associated Press.)—This city with an approximate population of 2,600,000 has only 3,200 private automobiles, according to figures compiled recently by the authorities, of about 1,200 less than last year. The reduction is attributed to the economic crisis which has reached virtually all branches of business, professions and walks of life.



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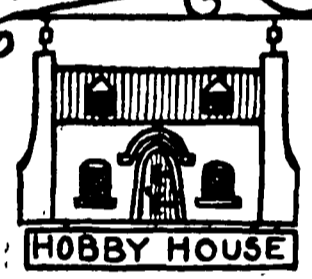
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