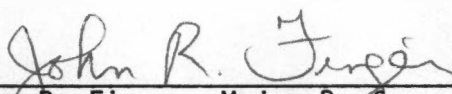
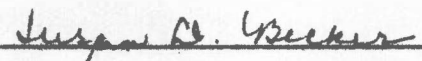


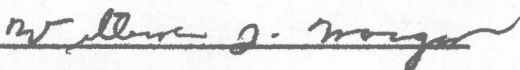
To the Graduate Council:

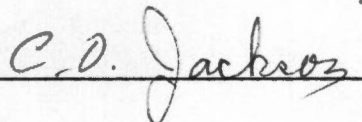
I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Adam R. Hornbuckle entitled "Women's Sports and Physical Education at The University of Tennessee: 1899-1939." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in History.

  
John R. Finger, Major Professor

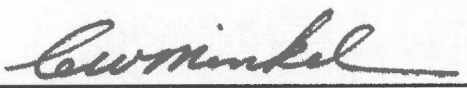
We have read this thesis  
and recommend its acceptance:

  
Susan B. Becker

  
William J. Morgan

  
C. D. Jackson

Accepted for the Council:

  
The Graduate School

WOMEN'S SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE:  
1899-1939

A Thesis  
Presented for the  
Master of Arts  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Adam R. Hornbuckle  
December 1983

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to several people who were instrumental in the preparation and completion of this study. First, I wish to thank Dr. John R. Finger who served as my major professor. His revision of the many manuscripts was invaluable in the preparation of this thesis. Secondly, Drs. Susan D. Becker, Charles O. Jackson, and William J. Morgan, as committee members, read the thesis and provided many helpful comments and suggestions for its revision.

A number of other individuals were helpful in supplying information and directing me to research materials and other sources. Mrs. Martha D. Masengill and Miss Jeane Barkley of the Alumni Affairs office supplied the names of women who participated in sports at the University during the 1920s and 1930s. Dr. Andrew J. Kozar, Executive Assistant to the President, shared his enthusiasm for Tennessee athletics and suggested a number of valuable sources. In addition, Dr. Kozar introduced me to Neal O'Steen, Director of Publications of Information Services, who supplied me with copies of James Riley Montgomery's histories of The University of Tennessee and directed me to other sources.

Financial support for this project was supplied in part by a grant from the Bernadotte Schmitt Graduate Research Awards Committee and from teaching stipends awarded by the Graduate Awards and Review Committee.

Personal thanks go out to a number of other individuals who have aided in the preparation and completion of this thesis. I want to thank Mrs. Marilyn Caponetti for typing the final draft; her expertise was invaluable in this regard. I especially want to thank Paula DePriest for her support and patience throughout the course of writing and typing the many rough drafts and final committee copy. Finally, I want to express my sincerest gratitude to my parents, James and Virginia Hornbuckle, for their support and encouragement throughout my entire academic career.

## ABSTRACT

Sports historians have demonstrated that the early twentieth century, particularly the 1920s and the 1930s, was a period of both increasing and decreasing opportunities for women to participate in skilled and competitive athletics. Most would agree that a philosophy of anti-competition and universal participation as advocated by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation (WDNAAF) steered women's collegiate sports and physical education during the period. However, they disagree over the extent of the application of that philosophy and its effectiveness once put into practice. While examining the development of women's sports and physical education at the University of Tennessee for the period between 1899 and 1939, this study focuses on the decades of the 1920s and 1930s and measures the WDNAAF's philosophy on the University. The thesis provides a model for similar studies at other institutions and is also a stepping stone for future studies of women's athletics at the University of Tennessee.

This study shows that skilled and competitive athletics, and the recognition and prestige derived from them, were important factors in the development of women's sports and physical education at the University of Tennessee; and they remained significant throughout the 1920s and 1930s, despite the elimination of women's varsity sports and the development of forms of universal participation. Tennessee first introduced physical education to its coeds in

1899. Skilled and competitive individual and team sports, such as tennis and basketball, were important features of the women's physical education program. Prior to 1926, the University supported these sports at both the intercollegiate and interclass levels. During this period, Tennessee produced many outstanding coed varsity teams, particularly in basketball. In 1926, as the WDNAAF's philosophy became more influential nationwide, Tennessee eliminated its women's varsity sports and began to develop forms of universal participation. The latter, however, continued to emphasize skill and competition. By the mid-thirties, the University had developed a women's intramural system which offered all individuals and groups the opportunity to compete for recognition and prestige in skilled and competitive sports.

This thesis demonstrates that the anti-competitive and universal participation philosophy of the WDNAAF certainly had an effect upon the University of Tennessee, but only in an indirect manner. Tennessee eliminated its women's varsity athletics not in response to a directive from the WDNAAF itself, but because nearby schools had already abolished their teams. The University of Tennessee, moreover, failed to adhere strictly to the WDNAAF's policies by continuing to stress skill and competition and emphasizing recognition and prestige through athletics. Finally, this thesis indicates that the development of universal participation was not an immediate process, but rather one requiring many steps in the reorganization of

groups, individuals, and activities. Overall, this study suggests that compliance with anti-competitive and universal participation policies of the WDNAAF was largely the responsibility and design of the individual institution.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER                                                                                         | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| INTRODUCTION. . . . .                                                                           | 1    |
| I. EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS AND<br>PHYSICAL EDUCATION. . . . .       | 10   |
| II. WOMEN'S SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY<br>OF TENNESSEE: 1899-1926. . . . . | 40   |
| III. THE TRIUMPH OF WOMEN'S INTRAMURALS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF<br>TENNESSEE: 1926-1939 . . . . .  | 78   |
| IV. CONCLUSION. . . . .                                                                         | 101  |
| SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .                                                                 | 104  |
| VITA. . . . .                                                                                   | 109  |

## INTRODUCTION

During the past two decades, contemporary sports writers and historians have devoted increasing attention to the development and role of women's sports and physical education in the United States, an interest reflecting a revolution of sorts in women's athletics during that period. Encouraged by "athletic competition with the Soviet Union and a revived feminist movement, plus legislative and court mandates," this revolution liberated the female athlete by removing many of the sexually discriminating barriers existing in American sports.<sup>1</sup> This watershed, however, was not the first in women's sports and physical education during the twentieth century. During the 1920s and 1930s, another revolution of sorts was responsible for the erection of barriers that lasted well into the 1960s and 1970s. Striking contrasts marked the opportunities for sportswomen in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s. While there were many opportunities for women to participate in highly skilled and competitive amateur and professional sports, similar opportunities in the nation's educational system met fierce opposition from leading female physical educators. In 1923, these women formed the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation (WDNAAF) around a philosophy of universal

---

<sup>1</sup>Benjamin G. Rader, American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1983), p. 335.

participation, which strongly advocated the elimination of varsity athletics for young women. "A game for every girl and a girl in every game"<sup>2</sup> became the motto of the WDNAAF, as it advocated its anti-competitive platform and encouraged forms of athletics and physical education designed to promote universal participation.

The historiography concerning women's sports and physical education during the twenties and thirties reflects the contradicting opportunities for American sportswomen. Ellen Gerber supports the position that the period was one of restriction rather than liberation for female athletes and physical educators alike. The period between 1923 and 1936, according to Gerber, was one "in which a conscious decision to curtail intercollegiate competition for women in schools and colleges was made and implemented."<sup>3</sup> As a result of this decision, according to Gerber, new forms of competition emerged which minimized or eliminated skill and competition.<sup>4</sup> Gerber finds the restrictive nature of the era especially significant in light of the recent revolution in women's sports. Many older physical educators are confused over the direction of their profession and lack the skills to coach competitive athletics. Similarly, Laura Robicheaux argues that "during the early twentieth century,

---

<sup>2</sup>Alice Allene Sefton, The Women's Division National Amateur Athletic Federation: Sixteen Years of Progress in Amateur Athletics for Girls and Women (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Ellen W. Gerber, "The Controlled Development of Collegiate Sport for Women, 1923-1936," Journal of Sports History, vol. 2 (Spring 1975), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

promoters of athletics for women were in constant opposition . . . to the woman physical educator."<sup>5</sup>

As for those who support the position that the twenties and thirties were times of growing opportunities for women in highly skilled and competitive sports, Joan S. Hult contends that "the death of competitive athletics for women has been greatly exaggerated."<sup>6</sup> She maintains that despite the efforts of the leading women physical educators, women still found competitive athletics in industrial leagues, sanctioned by the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), and in small high schools and colleges.<sup>7</sup> She emphasizes that "the will to find competitive opportunities surfaced even in the absence of any long sports tradition and despite social taboos against such participation."<sup>8</sup> Benjamin G. Rader supports Hult's claim that competitive sports for women thrived in the industrial leagues, yet he also points out that some AAU sponsored sports, such as track and field, declined during the thirties and never regained strength until the fifties and sixties.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Laura Robicheaux, "An Analysis of Attitudes Towards Women's Athletics in the U.S. in the Early Twentieth Century," Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education, vol. 6 (May 1975), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup>Joan S. Hult, "Have the Reports of the Death of Competitive Women's Athletics, 1920-1935, Been Greatly Exaggerated?" Proceedings of the North American Society for Sport History (1980), p. 42.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Rader, American Sports, p. 336.

The central theme of women's sports and physical education during the 1920s and 1930s, according to these interpretations, is one of increasing and decreasing opportunities for women to participate in skilled and competitive sports. One sport in particular, basketball, demonstrated this theme of the twenties and thirties. In "The Rise of Basketball for Women in Colleges," Ronald A. Smith maintains that it became the chief sport for women in high schools and colleges because many women physical educators believed it was "the best physical activity for developing positive social behavior among young women."<sup>10</sup> Despite the efforts of physical educators to modify the men's rules and fashion a feminine version of the game, basketball became a skilled and competitive activity for women; and in many cases, women followed male rules and men coached female teams.<sup>11</sup> The reaction of many women to these problems during the twenties and thirties, according to Smith, decided "the direction that women's basketball would take in the colleges for the next generation," as the nature of women's basketball became markedly different from that played by men.<sup>12</sup> Yet despite these changes, Smith points out that a minority of women still approved of young women playing basketball under male rules.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup>Ronald A. Smith, "The Rise of Basketball for Women in Colleges," Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education, vol. 1 (December 1970), p. 33.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 22-25.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

The contradictory theme of women's sports in the 1920s and 1930s not only reflects the position of American women during that period, but it also mirrors some of the broader themes in the history of American women. Since the colonial era, the story of womanhood in American society has been one of increasing and decreasing social, economic, and political opportunities. Compounding this theme is the pervasive concept that men and women occupy traditionally separate and distinct spheres in American life. In Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present, Mary P. Ryan provides a framework for understanding the "dizzying variety of feminine images and female roles."<sup>14</sup> In colonial society, based on community and hierarchy, women enjoyed many economic responsibilities, yet they had little social and political status. With the driving commercial spirit of the early national period, womanhood splintered into many directions. As some women led lives of fashionable idleness, others turned their attention to home industry, and many found work in the burgeoning factories and mills. The economic order of the nineteenth century identified the industrial woman, both in the home and factory, with specific domestic functions of wife and mother. Finally in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, women attempted to define their own roles and decide their own destinies with the force of the suffrage movement.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup>Mary P. Ryan, Womanhood in America: From Colonial Times to the Present (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), p. 11.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-13.

The athletic participation of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries demonstrates Ryan's position that women during that period attempted to shape their own lives and decide their role in society. Female participation in croquet, tennis, archery, cycling, and physical education classes demonstrated women's interest in extending their activities beyond the traditional domestic sphere. The development of a separate version of women's basketball, with its own rules and style of play, reflected the desire of women to develop their own lives and decide their own destinies.<sup>16</sup> The controlled development of women's collegiate sport during the 1920s and 1930s further developed that theme in American womanhood.

Yet the women's movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries failed to shatter the traditional definition of womanhood, and during the 1920s and 1930s the role of wife and mother became further entrenched in American life. Although it signaled a return to "normalcy" in American ideals and customs, the post World War I decade actually marked the "formative years of modern American society."<sup>17</sup> George E. Mowry maintains that during the twenties, America became an urban nation in its mind-set, its ideals, and its folkways; and interwoven in this change was "the rise of a new type of industrial economy typified by mass-production

---

<sup>16</sup>Smith, "Rise of Basketball," pp. 33-34.

<sup>17</sup>George E. Mowry, ed., The Twenties: Fords, Flappers, & Fanatics (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1963), p. 1.

and mass-consumption."<sup>18</sup> Ryan argues that the emergence of this new economy, despite the interruption of depression and war, transformed woman into "America's number one shopper," a role which she would have to juggle between wife and mother.<sup>19</sup> Sheila M. Rothman also points out this transformation of woman's role during the twenties, as she stayed in the home, but shifted her attention from her children to her husband.<sup>20</sup> Agreeing with Ryan and Rothman, William H. Chafe maintains that the home gained much strength during the twenties and thirties, as "most women readily accepted the role of wife and mother."<sup>21</sup>

The strengthening of the home sphere following World War I has been largely overlooked by contemporary and historical interpretations which have emphasized the new woman of the 1920s. Frederick Lewis Allen focused much attention on this liberated middle-class female, the flapper, in his discussion of the revolution in manners and morals during the decade.<sup>22</sup> William E. Leuchtenburg points out in The Perils of Prosperity that this new woman "revolted against

---

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ryan, Womanhood in America, pp. 14-15.

<sup>20</sup>Sheila M. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1978), p. 177.

<sup>21</sup>William H. Chafe, The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970 (New York: Oxford Press, 1972), p. 111.

<sup>22</sup>Frederick Lewis Allen, Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920's (New York: Harper & Row, Perennial Library, 1964), Chapter 5.

masculine possessiveness," and she demanded the same freedom of movement and political and economic rights enjoyed by men.<sup>23</sup> According to George E. Mowry and Blaine A. Brownell, the new woman "cut both her hair and dresses exceedingly short, de-emphasized the feminine form by throwing away her corset and by dieting, and participated with much gusto in what hitherto had been masculine amusements and sports."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, Ryan points to this new woman in the "sexy saleslady," a housewife, mother, and consumer who flaunted her sexuality across the advertisements in popular journals.<sup>25</sup>

The participation of women in sports during the 1920s and 1930s and the efforts to restrict their skilled and competitive nature, reflected this multiplicity of roles which confronted American women. The major sportswomen of the era, Gertrude Ederle, Helen Wills, Glenna Collet, and Babe Didrickson, all symbolized the emancipated spirit of the new woman, actively participating in a previously male dominated society. They were women truly shaping their own lives, deciding their own destinies, and reserving for themselves a place in history. Yet all too often these and other female athletes became the sexy salesladies in the advertisements of sports

---

<sup>23</sup>William E. Leuchtenburg, The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1931 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 159.

<sup>24</sup>George E. Mowry and Blaine A. Brownell, The Urban Nation: 1920-1980, Revised Edition (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), p. 23.

<sup>25</sup>Ryan, Womanhood in America, p. 15.

consumption.<sup>26</sup> This commercialization and exploitation of sports-women, in addition to the increasing skilled and competitive nature of their activities, were among the many displeasures women physical educators found in women's athletics. Their efforts to eliminate these ills and shape a separate and distinct athletic sphere for women generally reflected the strengthening of the home sphere and the traditional image of American womanhood.<sup>27</sup> Accordingly, the proper sportswoman would then reflect Rothman's "wife-companion," who, on the country-club level, would accompany her husband to the tennis court, golf course, and swimming pool.<sup>28</sup>

The main topic of this study, however, is women's sports and physical education at The University of Tennessee between 1899 and 1939. Particular emphasis will be placed on the twenties and the thirties in order to determine if the crucial policy changes of the period affected UTK; and if they did, how did the University respond to them? My thesis is that skill and competition, in addition to athletic recognition and prestige, were important elements in women's sports and physical education at The University of Tennessee during the early twentieth century, and they remained important even as the philosophy of anti-competition and universal participation guided women's athletics during the 1920s and 1930s.

---

<sup>26</sup>Stephanie L. Twin, Out of the Bleachers: Writings on Women and Sport (Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1979), pp. xxix-xxx.

<sup>27</sup>Gerber, "Controlled Development," pp. 14-15.

<sup>28</sup>Rothman, Woman's Proper Place, p. 187.

## CHAPTER I

### EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, opportunities increased for women to participate in sports and physical education. Following the Civil War, women began to participate in socially acceptable and non-strenuous physical activities such as croquet, tennis, and archery. Bicycling, popularized during the 1880s and 1890s, introduced women to far more strenuous activities. At the same time, women's colleges and coeducational institutions established physical education programs which, likewise, consisted of socially acceptable and non-strenuous activities. Associated with this increased participation in sports and physical education was the establishment of institutions designed specifically for training women physical educators. As women's athletics entered the twentieth century, however, it became increasingly strenuous, skilled competitive, aggressive, and oriented toward spectators. By the 1920s, critics of women's sports and many female physical educators objected to these changes in women's athletics, and throughout the twenties and thirties, they sought means to control them.

Shortly after the Civil War, the first socially acceptable physical activity for women was croquet.<sup>1</sup> Croquet was an activity

---

<sup>1</sup>John A. Lucas and Ronald A. Smith, Saga of American Sports (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1978), p. 254.

in which both men and women could participate together. It consisted of simple movements which required no undue exertion. It also required no special costume, so both sexes wore their typical dress of the day. Even as women's sports became more skilled, competitive, and strenuous, croquet remained a popular activity among both men and women well into the twentieth century.

In addition to croquet, archery, during the 1860s and 1870s, also expanded the participation of women in sports by its social acceptability and non-strenuous nature.<sup>2</sup> Like croquet, it consisted of simple movements which allowed women to participate wearing their many layers of clothing. It, too, was an activity in which both men and women participated together, even at a skilled and competitive level. In 1879, men and women competed in a national archery tournament, yet rules limited women to the number of arrows they could shoot and the distance of their shooting range.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, archery was one of the first activities around which women organized athletic clubs, such as the Crescent City Female Archery Club and the Pearl Archery Club, both organized in New Orleans during the 1870s and 1880s.<sup>4</sup>

Like croquet and archery, tennis also encouraged the participation of women in physical activity. In fact, a woman, Mary Outerbridge, introduced the sport in the United States in 1874,

---

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 254 and 256.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>4</sup>Ellen W. Gerber, Jan Felshin, Pearl Berlin, and Waneen Wyrick, The American Woman in Sport (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1974), p. 28.

after she observed British soldiers on Bermuda playing the game.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the modern, fast-paced and aggressive sport, tennis during the late nineteenth century was a gentle game in which lavishly dressed men and women engaged. In the 1870s and 1880s, athletic clubs which formerly allowed only male members accepted women for their participation in tennis. Among these clubs were the Ladies' Club of the Staten Island Cricket and Baseball Club, and the once exclusively male New York Tennis Club.<sup>6</sup>

The admission of women to previously all-male athletic clubs and the formation of their own organizations underscored the growing acceptability of female participation in physical activities. Sports like tennis and archery, unlike croquet, demanded such organization to provide the women with the courts and other items needed for regular participation and competition. For example, the former all-male tennis clubs made special arrangements for their female patrons to have access to all of the courts during certain hours, like the morning, and even set aside several nets exclusively for their own use. Moreover, the clubs granted the women certain dates for their tournaments, which received usually a "large and fashionable gathering of members and friends." In addition to tennis and archery clubs, women became active also in fencing, rowing, canoeing, golf, bowling, and gymnastics clubs.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Lucas and Smith, Saga, p. 256.

<sup>6</sup>Gerber, et al., American Woman, pp. 27-28.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

The development of these opportunities for women to participate in sports following the Civil War reflected the changing, and contradictory role and status of American women. The social and economic changes of the late nineteenth century had at once a liberating and restricting effect upon women's lives. As urbanization and industrialization accelerated, the role of women expanded beyond the traditional domestic sphere. From 1880 to 1900, the number of women entering the workforce grew from 2-1/2 to 5 million, as their employment opportunities encompassed secretarial positions, telephone switchboard operators, bookkeepers, librarians, journalists, nurses, doctors, and lawyers.<sup>8</sup> Yet increased financial resources and leisure time allowed some women to develop a stronger commitment to the virtues of True Womanhood: piety, purity, submission, and domesticity.<sup>9</sup> Encouraged by their husbands, these women led lives of enforced idleness. Their clothing reflected their socially restricted lives, as they laced themselves in tightly fitting corsets, donned layers of petticoats, and trailed long, flowing dresses. The social acceptance of their participation in sports reflected this contradiction in the lives of American women, as it brought them out of the home and into the world of men, but failed to liberate them from their cumbersome layers of clothing.

---

<sup>8</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, The Rise of the City, 1878-1898 (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 142.

<sup>9</sup>Benjamin G. Rader, American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1983), p. 165.

The most important sport of the late nineteenth century affecting the participation of women was bicycling. The bicycle enlarged women's sporting opportunities by demonstrating that they could participate in an activity more physically demanding than croquet, archery, or tennis.<sup>10</sup> Certainly, cranking the pedals of a bicycle required more physical effort than striking a croquet mallet against a wooden ball, swinging a tennis racket, or pulling an arrow against a strung bow. In fact, some physicians advocated women's use of the bicycle as a cheap and safe means of exercise and transportation.<sup>11</sup> Most important, the activity brought about major dress reforms for women.<sup>12</sup> Unlike most other sports of the era, which allowed women to participate wearing their cumbersome clothes, the bicycle forced them to wear less restrictive and bulky garments, such as bloomers or knickerbockers. First introduced by Amelia Bloomer in the 1850s, the former costume received much criticism, and those who wore it were subjected to ridicule and scorn.<sup>13</sup> Yet, the bicycle gave bloomers social acceptability, and many proper women took up the activity and donned the outfit. But still the sport did not fit into many physician's and

---

<sup>10</sup>Lucas and Smith, Saga, p. 258.

<sup>11</sup>John A. Haller and Robin M. Haller, The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), pp. 175-176.

<sup>12</sup>Gerber, et al., American Woman, p. 33; Haller and Haller, Physician and Sexuality, pp. 176-177; Lucas and Smith, Saga, pp. 258-260.

<sup>13</sup>Gerber, et al., American Woman, pp. 30-31.

feminist's image of genteel femininity, and they discouraged the participation of upper-middle class women.<sup>14</sup> Yet despite this objection, the bicycle remained a liberating force in the lives of many women.

Another liberating force in the lives of American women during the late nineteenth century was the growing opportunity for them to receive a college education. Like the increasing employment and athletic opportunities, college attendance removed some women from the home, placing them in yet another sphere once dominated by men. Because of the supposed intellectual and psychological inferiority of women, many educators and physicians believed that higher education endangered the health of young women.<sup>15</sup> For that reason, in the growing number of women's colleges and coeducational institutions following the Civil War, formal physical educational programs became part of the required curriculum of young college women. The establishment of required physical education demonstrated that educators felt improved physical vigor would strengthen the bodies and minds of young women for the rigors of the classroom. Vassar College, one of the first women's colleges of the post Civil War era, advocated physical education in its instruction of young women. The Vassar system of "vigorous femininity," as one historian has described it, became the model for physical

---

<sup>14</sup>Haller and Haller, Physician and Sexuality, pp. 179-187.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 37, 60-61, 83.

education in most women's colleges and coeducational institutions during the late nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup>

Believing that women deserved an equal opportunity for intellectual and cultural development, Matthew Vassar, in 1865, had established one of the first colleges to provide women with an education equal to that received by men.<sup>17</sup> To achieve that goal, the institution offered a variety of courses in both the sciences and the humanities, as well as in music and the arts. Training for teachers was part of the curriculum at Vassar. In addition, the institution offered a program in domestic economy, which intended "to maintain a just appreciation of the dignity of women's home sphere . . . to teach a correct theory, at least, of the household and its management."<sup>18</sup> These broad areas of study at Vassar illustrate the dual nature of women's role during the latter half of the century, expanding opportunities together with a maintenance of traditional domestic values.

In addition to offering women educational opportunities comparable to those of men, Vassar also provided exercise programs designed to improve and maintain the health of its students. These programs worked in tandem with a well ordered daily routine, which included strict morning and evening hours and three meals

---

<sup>16</sup>Sheila M. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideas and Practices, 1870 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1978), p. 34.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

served at precise times. The physical educational program included both indoor and outdoor activities. Outdoor activities included croquet, baseball, hiking, and horseback riding. Indoor activities included bowling, calisthenics, and other types of gym work.<sup>19</sup> Although the public did not wholeheartedly approve of Vassar's physical training policies for women, the activities proceeded unobserved, as the "sheltering trees" of the campus protected the young women in their play.<sup>20</sup>

More important than having the students participate in physical education was Vassar's requirement that its applicants already be in good physical condition before receiving admission to the college. This prerequisite reflected a belief that women, especially those in poor physical condition, were not capable of meeting the demands of higher education. In the case of Vassar, the physically unfit were barred from admission as were all but the "most affluent and aristocratic." Maria Mitchell, one of the college's most prominent professors, supported and encouraged this position of the institution, as she advised against aiding "the daughters of the very poor through a college course," or allowing "the delicate girl" to attempt taking a college course.<sup>21</sup>

Despite its stringent and often biased admission requirements, the Vassar system became the model for other women's

---

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>20</sup>Lucas and Smith, Saga, p. 262.

<sup>21</sup>Rothman, Proper Place, p. 30.

colleges during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Women's colleges such as Bryn Mawr and Smith, established in the 1880s, placed a high priority on physical education and a well ordered routine for their students. Bryn Mawr exhibited this standard by carefully limiting and planning classroom hours, providing instruction in personal hygiene and supervision from a qualified physician, offering outdoor recreation, maintaining sanitary conditions, and furnishing the college with the latest gymnastic facilities.<sup>22</sup> Smith College was the first institution to introduce its students to basketball in 1892.<sup>23</sup> Throughout the remainder of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, the establishment of physical education programs in many universities demonstrated the growing realization that women were indeed capable of participating in exercise programs.

At the same time that physical education became included in the curriculum of several women's colleges, other institutions emerged which were designed specifically for training individuals in the fundamentals and the theories of physical education. Probably the most significant of these institutions was the Normal School of Physical Training, established in 1881 as the Sanitary Gymnasium by Dudley Allen Sargent in Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>23</sup>Ronald A. Smith, "The Rise of Basketball for Women in Colleges," Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education, vol. 1 (December 1970), p. 21.

<sup>24</sup>Ellen W. Gerber, Innovators and Institutions in Physical Education (Philadelphia: Lea and Febiger, 1971), p. 308.

An outgrowth of Sargent's work at Harvard University's Homeway Gymnasium, the Sanatory Gymnasium met the growing need for physical educators in women's colleges and coeducational institutions.<sup>25</sup> Sargent instructed both men and women in the use of his apparatus. In fact, he strongly advocated both physical training for women and their participation in team sports, maintaining that educators, physicians, and "women themselves had been slow to realize (their) tremendous power and had overestimated their weaknesses, so that it needed many years of encouragement and of feeling their way through the stages of musical calisthenics and bean-bag drills to convince them that they would not fall to pieces in more violent exercises."<sup>26</sup>

Sargent's interest in the physical education of women and their participation in sports reflected the expanding and increasingly active role of women during the late nineteenth century outside their traditional domestic sphere. Recognizing the larger role of women within a nation realizing its own potential, Sargent argued that society needed women with increased stamina.<sup>27</sup> To achieve this, he proposed that women participate in both individual and team sports, such as basketball, soccer, and hockey. Although he disapproved of ballet dancing as a form of exercise, Sargent advocated aesthetic dancing as an excellent activity for women

---

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 290.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

(and later he encouraged male participation in the activity). According to Sargent, aesthetic dancing complied "more completely with the requirements of exercise, because . . . the range of movement in (aesthetic) dancing is greater."<sup>28</sup>

With the opening of the Sanatory Gymnasium in 1881, Sargent gained the opportunity to implement his ideas concerning the physical education of women, and offer them training as physical educators. In the first year, six women entered his one year course, and devoted themselves "to the study and practice of physical training with the view of becoming teachers."<sup>29</sup> Reflecting the growing complexity of the field and its increasing importance in the realm of education, the time of instruction increased in 1891 to two years, to three in 1903, and finally to four in 1929, when the school became a part of Boston University. Though a high school diploma was the chief requirement for admission to the Gymnasium, many of the applicants had college degrees.<sup>30</sup>

The curriculum offered at the Sargent Normal School set the standard for other such institutions at around the turn of the century, in balancing the focus between theoretical and practical courses. Theoretical courses reflected an emphasis on the scientific foundation of physical education with courses in natural and physical sciences. Generally, these included anatomy, biology,

---

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 290-291.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 293.

chemistry, physics, and physiology; these subjects composed the first year's curriculum. The second year's work dealt with more specific topics, such as the physiology of exercise, applied anatomy, animal mechanics, anthropometry and the laws of form and proportion, and vital statistics. Students also received training in the science and art of teaching, and the organization of sports, games, and exercise programs. In 1902, the program added a course on the history of education; and between 1908 and 1908, curriculum included professional training for playground instructors.<sup>31</sup>

Complementing Sargent's theoretical training was a core of practical courses relating to exercise itself. The first year focused on "exercises . . . for the physical development of the teacher." This included training in massage, free movements, calisthenics, light gymnastics, chest weights, balance swings and boards, class exercises, voice training, and an introduction to heavy gymnastics. In the second year more attention turned to light and heavy gymnastics, marching, athletic sports, first aid, the organization of classes, and tailoring exercises for the individual student. In 1904, practical instruction expanded to include aesthetic dancing, field and ice hockey. Practice teaching became part of the curriculum in 1907.<sup>32</sup>

Just as Vassar College became a model for women's colleges during the late nineteenth century, the Sargent Normal School,

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 293-294.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 294.

with its theoretical and practical instruction, became a model for other such institutions. Individuals educated under the Sargent system also spread his ideas throughout the educational profession. Examples of similar institutions which developed at this time include the Harvard Summer School of Physical Education, the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics, and Smith College. The Harvard Summer School, like Sargent's Normal School, was an outgrowth of his work at the Homeway Gymnasium. "The object of the school," according to Sargent, "was to arouse an interest in the general subject, show its relation to education, and in a short time prepare as many people as possible to teach physical training."<sup>33</sup> The Boston Normal School adopted the same balanced instructional approach to physical education, but it focused its teacher training on Swedish gymnastics.<sup>34</sup> In the 1880s, Smith College adopted the Sargent system and apparatus for its physical education program.<sup>35</sup> Among the individuals educated by Sargent, Elizabeth Burchenal became one of the most outstanding figures in women's physical education during the early twentieth century. After receiving her diploma in 1898, she became a strong advocate of aesthetic dancing while serving as the director of women's physical education at Columbia University between 1903 and 1906. From 1906 to 1917, Burchenal directed her efforts as the Director of Physical Training

---

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 308

<sup>35</sup>Rothman, Proper Place, p. 35.

in the New York Public Schools. In 1917, she became the first chairperson of the newly formed Committee on Women's Athletics of the American Physical Education Association. In 1923, she became an influential figure in the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation.<sup>36</sup>

Although several institutions and individuals promoted the participation of women in sports and physical education, there were many critics and skeptics of these increasing opportunities for women. Luther Halsey Gulick, for example, a contemporary of Sargent, maintained that "boyhood and manhood have for ages long been tested and produced by athletics." He further argued that "athletics have never been either a test or a large factor in the survival of women, that is, athletics do not test womanliness as they test manliness." In keeping with this philosophy, Gulick opposed vigorous exercise and competitive sports for women, but instead encouraged their participation in dance. He regarded folk dancing as better "adapted to the feminine physiological, social, or aesthetic needs."<sup>37</sup> With the assistance of his wife, Gulick organized the Campfire Girls in 1913, an organization that reflected the values of the home, outdoors, and solidarity.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the conflicting opinions of physical educators, physical education programs and competitive sports became very

---

<sup>36</sup>Gerber, Innovators and Institutions, pp. 296 and 363-367.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 353.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 355.

prevalent in women's colleges and coeducational institutions. Basketball, a sport invented for indoor play during cold winter months, became the foremost team sport for women. Unlike most other sports of the era, it challenged the social acceptability of women's participation in sports because of its fast pace and strenuous, sometimes aggressive, nature. Yet many women loved its "freedom of movement, rapid pace changes, and vigorous competition."<sup>39</sup> Like bicycling, basketball further liberated the athletic potential of women.

John Naismith invented basketball for the young men at the Springfield, Massachusetts YMCA, but Senda Berenson, the physical education director at nearby Smith College, adopted it as an exercise for her students.<sup>40</sup> Finding the game too rough for women under the existing men's rules, Berenson modified them to eliminate rough play, lessen physical exertion, and distribute the play among all the players. To do this, she divided the court into three sections, in which players positioned themselves throughout the duration of the game. The ball, rather than the players, stayed in motion, as it could not be held for more than three seconds nor dribbled more than three bounces before it had to be passed off to another player.<sup>41</sup> In 1899, Berenson and other

---

<sup>39</sup>Rader, American Sports, p. 166.

<sup>40</sup>Lucas and Smith, Saga, pp. 205 and 262.

<sup>41</sup>Smith, "Rise of Basketball," pp. 21-22.

women physical educators approved these rule modifications as the official rules of women's basketball. Women continued to play under these rules well into the 1960s, when they returned to the men's rules.<sup>42</sup>

While coaches attempted to devise a more feminine version of basketball, the game became a popular, skilled, and competitive sport for women in colleges and high schools. Women usually participated in the game during physical education classes and in intramural competitions, yet many women's colleges and coeducational institutions formed varsity teams among their best players and competed against other schools. By the first few years of the twentieth century, intercollegiate games occurred regularly between Radcliffe and Mount Holyoke, Barnard and Syracuse, and Stanford and California.<sup>43</sup> Although many of these schools were in the East, generally the colleges which competed at the intercollegiate level were in the Midwest and West. In any case, they were a minority.<sup>44</sup> In 1916, only 14 out of a sample of 66 colleges practiced some form of women's varsity athletics. It appeared that women's varsity sports (almost exclusively basketball), were more common in high schools; and in 1925, nearly half of the states held basketball championships for women.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 22

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>44</sup>Ellen W. Gerber, "The Controlled Development of Collegiate Sport for Women, 1923-1936," Journal of Sport History, vol. 2 (Spring 1975), pp. 1-3.

<sup>45</sup>Rader, American Sport, p. 166.

As women's athletics entered the twentieth century, they became increasingly strenuous, skilled, competitive, aggressive, and oriented toward spectators. The rapid rise of women's varsity basketball, despite rule modifications, reflected this transformation in women's athletics. Moreover, women's basketball was only a small part of a larger movement towards the participation of women in skilled and competitive athletics following World War I. In most cases, women approached the socially acceptable and non-strenuous sports of the late-nineteenth century with an increasingly skilled, competitive, and aggressive manner. This was especially true in the tennis play of Helen Wills. Gertrude Ederle and Glenna Collet demonstrated similar qualities in swimming and golf, respectively. Other examples of this phenomenon were the sponsorship of national championships in various sports by the Amateur Athletic Union and the support of women's athletics by business and industry. This competitive movement also intruded into the Olympic Games, as more and more women began to participate in the once exclusively male athletic celebration.

The increasing opportunities for women to participate in skilled and competitive athletics during the 1920s reflected the changing role of some women in American society. Generally many of the sportswomen of the period reflected the middle-class, urban, and educated character of the new woman as described by many

historians.<sup>46</sup> The sports in which these women participated became their careers, and they approached them with the same aggressiveness and confidence as a woman in the business or professional world.

Helen Wills, Gertrude Ederle, and Gleena Collet were probably the best examples of the skilled, competitive, and aggressive female athlete. Between 1923 and 1938, Wills compiled seven national tennis single titles, eight Wimbledon singles championships, and a gold medal in the 1924 Olympic Games. Ederle, a swimmer, earned a gold and two bronze medals in the same Olympiad; and in 1926, she became the first woman to swim the English Channel. During the twenties, Collet dominated golf, taking six national amateur titles. As sportswomen, they displayed many characteristics both of the new and the traditional woman. Wills and Collet came from upper-middle class, prosperous families. Wills also attended college in California, where she excelled in academics by becoming a Phi Beta Kappa honor student. Ederle, in contrast, had working class roots.<sup>47</sup> Despite their diverse social, economic, and educational backgrounds, these women displayed a competitiveness and goal-orientation similar to those women participating in the business and professional world.

---

<sup>46</sup>William H. Chafe, The American Woman; Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 57; Haller and Haller, Physician and Sexuality, pp. xi, 28, 39-40, 47, 51, 77-78, 82, 86, 173; George E. Mowery and Blaine A. Brownell, The Urban Nation, 1920-1980, Revised Edition, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), pp. 23-25.

<sup>47</sup>Lucas and Smith, Saga, pp. 344-349.

Although no apparent female superstars emerged from team sports, leagues supported by commercial and industrial interests provided women with opportunities to participate in competitive athletics. This was all part of a larger effort to improve worker morale.<sup>48</sup> Firms organized women's teams in sports such as softball, bowling, and basketball. Unlike women's sports before the turn of the century, spectators flocked to watch these talented, but "sexy" sportswomen. In fact, the association between sexual attractiveness and athletic performances of women contributed to the success of these industrial leagues. For example, one promoter of women's industrial sports, Marty Fiedler, gave softball teams names such as Slapsie Maxis's Curvacious Cuties and Balian Ice Cream Beauties. The Casualty Insurance Company of Dallas reported a rise in the attendance of their women's basketball games from 500 to 5,000 because of controversies over the costumes worn by the team.<sup>49</sup> Regardless of the motivation behind them, industrial sports increased the opportunities for women to compete at a national class level. In 1907, the World Bowling Congress began conducting a women's tournament along with the men's. The Amateur Softball Association, in 1933, held the first championship for women. Finally in 1926, as women's varsity basketball declined in the nation's educational system, industrial and the Amateur Athletic Union combined their

---

<sup>48</sup>Rader, American Sports, p. 337.

<sup>49</sup>Stephanie L. Twin, ed., Out of the Bleachers: Writings on Women and Sport (Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist, 1979), pp. xxix-xxx.

efforts to maintain the sport at a competitive level for women by conducting national tournaments played under men's rules.<sup>50</sup> In 1926, besides working with industrial leagues to maintain competitive women's basketball, the Amateur Athletic Union sponsored several other sports women at the national level. The AAU began sponsoring championships for women in swimming in 1916, track and field in 1924, and gymnastics in 1931.<sup>51</sup> This growth of competitive amateur sports for women reflected a movement to include their participation in the Olympic Games. Pierre de Coubertin, an athletic idealist, who revitalized the Games in 1896, saw the participation of women in the quadrennial event as "impractical, uninteresting, inaesthetic, and . . . wrong."<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, women began to take part in the Olympics in 1900, by entering the socially acceptable sports of golf and tennis. In 1912, archery and ice skating became Olympic sports for women. Swimming and skating became an Olympic event for women in 1920 and Americans won four out of five gold medals in the new event.<sup>53</sup>

Despite their increasing opportunities to participate in the Olympics during the early twentieth century, there were many critics of female participation in the Olympics. These critics

---

<sup>50</sup>Gerber, et al., American Woman, pp. 95-99, 117-121.

<sup>51</sup>Rader, American Sports, p. 336.

<sup>52</sup>Lucas and Smith, Saga, p. 349.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 349-350.

found their strongest evidence against women participants in the 800 meter track event in the 1928 Olympiad. Out of the eleven runners starting the race, five of them failed to finish, five collapsed upon finishing, and the remaining athlete fainted in the dressing room.<sup>54</sup> Obviously untrained for the event, the women in the 800 meters demonstrated to the critics of women's sports that they were physiologically incapable of participating in prolonged athletic contests.<sup>55</sup>

By the 1920s, women's sports and physical education had changed from the socially acceptable, non-strenuous, and non-spectator oriented activities of the late nineteenth century to competitive, physically demanding, and spectator contests. Critics and many women physical educators during the twenties objected to this transformation because in many cases the young women participated in essentially unladylike conditions, with masculine playing strategies, male coaches, and brief costumes. Some individuals said that women participating in athletics were either being unfeminine or were flaunting their sexuality through sports.<sup>56</sup> During the twenties and thirties, women physical educators organized themselves in order to set standards for women's sports, mainly those in the nation's educational system, and control their further development.

---

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 355-356.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 356.

<sup>56</sup>Rader, American Sports, p. 339.

In the early 1920s, the Harding Administration executed an attempt to organize groups interested in the physical fitness of American youth. In 1922, under the direction of the Department of Navy and War, the National Amateur Athletic Federation took shape.<sup>57</sup> Its organization was a direct result of physical examinations of young men entering the military during the First World War which indicated that American youth, especially those in urban areas, were in poor physical fitness.<sup>58</sup> The Harding Administration felt that such a group would help remedy the situation. Under the direction of Lou Hoover, wife of Herbert Hoover, who then was the Secretary of Commerce, a separate women's division emerged because Mrs. Hoover believed "there were such fundamental different factors underlying the athletics of men and boys and women and girls."<sup>59</sup> The Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation became an avenue upon which women physical educators directed the course of women's sports and physical education in the educational system away from skilled and competitive orientation. Coming at a time when much controversy existed over the conduct and control of women's sports, the WDNAAF formulated an

---

<sup>57</sup>Alice Allene Sefton, The Women's Division, National Division Amateur Athletic Federation: Sixteen Years of Progress in Amateur Athletics for Girls and Women (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), pp. 1-2.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 1; Agnes R. Wayman, Education Through Physical Education: Its Organization and Administration for Girls and Women, Third Edition (Philadelphia: Lea & Fibeger, 1934), p. 25.

<sup>59</sup>Sefton, Women's Division, p. 2.

anti-competitive philosophy of play, and it implemented forms of sport and exercise which encouraged universal participation.

The formation of the WDNAAF seemed to silence much of the disagreements over the conduct and control of women's sports. Controversy over these aspects of women's sports began shortly before the turn of the twentieth century over basketball rules. Before the publication of the first basketball rules by the Spaulding Company in 1899, Senda Berenson headed the Basketball Rules Committee (WBC), which decided upon the rules for the women's version of the game. In 1905 this group became the National Women's Basketball Committee (NWBC). The NWBC operated within the larger American Physical Education Association (APEA). The growing complexity of women's sports led in 1917 to the formation of the Committee of Women's Athletics (CWA) of the APEA, and the NWBC became a sub-committee of this group. In 1922, there were five sub-committees of the CWA governing basketball, hockey, swimming, track and field, and soccer. "Making, revising, and interpreting rules" were the chief functions of the CWA and its sub-committees. These functions reflected the increasing diversity and complexity in women's sports and physical education by the 1920s, as requests for advice "in solving problems" came in from around the nation, "demonstrating the need for a set of standards which should be based on the limitations, abilities, and needs" of women.<sup>60</sup>

---

<sup>60</sup>Gerber, "Controlled Development," pp. 4-6.

The participation of American women in international competition, such as the Olympic Games, expanded the controversy over what organization actually controlled women's athletics. The participation of American women in swimming and skating in the 1920 Olympiad occurred without the opposition of women's physical educators. This seemed to indicate that the actual participation was not the real problem. The problem arose in 1922, when women physical educators became angry because the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), and the American Olympic Committee (AOC), sponsored the nation's international and Olympic teams, attempted to assume control of women's track and field. This move by the AAU and the AOC occurred about the same time that there was an attempt by Dr. Harry E. Stewart of the New Haven School of Physiotherapy to send a female contingent to the 1922 Paris International Athletic Games.<sup>61</sup> The AAU supported the efforts of Dr. Stewart. Because the AAU failed to consult them beforehand, women physical educators, particularly those serving in the organization, considered its actions a direct challenge to their policies concerning women's athletics. They withdrew their support of the AAU and refused to serve in it in the future.<sup>62</sup> These women became the guiding force of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation.

---

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 75; Lucas and Smith, Saga, p. 350.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

After 1922, the WDNAAF became the chief governing mechanism of women's sports and physical education in the United States. It provided women physical educators with the financial resources, media outlets, and overall professional influence to control the further development of women's sports and physical education in the educational system. Independent of their control were the various industrial leagues and those competitions sponsored by the AAU. However, the success of the organization seemed imminent, as most of the nation's young women participated in sports and physical education through the high schools and colleges. Essentially, the group offered a "woman's point of view in physical education"; and set a course for women's sports and physical education that demonstrated "a reaction against the man-made athletic world."<sup>63</sup>

Basically, a woman's point of view in sports and physical education meant a concept of anti-competition and universal participation. Members of the WDNAAF felt that competitive athletics for women were detrimental to the health and socialization of young women. Their platform, constructed at their first organizational meeting in April, 1923, stated that women's athletics should be protected from the exploitation of spectator gatherings, as well as the reputation, and commercial advantages of any school or organization. Emphasis was to be placed on "universal

---

<sup>63</sup>Wayman, Education Through Physical Education, p. v.

participation," rather than "individual accomplishment and the winning of championships."<sup>64</sup> These statements reflected the policies outlined and advocated by Elizabeth Burchenal, the first chairperson of the Committee of Women's Athletics, who became an instrumental force in the WDNAAF. Her idea became the cornerstone of the anti-competitive and universal participation philosophy:

- (a) Athletics for girls should be developed only on the basis of play, wholesome pleasure, and character building--"Sport for sport's sake."
- (b) Athletics should be for all the girls. . . . Any form of athletics is a failure which does not include, and is not suitable for and interesting to, at least 80 percent of all girls.
- (c) Eliminate all the disadvantages and mistakes of boy's athletics. . . .
- (d) Athletics carried on within the school (intramural, interclass athletics) and no inter-school competition.
- (e) Athletic events and games in which teams (not individuals) compete.
- (f) Athletics chosen and practiced with regard to their suitability for girls and not merely an imitation of boy's athletics.
- (g) Girls' athletics directed by competent women instructors and leaders.<sup>65</sup>

Although anti-competition and universal participation became the central theme of the policies set by the WDNAAF, that did not mean that each of its members agreed with it. Ethel Perrin,

---

<sup>64</sup>Rader, American Sports, p. 166.

<sup>65</sup>Gerber, Innovators and Institutions, p. 367.

the supervisor of Physical Culture in the Detroit Public Schools, was one of the few leaders in women's physical education who supported competition in women's sports. She believed that athletic competition tested the qualities of good citizenship: "self-control, honesty, and cooperation." Perrin felt that the problem with women's varisty sports was that they had "been poorly conducted." Moreover, she disagreed that competitive sports endangered the health of young women, as she claimed that those "conservative people who fear for the future of our race because of the possible impairment of the reproductive organs of an athletic women, have little or no data to point the way, and they have to resort largely to the personal opinion of the physician." Yet, Perrin felt that women's sports should not be concerned with the development of individual stars and championship teams.<sup>66</sup>

The contracting opinions of women physical educators, as demonstrated by Burchenal and Perrin, indicated one common denominator--sports and physical education, if conducted in a proper manner, were important for both men and women. Obviously, they deplored the conduct of the "man-made athletic world," which placed a high emphasis on the prestige and recognition achieved through athletics. Since they had a direct influence over the control over women's sports and physical education in the nation's educational system, they felt they could uplift women's athletics. In their

---

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 371.

efforts and desires, the WDNAAF reflected some of the larger social, economic, and political movements in which women participated during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In other words, the anti-competitive and universal participation philosophy of the WDNAAF reflected the goals of the women's rights movement, which advocated that female participation in the electoral process would uplift politics because of woman's natural moral and spiritual superiority.<sup>67</sup>

The WDNAAF's anti-competitive and universal participation platform also demonstrated some of the Progressive ideals of the early twentieth century prior to World War I. They believed that team sports, rather than individual ones, served the interests of young women when they contributed to the "greatest good to the greatest number; not the greatest good to the smallest number. . . ."<sup>68</sup> This idea demonstrated the Progressive's concern for the larger welfare of society and not the unlimited development of individual interests. Universal participation also satisfied the pragmatic progressive educational aims, as expressed by John Dewey, namely, that education functioned to "balance the various elements in the social environment, and to see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and come into living

---

<sup>67</sup>Chafe, American Woman, pp. 12-15.

<sup>68</sup>Quoted in Lucas and Smith, Saga, p. 353.

contact with a broader environment."<sup>69</sup> The cooperation of team members to move a basketball, soccer ball, or hockey puck down a court and through a goal, rather than a single, skilled and aggressive individual scoring the goal, certainly illustrated Dewey's "balance of elements," which the WDNAAF hoped to achieve through the universal sports participation of young women.

In order to eliminate, or minimize, skill and competition and promote universal participation in women's sports and physical education, the WDNAAF encouraged four different forms of athletic interaction: intramurals, telegraphic meets, sports days, and play days. Intramurals consisted of events, particularly team sports, between the young women of a single school, and not between those of two opposing institutions. Telegraphic meets eliminated face-to-face competition between opposing schools by having the results reported along telegraphic lines between schools. Both of these designs attempted to curb the effects of athletic recognition, prestige, travel, and the embarrassment of appearing in front of mixed audiences upon young women. Sports days, however, placed teams of different schools against each other, but with alterations in the rules, so that there would be no winners or losers. Play days, probably the most popular of the new competition forms during the 1920s and 1930s, brought together women of several schools, in which they played various games on teams

---

<sup>69</sup>Quoted in Ibid., p. 354.

representing no particular schools. Schools in the West, particularly in California, led the nation in play day participation. A 1936 survey of 77 colleges, many of which had participated in inter-collegiate contests, indicated the success of the WDNAAF's anti-competitive/universal participation movement, as 74% had participated in telegraphic meets, 70% in play days, and 41% in sports days.<sup>70</sup>

Because of these forms of athletic participation encouraged by the WDNAAF, the nation's high schools and colleges did not become training grounds for female athletes until the 1970s. Instead, the industrial leagues and AAU sponsored competitions served that purpose, although the WDNAAF wholeheartedly disapproved of them. Sports and physical education in the nation's educational system, in contrast, maintained and improved the health and fitness of young women, instilled in them an appreciation for exercise, and taught them qualities of good citizenship. Thus sports and physical education as directed by the WDNAAF encouraged socially acceptable, non-strenuous, and non-spectator oriented activities, like those of the late nineteenth century.

---

<sup>70</sup>Rader, American Sports, p. 169.

## CHAPTER II

### WOMEN'S SPORTS AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

#### AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE :

1899-1926

At the turn of the twentieth century, physical education became an important aspect of coeducation at The University of Tennessee. To promote and encourage the physical fitness of its coeds, the University made competitive team sports, particularly basketball, an intricate part of its women's physical education program. The development of sports and physical education for women at UTK during the first quarter of the twentieth century reflected many of the general characteristics which took place in the growth of women's athletics nationally. In fact, the growth of Tennessee's women's athletic program also demonstrated some of the characteristics found in the development of men's collegiate sports. Moreover, the early participation of women and men in sports at UTK was part of a larger growth of student and faculty participation in extra-curricular activities. By the mid-twenties, women's sports at UTK, especially basketball, brought much recognition and prestige to the institution and the young women who participated in them.

At the same time that opportunities increased for women to participate in sports and physical education during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, athletics grew increasingly

important in the nation's colleges and universities. The participation of college students in sports was part of the growing importance of extra-curricular activities. During the mid-nineteenth century, college students began to participate in activities and organizations which reflected their interest outside the classroom. The earliest of these included athletics and debating and literary societies. Later, fraternities and sororities grew in popularity, and they replaced the social functions of the declining literary organizations. Other reflections of these outside interests were societies devoted to art, music, and science. In the 1920s, extra-curricular interests turned toward electing beauty queens, most popular men, and the most athletic girls. In the 1930s, students expressed their extra-curricular interest in politics and various forms of social protest.<sup>1</sup>

The participation of students in extra-curricular activities at UTK reflected these larger national trends. Literary societies were among the oldest organizations at the institution. These included the Chi Delta and Philomathesian Societies for men, both founded in 1836, and the Barbara Blount Literary Society for women, founded shortly after their admission to the University in 1893. These organizations held weekly meetings at which members listened to a debate between four principal speakers, and then participated in a discussion. Besides serving the social needs of students, these meetings offered them an opportunity to develop their listening,

---

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York: Knopf, 1962), pp. 136-155, 454, 467-468.

speaking, and debating skills in a setting outside of the classroom. In fact, the first known competition between the sexes in 1896 was a debate between the Philomathesians and the Barbara Blount Society. The topic was "Resolved, That Love, in Courtship is Out of Fashion," and the women handily defeated the men.<sup>2</sup>

The literary societies flourished until well after the First World War, then other groups and activities assumed their functions. Fraternities, many of which appeared on the UTK campus during the late nineteenth century, took over many of the social activities. Students began scheduling Saturday nights, once a favorite meeting night of the societies, for dating and other less intellectual pursuits.<sup>3</sup> Dancing increasingly became a popular social and recreational activity. On one occasion, dancing met with hash censure from Dean James D. Hoskins, who told student

that they would have to cut out the "turkey trot," etc., and confine themselves in the future, at their social gatherings, to the old time waltz, two step and such other dances as are approved, the ban has been placed on all the late fancy "wiggles" and "trots."<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the fraternities and sororities, other clubs and associations appeared on campus reflecting the extra-curricular interests and needs of a diversified and expanding student body. By the end of the twenties these included various student government

---

<sup>2</sup>James Riley Montgomery, "The Volunteer State Forges Its University: The University of Tennessee; 1887-1919," The University of Tennessee Record, vol. 69, no. 6 (November, 1966), pp. 192-194.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

organizations, men's and women's Glee Clubs, several agricultural associations, honorary fraternities and sororities, a home economics club, scientific and engineering groups, military organizations, and a varisty lettermen's club.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the twenties and until the end of the thirties, UTK students annually selected beauty and homecoming queens, as well as several men of distinction.<sup>6</sup> During the thirties, organizations expanded to include a non-fraternity council which promoted social and recreational events for those men and women not belonging to fraternities and sororities.<sup>7</sup> Overall, the participation in extra-curricular activities and organizations by the students of UTK reflected broader trends of other American colleges and universities.<sup>8</sup>

Like other extra-curricular activities, college athletics developed largely as an expression of the outside interest of students and as a break from the regimented routine of academic life. Throughout most of the nineteenth century, student participation in athletics was spontaneous, unorganized, and usually reflected class rivalries. The most renown of such rivalries was the "Bloody Monday" confrontation which erupted on the first Monday of each

---

<sup>5</sup>The Volunteer, 1929, pp. 163-206.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 1920-1939.

<sup>7</sup>James Riley Montgomery, "Threshold of a New Day: The University of Tennessee, 1919-1946," The University of Tennessee Record, vol. 74, no. 6 (November, 1971), p. 311; Orange and White, December 9, 1932, p. 311.

<sup>8</sup>Montgomery, "The Volunteer State," p. 14.

fall term at Harvard and Yale, and at other lesser known institutions.<sup>9</sup> By the middle of the century, class rivalries developed into inter-collegiate rivalries, marking the beginnings of competitions between schools. As athletic competition between schools increased, sports became less spontaneous and more organized. This change was reflected by the selection of a team captain or manager, whose chief responsibility was to "insure the continuance of the organization the following year."<sup>10</sup> Usually the most outstanding player, the captain or manager also saw to organizing practice sessions, developing plays and strategies, selecting a starting team, and making and enforcing training regulations. Because of his qualities of leadership, sportsmanship, and athletic talent, this individual invariably became the campus hero of the later nineteenth century.

During the early twentieth century, athletic associations began to assume control of the duties previously performed by the team manager. Both students and faculty members participated in these athletic associations. In addition to assuming the duties of the team manager, the athletic association offered teams financial and moral support.<sup>11</sup> More important, the athletic association organized the revenue-producing contests. Three types of college athletic control emerged during this time: The centralized athletic

---

<sup>9</sup>Lucas and Smith, Saga, p. 193.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

committee, which encompassed students, alumni, and faculty; student control with alumni influence; and a dual system of faculty athletic committee and a student athletic association.<sup>12</sup> In addition, groups of schools organized larger associations, usually on a geographical basis. By World War I the unorganized and spontaneous student games of the late 1800s had become more organized and remunerative and were a central part of university life.

The early development of competitive athletics at UTK reflected many of the same trends found at other colleges and universities. The earliest known sports played by UTK students during the 1880s and 1890s were intramural field day activities, baseball, and rugby-style football. These activities demonstrated elements of both spontaneity and organization, as both students and professors actively participated in them. For example, a young agriculture professor, Charles Plumb, was instrumental in the organization of the intramural field day in 1889, and together with Henry E. Summers, a professor of biology and zoology, helped organize the Football Club in 1891. Baseball, however, was the most popular of these early sports at UTK, and as late as 1910 the sport ranked well ahead of football in attendance and prestige. From its meager sand lot origins, the game grew into one of intense and bitter inter-collegiate rivalries. In 1892, for example, 250 fans accompanied the team to Maryville College for a game which UTK won 16-10. It was not until 1910 that UTK defeated its most bitter rival Vanderbilt

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 222-223.

University. Like teams at other schools, the baseball team had a captain and manager, who assumed most of its responsibilities except for coaching, which non-faculty personnel carried out only for the love of the game.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time that students and professors alike participated in athletics, the University established an athletic association, and actively took part in the organization of a regional athletic association. As early as 1888, UTK established an athletic association largely for the purpose of building interest in sports, controlling finances, and selecting game officials. Initially, the athletic association was a student organization. During the early 1900s, faculty members began to participate in the association, but they did not assume full control of it.<sup>14</sup>

Shortly after the formation of the University's athletic association, UTK participated in the organization of a regional athletic association. In 1892, Professor Charles W. Kent travelled to Richmond, Virginia, to represent the University in the organization of the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association (SIAA). The association consisted of southern universities as well as such eastern schools as Johns Hopkins, Virginia, and North Carolina. In 1923, the SIAA became the Southern Conference. From its beginnings, the chief interest of this organization was football, and it was instrumental in the growth of the sport at UTK.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup>Montgomery, "The Volunteer State," pp. 165-170.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

Another reflection of the growth of sports at UTK was the formation of the dual system of athletic control. This system took shape in 1919.<sup>16</sup> Its purpose was to represent the interest of both students and faculty. The dual system consisted of the Athletic Association and an elected body, the Athletic Council. The Athletic Association remained essentially a student organization; however, its chairman was a faculty member, Charles E. Wait, a professor of chemistry and metallurgy. The Athletic Council, elected by the Athletic Association, hired coaches and set policies for the athletic teams. Professor Nathan Dougherty chaired the Athletic Council. Additionally, an alumni organization, the Tennessee Club, probably reflected the growing importance of athletics more than any other factor, with its pledge to do "all that is legitimately possible to elevate U.T.'s standing in the Athletic World."<sup>17</sup> It was also at this time that football became the foremost sport at the University than the leadership of Robert R. Neyland.<sup>18</sup>

Distinct from athletic competition and extra curricular activities, physical education was a required part of the University of Tennessee student's curriculum. Physical training was a requirement in the curriculum of first and second year students, both men and women. However, the University offered several courses beyond the second year as electives. Men engaged in two hours

---

<sup>16</sup>Montgomery, "Threshold of a New Day," p. 327.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 335.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., passim.

of weekly physical training, while women participated in three hours.<sup>19</sup> The additional weekly hour for women probably demonstrated the idea that women needed more physical exercise while taking college classes. The purpose of physical education at UTK was "the establishment and development of the physical foundation of students for a vigorous, useful life."<sup>20</sup> It also served to "conserve the social and moral value of games and sport; to train men and women for expert service in conducting Physical Education, play and athletics in playgrounds, high schools, YMCA, YWCA, and community center."<sup>21</sup> These objectives for physical education at UTK were similar to those of other institutions.

These goals were reflected in the physical education courses offered at UTK. For example, the first and second year required courses for men consisted of marching, calisthenics, exercise with dumbbells and Indian clubs, wands, and light gymnastic apparatus. They also worked on Swedish gymnastics, games, and competitive sports. The elective courses for men included a coaching class in football, basketball, track and field athletics, and boxing; and a preparatory course for teaching physical education in schools, which included topics such as playground methods, group games, athletic training, first aid, teaching gymnastics, and kinesiology.<sup>22</sup>

---

<sup>19</sup>The University of Tennessee Record, vol. 23, no. 1 (April 1920), p. 107.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

The required physical education courses and electives for coeds were similar to those of the men. The main difference in the required classes was the instruction in aesthetic and folk dancing. In addition, the first and second year classes gave special attention to strengthening the "weak ankles and increasing the lung capacity" of the coeds.<sup>23</sup> Women's electives included an advanced training course and teaching preparatory course, both of which offered topics similar to those of the men.<sup>24</sup>

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, physical education at UTK grew in importance and number of courses, reflecting an expanding need for men and women trained in the "broad conception of physical education in all its phases."<sup>25</sup> Instead of having only elective courses past the first and second years of required physical education, the University in 1925 changed to a program of Theoretical Physical Education.<sup>26</sup> The purpose of this program was teacher training, and all seven of its courses included both men and women. The curriculum included two coaching classes, two teacher preparatory classes, organization and administration of physical education, playground instruction, and corrective posture exercises for women. Allowing both men and women in the Theoretical Physical Education program indicated that UTK found little difference in the teaching

---

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-108.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., vol. 28, no. 3 (May 1925), pp. 155-156.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 155.

and coaching methods applied to the sexes, except possibly in the corrective posture exercises for women.

By 1930, significant changes occurred in the curriculum of the physical education department, reflecting a difference in the instruction of men and women. For both men and women, the required number of courses increased from two to three per year but the men's and women's programs now differed markedly. The men's program leaned more towards teaching and coaching skilled and competitive athletics, while the women's curriculum pointed towards gymnastics, dancing, swimming, diving, and community recreation.<sup>27</sup> This separation reflected a shift in the attitudes of women physical educators during the 1920s toward disapproval of skilled and competitive athletics for young women. It also demonstrated the move toward eliminating male coaches from female physical education, making it solely a female's profession. By the end of the thirties, teacher's training became known as Professional Physical Education, and it expanded its courses to include adult recreation, scout leadership, and modern dance.<sup>28</sup>

Clearly one aspect of physical education at UTK was teacher training. Reflecting the growth of public education in Tennessee, the University established a Teachers Department in 1891 to meet the need for qualified teachers.<sup>29</sup> The establishment

---

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., vol. 33, no. 3 (May 1930), pp. 208-211.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., vol. 42, no. 3 (May 1939), p. 229.

<sup>29</sup>Montgomery, "The Volunteer State," p. 34.

of this department encouraged the extension of higher education to women at UTK. Several other factors also encouraged the academic admission to women to the University in 1893. Nearby Maryville College, a small, private, church related school had admitted women as early as 1867, and Peabody Normal School in Nashville had also in 1875.<sup>30</sup> UTK's president, Charles W. Dabney, felt that the admission of women would draw more students. Moreover, Dabney had been encouraged upon this issue by Angie W. Perkins, wife of physics professor, Charles D. Perkins, who was an influential social-club woman in Knoxville.<sup>31</sup> Also the admission of women seemed appropriate at the time since the University had long since dropped its military facade.<sup>32</sup>

The demands by area women for admission to the Teachers Department seemed to be the strongest factor bringing women to UTK. With the permission of the faculty, four women enrolled in the normal school for the 1892-93 academic year. In fact, two of the young women, Ida and Mollie Smith, were daughters of Frank Smith, a professor in the Teachers Department.<sup>33</sup> During the spring of 1893, the faculty recommended to the Board of Trustees

---

<sup>30</sup>Elizabeth Lee Ihle, "The Development of Coeducation in Major Southern State Universities," Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Tennessee, 1976, p. 125.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Montgomery, "The Volunteer State," p. 34.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 35; Ihle, "Development of Coeducation," pp. 125-126.

"to announce that no distinction will hereafter be made by the University on account of sex. . . ."34 The following September forty-eight young women entered UTK under the stipulations that they were seventeen years of age and that they lived away from campus in private homes.<sup>35</sup> Delighted by the number of women attending UTK during 1893-94, Dabney, the faculty, and the trustees felt it was "one of the more prosperous in University history."<sup>36</sup>

Although UTK's president, faculty, and trustees reacted favorably towards the admission of women, male students expressed cautious and suspicious sentiments. A poem by Norman Puttman, class of 1895, predicted only "male degradation" as a result of coeducation.<sup>37</sup> Despite their fear of the coeds, Dabney reaffirmed the University's move to coeducation, warning the male students that "the ladies have not only come to the University but they have come to stay."<sup>38</sup>

Sports and physical education became part of coeducation at UTK in 1899 with the establishment of a Women's Physical Training Department. The purpose of the new department, according to the acting dean of women, Angie Warren Perkins, was to provide the

---

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ihle, "Development of Coeducation," p. 126.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Montgomery, "The Volunteer State," p. 38.

<sup>38</sup>Ihle, "Development of Coeducation," p. 127.

coeds with the opportunities for "physical exercise and development of bodily vigor which (were) necessary accompaniments of a healthy mind."<sup>39</sup> The dean's statement reflected the larger recognition that physical education for young women was a vital part of their success in higher education. The educational background of the department's first head and instructor, Anne Gibson, demonstrated the University's concern for the fitness of its coeds. She was a recent graduate of the Boston Normal School of Gymnastics and had attended the School of Student Physiotherapy at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.<sup>40</sup>

At the turn of the century, skilled and competitive athletics became a feature of UTK's women's physical training program. In 1900, Gibson introduced the coeds to basketball. According to acting Dean Perkins, "a yard was fitted up and the women found the sport and exercise most enjoyable and most profitable for pleasant weather. . . ."<sup>41</sup> During the winter months, or rainy days, the young women moved their activities inside the men's gymnasium, since they did not have one of their own. Gibson also introduced her students to tennis, rowing, and golf, although the dean's report did not describe the coeds' reaction to them.<sup>42</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup>The University of Tennessee Record, vol. 8 (January 1899), p. 24.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., vol. 8 (January 1900), p. 292.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

The early introduction of athletics to young women at UTK demonstrated a mixture of the trends affecting the participation of women in sports during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Some of the activities, such as tennis and golf, were those socially acceptable for women, since they required no undue physical exertion. Rowing indicated the movement towards physically demanding exercises demonstrating the actual physical capabilities of women. Finally, basketball, with its vigorous, fast pace, and emphasis on teamwork, reflected the attempt to instruct coeds in social skills as well as athletics.

In 1901, Gibson formed UTK's first competitive basketball team.<sup>43</sup> Between its formation and 1920, evidence concerning competitive women's basketball teams is scattered between The Volunteer yearbook and the Orange and White, the school's newspaper. Because reports about the teams appear only periodically, it is difficult to generalize. Between 1903 and 1910, The Volunteer featured photographs of the women's varsity basketball teams and a roster of its starting players, substitutes, coaches, managers, and captains.<sup>44</sup> These photographs reveal several facts about the team. Beginning in 1905, one girl usually wore a white sweater with a "T" sewn or pinned on it, indicating perhaps that the varsity players received letters for their participation. In that same

---

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., vol. 8 (January 1901), p. 259.

<sup>44</sup>The Volunteer, 1903-1910, unnumbered pages.

year, a male coach began to appear with the coeds, and in 1908, a male manager also appeared with them. The coeds wore bloomer-type outfits, allowing them much movement. They also wore their hair in a bobbed fashion. The Volunteer does not give any explanation for the appearance of the male coaches and managers, making indeed a puzzling situation since the University had a woman physical education instructor, Anne Gibson. Yet they may have been similar to some of the coaches of the men's teams, who were non-faculty members and "coached for the enjoyment of the game rather than monetary considerations."<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, their existence demonstrates Smith's observation that men coached women's basketball teams during the early twentieth century, much to the chagrin of women physical educators.<sup>46</sup>

The team yell and motto, published respectively in the 1905 and 1906 Volunteer indicated UTK's perception of the women's varsity basketball team, the players' perception of themselves, and their approach to the game itself. The team yell:

Hippity-Hus! Hippity-Hus!  
 What in the thunder's the matter with us?  
 Nothing at all! Nothing at all!  
 We are the girls who play basketball!<sup>47</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup>Montgomery, "Volunteer State," p. 165.

<sup>46</sup>Ronald A. Smith, "The Rise of Basketball for Women in Colleges," Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education, vol. 1 (December, 1970), p. 25; Montgomery, "Volunteer State," p. 25.

<sup>47</sup>The Volunteer, 1905, unnumbered page.

The yell suggested possibly that the varsity coed basketball team members appeared out-of-place at the University, that is, their participation in a competitive sport was inappropriate for young women. On the other hand, the photographs of the team in the school yearbook indicated acceptability within the University. Perhaps the yell also indicated that the coeds themselves had little reservations about their activity, and they were proud to play basketball. Their motto, in fact, underscored the integrity of the team:

T'was not so much dishonor to be beaten  
as 'tis honor to have struggled.<sup>48</sup>

Prior to 1920, there are only scattered references to the actual games played by UTK's women's varsity basketball team. Reports of games appeared in the Orange and White, and some are documented in a history of sports at Maryville College.<sup>49</sup> In 1903, the coeds played two games against Maryville, both of which Maryville won 10-1 and 16-6. The first game occurred in Maryville; the second in Knoxville. In 1904, UTK lost another pair of games to Maryville by the scores of 29-0 and 7-5. Although no score appeared in its report, the Orange and White in 1907 mentioned a game between a team representing Barbara Blount Hall and that of the Town Girls, coeds who lived off campus. The Barbara Blount team won the "high spirited game."<sup>50</sup> The next reported game,

---

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Kenneth D. Kribbs, History of Athletics at Maryville College (Maryville, Tenn.: Brazos Press, 1969), pp. 65-66.

<sup>50</sup>Orange and White, March 8, 1907, p. 1.

again without a score, was against the Tennessee School for the Deaf and Dumb. And in 1912, the coeds played a series of games against Maryville, but scores remained undisclosed.<sup>51</sup> In 1920, the University had a team which finished with an overall record of two wins and three losses.<sup>52</sup>

Throughout the 1920s, when the leading women physical educators began their campaign for anti-competition and universal participation in women's collegiate sports, women's sports at UTK became increasingly competitive and selective at both the interclass and varsity levels. This occurred despite efforts to promote and encourage universal participation among the students. The University, together with the Women's Physical Training Department, its instructors, and students, supported and encouraged the growth of competitive women's athletics. Individual stars resulted from this system, as they dominated particular games, tournaments, and entire sports. They brought prestige and recognition to themselves, their team, their school, and they also received material rewards. UTK dominated some sports regionally and nationally. Although each coed had the opportunity to participate in athletics at UTK, participation was not universal by any means. A coach selected players on athletic ability alone. At times women's sports seemed to imitate those of the men, and the women even demanded equal treatment as athletes.

---

<sup>51</sup>Kribbs, History of Athletics at Maryville College, p. 65.

<sup>52</sup>The Volunteer, 1920.

Keeping with the egalitarian spirit of the nineteenth amendment, sportswomen at UTK demanded equality with male athletes during the spring of 1920. Prior to their final women's varsity basketball game, the coeds held a "mass meeting" on March 16 to discuss problems standing in the way of their development as athletes.<sup>53</sup> This meeting was significant for all coeds at UTK, especially for those interested in sports, because it resulted in several changes that opened new athletic opportunities for them. They passed eleven resolutions which represented the first step toward shaping an athletic program for coeds at all levels of athletic ability.

The theme of the resolutions was equality for both male and female athletes. According to their opening statement:

Inasmuch as allowing the Women's Students' Basketball Team to make trips to other colleges for the purpose of engaging in competitive games is under discussion; We, the Women Students of The University of Tennessee, feel that where it (is) within reason the Women Students should have equal rights and privileges with the Men Students and Women's Athletics should be allowed to develop to the same extent as in other colleges. . . .<sup>54</sup>

In addition to these desires for competition and traveling opportunities similar to those of the men, the coeds also felt that their sports contributed equally to a well rounded sports program at UTK. They demonstrated this belief in their demand for a single Athletic Association, and not separate ones for men's and women's sports. They wanted recognition through the awarding

---

<sup>53</sup>Orange and White, April 5, 1920, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

of letters similar to those awarded male athletes. In addition, they wanted the Director of Women's Physical Training and a woman student to sit on the Athletic Council, or at least to have an honorary position.<sup>55</sup>

Universal participation, too, seemed to be another factor in the coeds' demands for equal athletic opportunities. They felt that a combination of varsity sports, interclass, or inter-dormitory tournaments, and individual championship meets "should be encouraged as a stimulus to regular Physical Training work as a means of recreation and development of an esprit de corps among Women Students."<sup>56</sup> In other words, sports at different levels would provide a base for universal participation among the coeds, establish goals for achievement, and provide a feeling of belonging to a successful team. Developing an esprit de corps among the coeds was an important factor in shaping an effective athletic program, but such a program, if not properly guided, might serve the elite sportswoman instead of the student seeking physical fitness and recreation. Nevertheless, the goal of the women certainly demonstrated the mixed concerns that women physical educators had over competitive athletics for women and universal participation.

During April, the Athletic Council "carefully considered" the resolutions presented before them by the women students.

---

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

On April 8 the Orange and White reported that the Council "showed a very cooperative spirit and voted to award letters to the girls on this year's basketball team." The Council also considered the question of whether women should be allowed to sit on the board, and since "there was no ruling in the constitution . . . against a girl holding such a position, no objection was made by the Council." However, there is no indication of either the Women's Physical Training Director or a coed actually participating in the Athletic Council.<sup>57</sup>

The women were less successful in achieving their other demands. Financial support was probably the most important of these demands ignored by the Athletic Council. Nor was anything mentioned about their request for support in arranging varsity teams, forming schedules, and providing travel to away competition.<sup>58</sup> The awarding of letters and representation on the Athletic Council, then, seemed merely conciliatory and symbolic measures.

Later that same year, the Orange and White reported that the coeds who would participate in track, swimming, and tennis were eligible also for letters.<sup>59</sup> Unlike varsity basketball, these sports occurred only at the interclass and individual level. Sometimes coeds met others from nearby schools in tennis matches,

---

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., April 8, 1920, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., May 12, 1920, p. 3.

but not with the regularity as in basketball. Coeds had to meet certain standards before receiving a letter. To letter in track and field, for example, one had to achieve the following standards:

|                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Running High Jump   | 4 feet & 1 inch    |
| Standing Broad Jump | 6 feet & 10 inches |
| Hop, Step, and Jump | 19 feet            |
| Baseball Throw      | 120 feet           |
| Shot Put            | 19 feet            |
| 50 Yard Dash        | 10 seconds         |

(Source: Orange and White, May 13, 1920, p. 3)

In addition to those for track and field, others set the requirements for tennis and swimming. These standards provided the coed with a goal to pursue in addition to working for a sports letter.

Accompanying these standards was a point system for determining the "Best All-Round Girl Athlete."<sup>60</sup> This system naturally allowed the multitalented coed to receive more recognition than just a letter. Based on the following point scale, a cup awaited the athlete who totaled the highest number of points:

|                 |            |
|-----------------|------------|
| Basketball      |            |
| starting team   | 100 points |
| substitutions   | 25         |
| Track and Field |            |
| all events      | 80         |
| 1/2 events      | 20         |
| Swimming        |            |
| all events      | 60         |
| 1/2 events      | 15         |
| Tennis          |            |
| starting team   | 40         |
| substitutions   | 10         |

(Source: Orange and White, May 13, 1920, p. 3)

---

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

Obviously this system favored the coed who excelled in basketball and then could compete strongly in the remaining sports. Yet on another level the point scale indicated a major trend in women's sports nationally, which was the growing importance of basketball. To many women physical educators it represented "the best physical activity for developing positive social behavior among young women."<sup>61</sup>

In January of 1921, practice began for the women's varsity basketball team under the direction of the head of Women's Physical Training, Katherine Frisby. According to the Orange and White, Frisby "drilled" the coeds in the fundamentals of the sport, in addition to arranging a schedule of games against Carson-Newman, Maryville, the University of Chattanooga, and Martha Washington in Abingdon, Virginia. However, the women's basketball team never took shape because UTK replaced Frisby as the head of Women's Physical Training with Mabel Miller, a former instructor at the Sargent School of Physical Training in Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>62</sup> Although the Orange and White offered no specific reason why Miller replaced Frisby, it appeared that Miller was better qualified for the position of Director of Women's Physical Training.

Miller's education and previous experience displayed a strong background in the philosophy and methods of Dudley Allen

---

<sup>61</sup>Smith, "The Rise of Basketball," p. 33.

<sup>62</sup>Orange and White, January 6, 1921, p. 1.

Sargent. After graduating from Randolph Macon Woman's College in Lynchburg, Virginia in 1916, Miller attended the Harvard School of Physical Education for graduate study. Upon completing her degree at Harvard in 1917, she served the next year as the Athletic Director at the Sargent School in Petersboro, New Hampshire. In 1919, she began the position at the Sargent School of Physical Training which she held prior to coming to UTK.<sup>63</sup>

In her first meeting with her new students, Miller described to them her plans for the remainder of the basketball season. Her plans reflected Sargent's belief that competitive sports would improve the physical fitness of young women. Instead of having a varsity team and an intercollegiate season, Miller proposed an interclass basketball tournament. Although competition was at the core of the tournament, Miller emphasized that the main purpose of the event was to promote enthusiasm for fitness and broader participation in sports among the coeds. Despite the efforts of the coeds in building an athletic program, she thought women's sports at UTK lacked enthusiasm. However, Miller did not rule out the possibility for a varsity team, if games against other schools could be arranged.<sup>64</sup> In addition to reflecting her mentor's belief in competitive sports for women, Miller's plan also indicated a concern for universal participation,

---

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., February 17, 1921, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid.

which female physical educators like Elizabeth Burchenal felt was paramount in women's sports and physical education.

The women's interclass basketball tournament occurred during late March, and by all indications it was a success for the coeds, as well as their coach. According to the Orange and White, the players displayed "real basketball ability" in the first round of games between the freshmen and sophomore teams and those between the juniors and seniors. The tournament also indicated that there was strong interest in women's basketball at UTK as "a large crowd was present and much spirit was manifested between the spectators and players." The tournament also revealed several talented players, including Laura Barber, who scored all 14 of the senior team's points. But the performances of the freshmen and the sophomores drew the most attention from Miller because these women would soon form the strength of her varsity teams. Among the freshmen were Thelma Markum, Josephine Rockwell, and Lucille Owen; outstanding sophomores included Hasel Overcash, Isabell Nelson, and Anna Stokely.<sup>65</sup> As a broader reflection of women's sports, the interclass basketball tournament indicated that women's sports at UTK drew the interest of spectators and developed individual stars, characteristics of sport which many women physical educators frowned upon during the twenties.

For the upcoming fall term, Miller introduced an "all sports program" for women's physical training. The program, again,

---

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., March 24, 1921, p. 1.

indicated Sargent's belief in competitive sports for women, and as well an attempt at universal participation. She designed the program to provide year-round exercise and competitive sports for the coeds through both indoor and outdoor activities. The program followed the divisions of the academic year: fall, winter, and spring. During the fall, the proposed activities were swimming and tennis. Basketball was the main sport for the winter. In addition to track and field, tennis and swimming returned to the program in the spring. The program offered both class instruction and tournaments in all of the events.<sup>66</sup>

Basketball was the main sport in Miller's "all sports program." Again this indicated the recreational, educational, and social value which women physical educators placed upon the game. Practices for the winter term interclass basketball tournament began during the late fall, and Miller used them to select the teams. Coeds who participated on the class teams received credit for physical training. An intercollegiate season followed the tournament. As a selection device for the varsity basketball team, the interclass basketball tournament demonstrated the selective and elitist nature developing in women's sport at UTK.<sup>67</sup>

As an incentive for participation in the sports program, Miller declared she would award trophies to the "representative

---

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., February 17, 1921, p. 4.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

athletes in all of the sports." In addition, participants in basketball and tennis would receive other types of awards. For instance, members of the class teams would receive an embroidered Roman Numeral which designated the team they had played upon: freshmen--I, sophomore--II, juniors--III, and seniors--IV. Moreover, the members of the varsity squad would be given letters at the end of the season. Singles and doubles tennis champions would receive silver loving cups. Most women physical educators, however, objected to material awards in women's sports, as they felt "the only rewards of effort in sport should be the social values inherent in a well-balanced and well-conducted physical education program."<sup>68</sup>

Despite its offering material awards for outstanding athletic performance, Miller's "all sports program" was certainly a "well-balanced and well-conducted physical education program." It demonstrated a balance between varsity and interclass activities, which offered different levels for participation and competition so that coeds with just as many levels of ability could successfully participate in it. This balance also reflected and reinforced the desire of the coeds in 1920 to create an esprit de corps among the coeds through competitive athletics as a stimulus to regular physical education and recreation.

Under Miller's direction, women's varsity basketball grew into an important sport at UTK between 1922 and 1924. Although

---

<sup>68</sup>Sefton, Women's Division, p. 15.

competition became very keen in the interclass tournaments, the growth of basketball was more apparent at the varsity level. Each year the number of games played by the coeds increased, and with the increase, UTK's record improved. Most of these games were against nearby schools in East Tennessee, southeastern Kentucky, and southwestern Virginia. In 1922, the coeds played only two games, recording a win and a loss.<sup>69</sup> During the following year, they improved to three wins and a loss.<sup>70</sup> In their last season under Miller, the coeds won five games and lost two. One of the defeats came against the University of Cincinnati, which reportedly had the best women's basketball team in the nation.<sup>71</sup> One player, Anne Pope, a transfer student from the University of Chattanooga, dominated women's basketball between 1922 and 1923, as she usually scored more than twenty points each game.<sup>72</sup> One problem encountered by the women in 1922 was over rules against Union College in Barbourville, Kentucky, as men's rules governed the contest.<sup>73</sup>

In addition to the varsity team, Miller expanded women's basketball in 1923 and 1924 to include a freshman team. The purpose

---

<sup>69</sup>Orange and White, March 17, 1922, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup>*Ibid.*, February 8, 1923, p. 1; March 1, 1923, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid.*, December 6, 1923, p. 7; March 27, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, March 17, 1922, p. 3.

of this freshman team was to give the outstanding first year coeds additional playing experience past the interclass tournament.

The formation of this team reflected the growing importance of women's basketball at UTK, as it became important for the school to have a strong varsity team. In 1924, the freshmen had their best season, with two impressive wins over high school teams from LaFollette and Knoxville, 22-16 and 17-7, respectively.<sup>74</sup>

Although basketball occupied center stage in Miller's "all sports program," the coeds participated with equal enthusiasm in other non-varsity sports. In addition to the activities previously outlined by Miller, riflery, a new sport drew much attention from the coeds. In 1922, between fifty and sixty women attended the practice sessions for the interclass tournament.<sup>75</sup> During the following year, UTK participated in matches against other schools throughout the nation, in which it won fourteen of sixteen matches.<sup>76</sup> Honored both by the McGhee Tyson Post of the American Legion and the UTK Military Department, the coed rifle team received sweaters and letters at the end of their fine 1923 season.<sup>77</sup>

The number of coeds who participated in tennis, swimming, and track also indicate the success of Miller's "all sports program."

---

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., February 7, 1924, p. 4; February 21, 1924, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., April 7, 1922, p. 5; May 5, 1922, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., February 1, 1923, p. 4; March 29, 1923, p. 1.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., March 29, 1923, p. 1.

The first year of the program, 1922, showed one of the largest number of coeds to participate in sports at UTK. For example, ninety women entered the tennis tournament held at the West Knoxville Tennis Club. This was reportedly the largest number of coeds to display interest in a single University athletic event up to that time.<sup>78</sup> Twelve came out for the swimming meet, and thirty-six participated in track and field.<sup>79</sup> Anne Pope dominated these events as she did in basketball. She was the singles tennis champion, set a shot up record in the preliminary rounds of track and field, and tied with Mildred Stradley for individual honors in the meet, each scoring 23 points.<sup>80</sup> Unlike Wills, Collet, and Ederle, who were specialists at their sport, Pope was a diversified star at the University of Tennessee.

Certainly, the growth of women's varsity basketball together with the number of coeds participating in Miller's "all sports program" indicated that her program worked very well. In fact, the Orange and White warned the "stern athletes of the male sex" about this rising sportswomen:

No longer does the University coed claim with pride the accomplishments of sewing and mending. Casting all restrictions aside, she has entered the field formerly under the complete subjugation of the male

---

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., May 12, 1922, p. 6.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., May 17, 1922, p. 2.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

of the species, and in keeping with this movement, The University of Tennessee ladies are participating with much zest.<sup>81</sup>

Judging from this statement, UTK recognized and encouraged the growing interest and participation in sports among its female students. It also reflected the expanding role of women in activities previously occupied by men. Moreover, it indicated that sports offered women an alternative to their traditional domestic role in society.

The growth of competitive athletics for women under the direction of Mabel Miller took place while the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation organized and began advocating its philosophy of anti-competition and universal participation. Although Miller's "all sports program" was a well balanced and well conducted physical education program, it would have most likely met with disapproval by the WDNAAF, because of its emphasis on varsity basketball and handing out material awards. Also the organization of women physical educators would have found too many similarities with men's sports, especially in the demands made by the coeds for equal opportunities in competition, travel, awards, and financial support. However some aspects of women's sports at UTK during the early twenties actually reflected many of the ideals of the WDNAAF. Other than varsity basketball, all sports occurred at the interclass level, in activities very suitable

---

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., May 12, 1922, p. 6.

for young women. Tennis was, of course, one of the original socially acceptable sports for women. Even basketball, so long as women's rules governed its play, was equally suitable. Perhaps riflery was inappropriate, but the coeds demonstrated that they were fine marksmen. Considering that some coeds participated in more than one sport, the number of women taking part in sports was generally between 190 and 200, which was between 56 and 59 percent of the 336 enrolled in the University.<sup>82</sup> This was a percentage which failed to meet Elizabeth Burchenal's requirement that a sports program offer participation to at least 80 percent, but much higher than the percentage of coeds participating today.

In 1924, women's sports and physical education at UTK came under the leadership of a new woman, Anne Huddle. Before coming to UTK, Huddle served as the head of women's physical training at East Tennessee Normal School in Johnson City (present-day East Tennessee State University). At East Tennessee, she had an impressive record coaching women's basketball, as her team had gone undefeated for two consecutive seasons. In fact, her team handed UTK its first defeat in the opening game of the previous season, 22-16. In her first year at UTK, Huddle selected Jeannie Lee McCracken, a former varsity athlete, to assist her in coaching the basketball team. This change in the directorship of women's physical education and sports perhaps indicated that UTK wished

---

<sup>82</sup>The Tennessee Record, vol. 24, no. 4 (June 1922), p. 234.

to place more emphasis on developing a stronger women's basketball team than an all-round sports program.<sup>83</sup>

The skilled and competitive nature of women's basketball at UTK accelerated under the direction of Anne Huddle. The initial practice session reflected this fact. In order to prepare her team for the winter season, Huddle started practice much earlier in the fall than Miller had. On November 20, the Orange and White reported that the coeds had been practicing "for the last three weeks" in preparation for the upcoming interdormitory tournament, which would serve as the selection device for the varsity squad. Previously, an interclass tournament had served this purpose. Nothing else was ever mentioned about the tournament, except that Huddle liked its results, and she hoped to make girls' basketball "a real live factor in the athletics of the University this year."<sup>84</sup> Yet, unlike Miller, she did not present a scheme for developing any of the other women's sports during the upcoming year.

In its first season under Huddle, the UTK women's varsity basketball team compiled a record of 5 wins, 3 defeats, and 1 tie. Never before had the team played so many games, the previous high being seven games during the preceding season. The game against Huddle's former team in Johnson City demonstrated the coeds' improvement under their new mentor, as they earned a 25-25 tie. At the end of the season, the coeds received both letters and white

---

<sup>83</sup>Orange and White, February 4, 1925, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., November 20, 1924, p. 1.

sweaters. The awards, according to the Orange and White, were similar to those awarded the men's freshmen football team, with an orange "T" and orange stripes on the sleeves. Huddle considered these awards "a great step forward in Tennessee athletics." The WDNAAF, on the other hand, would have probably viewed the awards as examples of commercialization and exploitation of women's sports.<sup>85</sup>

Again, a problem over rules surfaced in the 1925 women's basketball season. Against the University of Chattanooga, men's rules governed the final half of play. According to the Orange and White, the second half resumed under men's rules as the result of a compromise between Huddle and Bill Redd, coach of Chattanooga, who had earlier insisted that the entire game be contested under the men's rules. Apparently unaffected by the compromise, the UTK coeds won the contest 29-16.<sup>86</sup>

The Tennessee-Chattanooga basketball game reflected a larger national problem over the rules of women's basketball. Obviously the rules determined in 1899 by Senda Berenson and the Basketball Rules Committee had not widely been adopted. In 1914, one source indicated that between "one-half to two-thirds" of women played under men's rules and others played under at least five different versions of the women's rules.<sup>87</sup> The Tennessee-Chattanooga example

---

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., January 15, 1925, p. 4; February 26, 1925, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., February 26, 1925, p. 7.

<sup>87</sup>Smith, "The Rise of Basketball," p. 22.

indicated that such disputes continued well into the twenties, even after the WDNAAF began its anti-competitive campaign and urged schools to dismantle their varsity sports for women. These problems surrounding rules caused many women physical educators to disapprove of intercollegiate athletics for women, and served as basis for their anti-competitive philosophy. Moreover, male coaches, such as Bill Redd of Chattanooga, constituted another source of the WDNAAF's discontent with women's varsity sports.

Before the 1926 basketball season commenced, several factors reflected Huddle's growing emphasis on the varsity sport. Instead of relying on an interclass (or interdormitory) tournament to select the varsity squad, Huddle herself selected the team. Most of the games, she decided, would take place in Jefferson Hall, reducing travel time for the team and providing it with a home court advantage. In order to avoid the problem encountered against Chattanooga, she stated that area schools had agreed that "all games will be played to the girls' rules as published by Spaulding."<sup>88</sup> The results of this organization were impressive as the UTK women's team had its best record until the 1970s, winning 7 games and losing only one. The high point of the season was a 50-16 romp over Huddle's former East Tennessee Normal team.<sup>89</sup>

While varsity basketball steadily moved to the forefront of women's athletics at UTK under Huddle's direction, the other

---

<sup>88</sup>Orange and White, December 10, 1925, p. 4.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., November 5, 1925, p. 7; April 1, 1926, p. 5.

non-varsity sports continued to be held during the spring. Huddle did not announce an actual plan for these activities when she replaced Miller, but she apparently had no intention of changing what Miller had established in her "all sports program." In fact, the tennis tournament, swimming and track meets became annual events for the coeds. Although she encouraged participation in these events, Huddle made it clear that participation in them did not excuse one from regular physical training.<sup>90</sup> In 1926, a tennis team played two matches against Carson-Newman. Tennessee lost the first match to Carson-Newman 4-1, but won the second one, 5-3.<sup>91</sup> In contrast, it appears that no women's swimming or track team ever represented UTK in intercollegiate competition during Huddle's first two years as head of Women's Physical Training.

During the first quarter of the twentieth century, many opportunities developed at the University of Tennessee for women to participate in several sports at different levels of skill and ability. These activities essentially reflected the efforts of the Women's Physical Training Department to provide exercise and competition for its coeds. Yet they also represented the extracurricular interests of some students. In addition to competitive athletics, the University provided a comprehensive physical training program which required gym work for a majority of the

---

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., May 6, 1926, p. 4.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., May 13, 1926, p. 4.

young women. The development of these opportunities reflected the attitude that physical education was a necessary accompaniment in the higher education of women. More important, these opportunities were liberating forces in the lives of these young women, as their participation in sports, together with attending the University, demonstrated that their opportunities spanned throughout society, and they were not confined to the home.

During this period, varsity basketball developed into the most important, and most controversial aspect of women's sports and physical education. Prior to the 1920s, Tennessee's varsity women's basketball team was unimpressive, and it frequently lost to nearby Maryville College. By the twenties, however, the team developed into a formidable basketball force in East Tennessee. The leadership and coaching of Mabel Miller and Anne Huddle were responsible for the improvement of the team, and its growing importance within the overall women's sports program and Tennessee sports in general. Miller was most instrumental in the initial rise of women's basketball, in addition to developing a comprehensive physical education for the coeds. Her "all sports program," with its interclass (and inter-dormitory) tournaments, encouraged as many coeds as possible to participate in athletics and compete for a place on the varsity basketball squad. Under the direction of Huddle, basketball took on more importance at the varsity level. There was less emphasis on interclass competition and inter-collegiate received the attention. Yet non-varsity sports continued

to be an important factor in encouraging the participation of  
coeds in spring sports, just as they had under Miller's direction.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE TRIUMPH OF WOMEN'S INTRAMURALS

#### AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE:

1926-1939

Between the late 1920s and the early 1930s, several changes occurred in women's sports at the University of Tennessee which reflected the larger attempt by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation to control the further development of women's collegiate athletics. Precipitating these changes was the abolition of women's varsity basketball after its most successful 1926 season. Since women's athletics seemed to revolve around varsity basketball, its abolition called for an immediate reorganization of the entire program. The first of these changes was Anne Huddle's reorganization of women's sports around an honorary point system, which encouraged broader participation in sports at the interclass and individual level instead of intercollegiate. The program recognized athletic accomplishment by awarding a letter and sweater similar to those previously given only to varsity athletes.

The formation of an intramural system similar to that of the men was the second change in women's sports and physical education. The intramural program replaced the honorary point system in 1929. Intramurals directed recognition to teams rather than individuals like in the point system. Initially, the Women's

Physical Training Department, together with the sororities, organized and operated the new women's sports program. Not until the mid-thirties did women's intramurals actually facilitate universal participation, when at that time an organization was formed to enable coeds unaffiliated with sororities to participate in the program.

By the mid-twenties, varsity basketball at UTK reflected the skilled and competitive aspects which the WDNAAF condemned in women's sports. Participation on the team required the selection by the coach, and the coeds competed among themselves in rigorous practice sessions for a position on the team. Its emphasis focused upon winning and bringing recognition to the University. At times the coeds had to travel to contests as far away as Chattanooga and Johnson City, and even locations in Kentucky and Virginia. The sport also developed individual stars, who received publicly from the Orange and White, and recognition in the Volunteer, as well as material rewards at the end of the season. Although Anne Huddle, a qualified female physical education instructor, selected and coached the team, it still reflected the evils of the man-made athletic world.

In contrast, the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation advocated an anti-competitive philosophy for women's sports, which encouraged universal athletic participation. Clearly stated, its main purpose was "a game for every girl and

a girl in every game."<sup>1</sup> Its platform, based on guidelines earlier outlined by Elizabeth Burhenal in 1919, called for these measures governing women's sports. Athletic competition should stress the enjoyment of sport and development of sportsmanship and good citizenship. Awards should have little or no material value. The value of sport should be recognized, not the individual, team, or institution. The women should participate in appropriate costumes and not in front of mixed audiences. Efforts should be made to provide a sanitary environment and other adequate facilities. Physical education programs should be established which met the needs of all women of all ages and conducted by qualified female instructors. Travel should be eliminated from women's sports. Finally, appropriate rules should be adopted, enforced, and revised according to any current changes.<sup>2</sup> Forms of competition which the WDNAAF felt best administered these measures were sports days, play days, telegraphic meets, and intramurals.<sup>3</sup>

Although it did not seem that the WDNAAF actually played a direct role in the elimination of women's varsity basketball at UTK, the elimination of the sport reflected the larger movement

---

<sup>1</sup>Alice Allene Safton, The Women's Division, National Amateur Athletic Federation: Sixteen Years of Progress in Amateur Athletics for Girls and Women (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941), p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>3</sup>Benjamin G. Rader, American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1983), p. 335.

movement against intercollegiate athletics for women. The abolition of varsity basketball and its aftermath at the University of Tennessee also provided an example of a university's reaction to the anti-competition movement. Sources indicate that the decision to curtail women's varsity basketball was a controversial issue on the campus, and a perplexing one for Professor Nathan Dougherty, the chairman of the Athletic Council, A. Watt Hobt, a professor physical training and men's varsity coach, and Anne Huddle, the head of women's physical training and varsity basketball coach.

When it seemed apparent that 1926 would mark the final season for women's varsity basketball at UTK, several articles and editorials appeared in the Orange and White, discussing the issue. One editorial pointed out that there was opposition to the sport because "only two other schools" in the region still had such teams.<sup>4</sup> These schools were Maryville and Carson-Newman, as Maryville eliminated varsity basketball for its coeds in 1927, and Carson-Newman followed suit in 1931.<sup>5</sup> According to the editorial, this was not a reason why UTK should abandon its team because others had failed to "turn out good teams," or because the students at those institutions "did not support them as they should." Speaking in favor of women's varsity basketball, the editorial noted that the coeds had become one of the best teams

---

<sup>4</sup>Orange and White, March 18, 1926, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup>Kenneth E. Kribbs, The History of Athletics at Maryville College (Maryville, Tenn.: Brazos Press, 1969), p. 150; Issac Newton Carr, History of Carson-Newman College (Jefferson City, Tenn.: Carson-Newman, 1959), p. 281.

in the region, further stating that the prospects for the next year were even brighter. In conclusion, it emphasized that "the games were well supported by the students, who are decidedly against the suggestion to discontinue the sport."<sup>6</sup>

A following editorial on the issue noted some of the prevailing arguments against women's competitive athletics and pointed out some contradictions concerning female participation in vigorous physical activities. The editorial said that "some authorities" claim that "basketball is injurious to the health of girls."<sup>7</sup> In contrast, it stated that "only girls in the best of health are allowed to go out" for the team. Moreover, it pointed out that:

It is constantly being said that coeds do not get a sufficient amount of exercise, and then when they do play basketball it is said that they are getting too much exercise.<sup>8</sup>

If anything impaired the health of the coeds, the Orange and White suggested it was keeping late hours, coupled with the lack of exercise, rather than a well organized, managed, and vigorous athletic program.

However, the argument of the newspaper in favor of maintaining women's varsity basketball also demonstrated some of the Characteristics of women's sports which displeased the Women's Division

---

<sup>6</sup>Orange and White, March 18, 1926, p. 5.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., March 25, 1926, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., April 8, 1926, p. 1.

of the National Amateur Athletic Federation, namely recognition and elitism. The Orange and White claimed that eliminating varsity basketball discriminated against the coeds because they would no longer receive the recognition they had enjoyed through the sport:

Basketball is the only activity on the "Hill" in which coeds compete with coeds of other colleges and universities. Boys on any campus gain recognition more quickly through athletics than through any other means. However, at present, it appears that The University of Tennessee coed will be deprived of that recognition, honor, and glory which they have received through basketball.<sup>9</sup>

Obviously, the recognition and prestige afforded the coeds and the University through varsity basketball was a strong reason for supporting the continuation of the school's team. This concern demonstrated the importance of basketball not only to the women's sports program but to athletics at the University in general. The WDNAAF rejected such an association between men's and women's sport, believing it only exploited women and contributed nothing to their education, socialization, and overall fitness.

Shortly after these editorials appeared, Dougherty, Hobt, and Huddle met to discuss the situation surrounding women's basketball. Perplexed over whether or not to abolish the team, they decided to petition the opinions of other women's colleges and coeducational institutions. They sent letters and questionnaires to selected schools to survey their opinions and how they had

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

reacted to similar situations. Although the evidence is incomplete as to what schools they surveyed and what the results of the survey indicated, the Orange and White reported that the majority of the questionnaires returned favored the abolition of women's varsity basketball.<sup>10</sup> On June 1, 1926, the Orange and White reported that "there will be no girls teams representing the 'Hill' against other universities."<sup>11</sup> Evidently, UTK officials decided to follow the examples set by other schools and dismantle their varsity basketball team.

To fill the void left in women's physical training at UTK by the elimination of women's varsity basketball, Anne Huddle reorganized the entire program around an honorary point system. She introduced her new system in the fall of 1926. Under this new program, each participating coed could receive a letter "T" at the end of the year by earning 1000 points for participating in a variety of activities. The 1000 points also included a sweater upon which the coed could display her award. These women managing to earn only 500 points would receive an embroidered "UT" monogram, but no sweater. The Orange and White had only words of encouragement for Huddle's new system:

With the adoption of the point system for girls' athletics, the females at The University of Tennessee will have an opportunity to earn a "T".

---

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., March 25, 1926, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., June 1, 1926, p. 6.

In the past years only those girls who could play basketball or tennis became the wearers of the coveted emblems. Now every girl has the same chance.<sup>12</sup>

Although the WDNAAF would have probably disapproved of the letters, monograms, and sweaters, Huddle's honorary point system was an attempt at fashioning a method to promote the universal participation of coeds in athletics at UTK. However, it was not an attempt to subordinate skill and competition to universal participation. Instead, it fostered those qualities as a means to encourage the universal participation of UTK's women students.

Instead of having three seasons of competition as in Mabel Miller's "all sports program," Huddle's point system revolved around two seasons. The first lasted between November and February, in which the coeds could participate in basketball, volleyball, and field hockey. March through June marked the second season; its sports were tennis, swimming, track, and golf.<sup>13</sup>

The coeds earned points towards the letter or the monogram through participating in various team sports and individual activities, as well as holding positions as team managers and captains. Participation on a class team in volleyball, basketball, field hockey, soccer, or tennis was worth 100 points each, while participation in other activities merited only 40 points. Clearly, the point system emphasized team rather than individual sports.

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., October 20, 1926, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup>The Volunteer, 1927, p. 136.

This reflected the educational value of team sports. Those who served as team manager or captain earned additional points: 50 points per team as a manager and 25 as a captain. Scholarship also received attention under this new point system. Coeds maintaining an "A" average in academic work received an additional 50% of the points they earned through athletic participation. A "B" average earned an additional 25% of the total points scored.<sup>14</sup>

The point system operated between 1926 and 1929. Although Huddle designed the system to promote and encourage more coeds to participate in sports, it became instead a selective and elitest system, composed of coeds who would dominate the various activities and receive the year end awards. From its onset, the new system quickly departed from the ideals which had created it. During the winter of 1927, over 150 coeds participated in the practice sessions for interclass basketball, volleyball, and field hockey.<sup>15</sup> This figure represented only 22.5% of the undergraduate coeds enrolled at the Knoxville campus.<sup>16</sup> From this small number, Huddle and her assistants selected fifteen women from each class for the different teams. Yet many of the same coeds participated on each of the same teams (volleyball, basketball, and hockey).

---

<sup>14</sup>Orange and White, October 30, 1926, pp. 1-4.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., February 17, 1927, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup>The University of Tennessee Record, vol. 29, no. 3 (May 1927), p. 267.

In the case of the freshmen, four coeds held positions on each of the teams; and one, Mary McClure, was captain for both the basketball and hockey teams. Similarly, three sophomores played on each of their class teams.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast the remaining activities for 1927, which included several tennis tournaments, the annual swimming meet, and a riflery tournament, seemed to foster broader participation of the coeds. For example, 22 women participated in the swimming meet, without having to undergo a preliminary cut or team selection.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, Huddle and the coeds who participated in it, especially those who lettered in it, considered the new program during its first year a success. According to the Orange and White, only ten girls earned the necessary 1000 points to receive the "T" sweater.<sup>19</sup> Ironically this was fewer than the number of coeds who received letters in 1921, when varsity basketball began to dominate women's sports.<sup>20</sup> The article failed to mention the women, if any, who received monograms. In order to encourage participation in the program next year, Huddle informed the juniors and seniors that they could carry their points over from the first year so long as they did not duplicate points in the same sports

---

<sup>17</sup>Orange and White, February 17, 1927, p. 5.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, April 28, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, November 17, 1927, p. 1.

<sup>20</sup>The Volunteer, 1921.

during the second year.<sup>21</sup> Apparently Huddle devised this measure to encourage the coeds to participate in the honorary point system throughout their college careers.

During its second and third years, the point system still seemed to continue its selective and elitest nature. Riflery best demonstrated these characteristics. In 1928, Huddle selected the coeds who she felt were best qualified to handle the weapon. These coeds had proven themselves qualified by their past performances in other sports.<sup>22</sup> According to Lieutenant Horace L. Porter, assistant professor of Military Science and Tactics, who supervised the coed squad, challenges had been received from Radcliffe, Vassar, and Smith Colleges.<sup>23</sup> Although nothing further appeared concerning these matches, their possibility represented a sharp departure from a national policy stipulating no inter-collegiate activity among women. In fact, the only reported matches were two with the men's team, which resulted in one victory each for the men and the women.<sup>24</sup> Tennis, swimming, and golf tournaments closed the spring sport season for 1928.<sup>25</sup>

The third year of the point system began during the fall of 1928 with the selection of teams for the interclass basketball,

---

<sup>21</sup>Orange and White, November 3, 1927, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, January 26, 1928, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, March 1, 1928, p. 4.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, March 29, 1928, p. 7.

volleyball, tennis, and soccer tournaments. However, the unique feature of women's sports at this time was the formation of a coed swimming team to represent the University in meets against local teams, such as the YMCA and the UTK's men's team.<sup>26</sup> This team reflected a departure from the restrictions placed against having such coed teams. Obviously, UTK found it difficult to incorporate all of the anti-competitive ideals of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation. Huddle's honorary point system indicated that the University had embarked on a course of its own. Although it encouraged universal participation, the system actually became as selective and elitist as varsity basketball had been prior to 1926. Also it still stressed recognition through athletics by offering material gifts, letter sweaters and monograms, for scoring a required number of points. Nonetheless the honorary point system reflected an institution's response to the anti-competitive movement of the 1920s, and an attempt at promoting universal participation of coeds at UTK.

During the fall term of 1929, Huddle replaced the point system with an intramural format for women's sports. She organized a women's sports program in such a fashion as to "bring about better spirit between the dormitories and the sororities and the town girls, as well as to have a greater number of girls participating in physical education and athletic activities."<sup>27</sup> The

---

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., November 15, 1928, p. 7; December 13, 1928, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., October 31, 1929, p. 1.

point system had failed to promote universal participation among the coeds, and Huddle apparently believed that an intramural system would remedy the situation. To encourage participation, competition existed at three different levels: intersorority, interdormitory, and individual. Huddle called upon the Red Capps, a women's sports organization formed in 1927 to promote participation in the point system, to assist her in conducting the new intramural system.<sup>28</sup> The most important factor about the new intramural program was that it was a form of universal participation approved by the WDNAAF.

Women's intramurals officially got underway during the winter of 1930 with the relay carnival (indoor track) sponsored by the Knoxville News-Sentinel on January 10. This event was for sorority competition only, as the event had traditionally been a competition between the campus fraternities. In fact, the schedule for the rest of 1930 seemed to favor sorority competition over that for the dormitories and the independents:

|          |    |                 |                             |
|----------|----|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| January  | 10 | Relay Carnival  | (sorority)                  |
|          | 20 | Basketball      | (sorority)                  |
|          | 29 | Basketball      | (dormitory)                 |
| February | 14 | Foul Pitching   | (independents)              |
| March    | 28 | Tennis          | (sorority)                  |
| April    | 11 | Tennis          | (dormitory and independent) |
|          | 18 | Golf            | (sorority)                  |
|          | 25 | Playground Ball | (dormitory)                 |
|          | 28 | Riflery         | (independent)               |
| May      | 16 | Swimming        | (sorority)                  |
|          | 23 | Swimming        | (dormitory)                 |

(Source: Orange and White, November 21, 1929, p. 6)

---

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., November 17, 1927, p. 1; November 21, 1929, p. 6.

The schedule of women's intramural events clearly demonstrated an imbalance in the strength and influence of the sororities, as they had five events planned exclusively for their competition. The dormitories had had four and the independents only three events. The sorority and dormitory events reflected a team orientation, with basketball, tennis, and swimming. Those for independents reflected an individual orientation. It seemed that the dormitories and the independents had little input in organizing the women's intramural schedule, and they had to be satisfied with the activities that the sororities assigned for their participation. It is unlikely that non-sorority groups had a separate intramural competition because no source exists to indicate such an organization. Certainly such an arrangement failed to fulfill one of the proposed features of the new intramural program, which was to "bring about better spirit between" the many coeds on campus through sports. Instead, the program appeared to divide the coeds and favor particular groups over others.

The apparent strength and influence of sororities in the new women's intramural program reflected the overall importance of these exclusive social organizations which grew during the 1920s and 1930s at the University. Although their memberships dropped slightly prior to the Great Depression, the numbers of coeds joining sororities steadily increased throughout the twenties:

|      |     |      |     |
|------|-----|------|-----|
| 1920 | 94  | 1925 | 212 |
| 1921 | 112 | 1926 | 257 |
| 1922 | 136 | 1927 | 271 |
| 1923 | 159 | 1928 | 238 |
| 1924 | 174 | 1929 | 261 |

(Determined by sorority rosters in The Volunteer, 1920-1929)

The Chi Omega sorority consistently boasted the largest membership of the nine sororities, and by 1939 484 coeds belonged to the organizations.<sup>29</sup>

Sororities offered the coed a source of group identification and belonging. These sororities served as social centers of the University, similar to the roles of the fraternities. Young women competed vigorously for an invitation to membership in one of the organizations. To qualify coeds had to come from the right background, and display the correct manners and styles. Within the sorority, coeds learned to improve their appearance through the proper use of cosmetics, the latest hair styles, and skirt lengths. Moreover, they refined social skills such as playing bridge, making conversation, smoking cigarettes, and drinking alcohol. In return, the coed had to have something to contribute to the group, something which made her an outstanding individual "with a larger promise of success. . . ."<sup>30</sup>

Apparently, one quality which coeds contributed to sororities at UTK was athletic talent and participation. Throughout the

---

<sup>29</sup>The Volunteer, 1939, pp. 270-289.

<sup>30</sup>Shelia M. Rothman, Woman's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present (New York: Basic Books, 1978), p. 182.

twenties, before the organization of women's intramurals in 1929, a high percentage of sorority affiliated women participated in both varsity and interclass athletics. Basketball, contested at both the varsity and interclass (or interdormitory) levels, demonstrated this high percentage of sorority members among the participants:

|      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1920 | 40%  | 1925 | 100% |
| 1921 | 69%  | 1926 | 83%  |
| 1922 | 85%  | 1927 | 71%  |
| 1923 | 61%  | 1928 | 47%  |
| 1924 | 100% | 1929 | 100% |

(Source: Compiled from names in Orange and White, 1920-1929, cross-referenced with sorority rosters in The Volunteer, 1920-1929.)

In 1922, the majority of coeds participating in swimming belonged to sororities (84%).<sup>31</sup> During the fall of 1925, the sororities, in conjunction with Women's Physical Training Department, held what would become their annual tennis tournament.<sup>32</sup> This marked the first of such exclusive sorority sports activities. Towards the end of the twenties, the percentage of sorority members participating in the annual spring swimming meet increased rapidly from 43% to 100% in 1929.<sup>33</sup> An exclusive sorority swimming meet occurred during the spring of 1929 and Chi Omega defeated Alpha

---

<sup>31</sup>Percentage of sorority women participating in swimming derived from names given in the Orange and White, May 17, 1922, p. 2, cross-referenced with sorority rosters in The Volunteer, 1922.

<sup>32</sup>Orange and White, May 29, 1929, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup>Percentages of sorority women participating in swimming derived from names in Orange and White (1926-1929) cross-referenced with sorority rosters in The Volunteer (1926-1929).

Omicron Pi for the championship.<sup>34</sup> Many of the participants in this meet composed the UTK women's team which had swum against the YMCA and the men's team.

Between the early to mid-thirties, only sorority teams competed for top intramural honors. Although the schedule included intramural events for dormitory and independent teams and individuals, only sororities competed for an overall championship. As one participant recalled, girls who did not belong to sororities were simply "left out" of most activities.<sup>35</sup> Women unaffiliated with the organizations were "left out" because they lacked the organization, group loyalty, and initiative to assert themselves in extracurricular activities. The interdependent sororities provided the basic framework around which the intramural program could coalesce. In fact, the women's intramural system developed at about the same time "the sororities banded into a Panhellenic Council for general policy making and mutual strength."<sup>36</sup> Although a coed might represent the independents in the intramural system, she did not represent the interest of a single group, but rather those of many diversified elements. Evidently, this lack of mutual identity and strength crippled the independent coeds in their

---

<sup>34</sup>Orange and White, May 29, 1929, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Mrs. Lynn Snyder (formerly Elizabeth Deaderick) at her home, 7504 Sheffield Road, Knoxville, Tennessee on October 10, 1982.

<sup>36</sup>James Riley Montgomery, "Threshold of a New Day: The University of Tennessee, 1919-1946," The University of Tennessee Record, vol. 74, no. 6 (November, 1971), p. 311.

opportunities to widely participate in extra-curricular activities like intramural sports.

The lack of opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities, especially intramurals, troubled the independent students, both men and women, and they formed a Non-Fraternity Association to provide them with the organization enjoyed by the Greek societies. Chief spokesman of the independent organization, Tom Fitzgerald, a Liberal Arts student, identified two problems facing their participation in intramurals. He pointed out that the program, for which all students paid in fees and taxes, ignored a majority of them. The second obstacle was the students themselves, as their "lethargic spirit" hindered their involvement in the activities.<sup>37</sup>

Shortly after the formation of the Non-Fraternity Association, the independent coeds took it upon themselves to develop their own means for equal participation with the sororities in intramurals. Between 1932 and 1935, the independent women worked closely with the Physical Education Department to find an avenue for their participation. In fact, the Physical Education Department wanted actively to engage the independent coeds in the intramural program. At a meeting between the independent women and a representative of the Physical Education Department, Katherine Anderson, an instructor in the department expressed the concern of her colleagues:

---

<sup>37</sup>Orange and White, November 8, 1932, p. 1.

We want to do everything we can for you, but . . . ,  
we must know what you want. We are here to help  
you. We came to this meeting to see what you want.<sup>38</sup>

Despite this initial effort to involve the independent women in the intramural program, the Orange and White echoed the words of Tom Fitzgerald by describing the coeds as still "afraid to take the initial step" to actual participation.<sup>39</sup>

Equal opportunity to participate and compete against the sororities would not occur immediately for the independent coeds. In fact, there were several steps toward developing an intramural program that promoted the universal participation of coeds at UTK. The first step towards universal participation was a basketball tournament exclusively for the independent students, both men and women, held during February of 1933. Although it failed to place independent teams in direct competition against the Greek teams, the tournament demonstrated the willingness of both the Intramural and Physical Educational Departments "to cooperate with the students in giving them anything in the line of sports that they desire." In turn, independent participation in the event would demonstrate their interest in making "this initial step" a success.<sup>40</sup>

On February 10, the Orange and White reported the terms under which coeds were eligible to participate in the independent

---

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., December 2, 1932, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., January 24, 1933, p. 1.

basketball tournament.<sup>41</sup> The coed could not have participated in any previous basketball activity at UTK. This probably referred to the sorority tournament held during the previous month. However, the managers of the independent tournament teams were women affiliated with the Phi Mu sorority. These women, Marguerite Stoner, Jean "Icky" Robinson, and Juliana Nickerson, also served as coaches for two of the teams.<sup>42</sup> The Orange and White gave no reason as to why these women managed and coached those teams, when the rules clearly stated that they were ineligible to participate in the tournament. However, these women probably had the organizational skills to see that the teams and tournament operate smoothly. Stoner's team won the tournament by defeating a team representing the town girls, 35-5. However, the independent basketball tournament was anything but a success, as there was little interest in the event. Yet the real failure in the tournament was in its separation from the larger intramural program. It failed to incorporate both the independents and the sororities in a single program. Universal participation remained unachieved for coeds at UTK. The independent coed basketball tournament, therefore, represented no more than a conciliatory action by the Intramural and Physical Education Departments to satisfy and appease the independents. Nevertheless, the tournament was a step towards organizing a method for universal participation.

---

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., February 10, 1933, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., February 14, 1933, p. 4.

During the 1934-35 intramural season, the Intramural and Physical Education Departments made another, somewhat more vigorous, attempt to encourage the athletic participation of independent women by forming three Athletic Clubs. Open to each coed unaffiliated with a sorority, these Clubs participated against each other in shuffleboard, basketball, playground ball, volleyball, "and other events on the intramural schedule for the year." The purpose of these Athletic Clubs was "instilling more athletic spirit and enthusiasm among the non-sorority girls" at UTK. Although these clubs participated outside of the actual intramural program dominated by the sororities, they represented a step toward providing a means for universal participation of women in sports at UTK.<sup>43</sup>

For the 1935-36 intramural season, a single Athletic Club replaced the three clubs from the previous year. The formation of this club marked the triumph of universal participation in women's sports at UTK because it brought the independents into direct competition against the sororities for the intramural team title. Just like with the three Clubs the previous year, all coeds unaffiliated with the sororities received the invitation of the Physical Education Department to "join the Athletic Club."<sup>44</sup> With the formation of this Club for the independent coeds in 1935, universal participation complimented individual and team accomplishment and recognition in women's intramurals at UTK.

---

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., October 26, 1934, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., October 18, 1935, p. 4.

For the remainder of the decade, the Athletic Club became a formidable opponent of the sororities. In its first two years of competition, the Athletic Club finished among the top six teams (out of ten), and it was the intramural champion in 1937-38.<sup>45</sup> The Athletic Club won by taking the basketball tournament and horseshoe pitching contest. In each of the events they defeated the Delta Delta Delta sorority. During this period, membership in the Athletic Club grew quickly. In its first year, the Club had only 21 members.<sup>46</sup> This figure increased over twofold to 45 during their second year.<sup>47</sup> Next year their membership slipped to 38 coeds.<sup>48</sup> Securing the intramural championship in 1937-38 demonstrated that the independent coeds not only had finally received the athletic recognition they had long deserved, but also that they had welded themselves into an organized and cohesive group. This gave them the group identification, initiative, and source of motivation to compete and succeed in intramural athletics.

By the end of the 1930s, the University of Tennessee had developed a women's intramural program that provided universal participation for all its coeds. In its initial stages, women's intramurals seemed to favor the participation and competition among the sororities, leaving little opportunity for the

---

<sup>45</sup>The Volunteer, 1938, p. 306.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 1939, p. 312.

independent women to engage in the activities, and especially compete for the intramural championship. Of course this was an unfair situation and the domination of sororities appeared to be an obstacle towards achieving universal participation. However, the sororities actually provided intramurals with the framework it needed in order to succeed. In contrast, the honorary point system which preceded the intramural program failed because it lacked a similar organization. Its organization centered upon the awarding of points towards material gifts, individual rather than group recognition. This system fostered only elitism, not universal participation. The Athletic Club, in effect, became a sports sorority for the independent coeds, allowing them to compete against the sororities for the yearly intramural crown.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

This study of women's sports and physical education at the University of Tennessee between 1899 and 1939 is a significant contribution to the historiography of women's athletics during the early twentieth century. It represents a synthesis of the opposing interpretations concerning women's sports and physical education during the period, especially the 1920s and 1930s. In addition, it reflects other interpretations, such as stressing the importance of women's basketball in the educational system. As the only treatment of early women's sports and physical education at UTK, this thesis is a test case for women's sports and physical education, a yardstick for measuring the extent and effect of the anti-competitive and universal participation movement encouraged by the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation. Finally, this study offers a possible model not only for further investigation of women's athletics at UTK but also for examinations of the phenomenon at other coeducational institutions and women's colleges.

My thesis has been that skill and competition, in addition to athletic recognition and prestige, were important elements in women's sports and physical education at UTK throughout the entire period under examination. Indeed, they remained important even as the WDNAAF was espousing its philosophy of anti-competition

and universal participation. The University of Tennessee was not immune to this philosophy, of course, and it was a factor in the decision in 1926 to abolish the women's varsity basketball team. But the continuation of skilled and competitive athletics for coeds, in the honorary point system and intramurals, suggests that the degree of and nature of compliance with the WDNAAF's platform varied with the individual school. Thus UTK reflects two seemingly contradictory interpretations of women's athletics during this period: on the one hand the abolition of the varsity basketball team and the development of viable forms of universal participation supports the interpretation of both Ellen Gerber and Laura Robischeaux; on the other hand, the continuing emphasis on skill and competition supports the thesis of Joan S. Hult.

This thesis also supports the contention of Ronald A. Smith concerning the early development and significance of basketball for college women. First introduced to Tennessee coeds in 1900, women's basketball reflected the educational and social values which many female physical educators wished to impart to their students. It also demonstrated the increasing importance of skill and competition in women's collegiate athletics, becoming a varsity sport in the early twentieth century. By the mid-twenties, before the elimination of women's varsity basketball, the University had produced several outstanding teams.

It should be apparent that at the University of Tennessee there was a series of changes that reflected in part the philosophy

of the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation, and in part the needs and desires of the coeds themselves. This might well have been the case at other coeducational institutions and women's colleges as well, and only additional studies of this sort will illuminate these and related aspects of women's sports and physical education. As more studies become available, the experience of sportswomen and female educators of the early twentieth century will be enlarged and better understood. This thesis, then, marks a stepping stone for such investigations and further examination of women's sports and physical education at the University of Tennessee.

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

## SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

### I. PRIMARY SOURCES

#### A. Books

Lee, Mabel. The Conduct of Physical Education: Its Organization and Administration. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1937.

Sefton, Alice Allene. Women's Division, National Amateur Athletic Federation: Sixteen Years of Progress in Amateur Athletics for Girls and Women. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1941.

Wayman, Agnes R. Education Through Physical Education: Its Organization and Administration for Girls and Women. Third Edition. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1934.

#### B. University of Tennessee Publications

The University of Tennessee Record, vols. 1-42 (1898-1939).

The Volunteer, vols. 6-42 (1903-1939).

Orange and White, March 8, 1907-October 18, 1935.

#### C. Interviews

Personal interview with Miss Jessie Dempster at her home on Ginn Road, Knoxville, Tennessee on October 14, 1982.

Personal interview with Mrs. Lynn Snyder (formerly Elizabeth Deaderick) at her home, 7504 Sheffield Road, Knoxville, Tennessee on October 10, 1982.

Telephone interview with Mrs. Ralph LeBow (formerly Worth Marbry), Knoxville, Tennessee, June 15, 1983.

Telephone interview with Dr. Lucy Morgan, Asheville, North Carolina, July 15, 1983.

Telephone interview with Mrs. Robert Scott (formerly Elizabeth "Kitty" Ferris), Knoxville, Tennessee, June 15, 1983.

## II. SECONDARY SOURCES

## A. Books

Allen, Frederick Lewis. Only Yesterday: An Informal History of the 1920's. New York: Harper & Row, Perennial Library, 1964.

Becker, Susan D. The Origins of the Equal Rights Amendment; American Feminism Between the Wars. West Port, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1981.

Carr, Issac Newton. History of Carson-Newman College. Jefferson City, Tenn.: Carson-Newman, 1959.

Chafe, William H. The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Roles, 1920-1970. New York: Oxford Press, 1972.

Gerber, Ellen W. Innovators and Institutions in Physical Education. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1971.

\_\_\_\_\_, Jan Fleshin, Pearl Berlin, and Waneen Wyrick. The American Woman in Sport. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1974.

Haller, John A. and Robin M. Haller. The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America. New York: W. W. Norton, 1974.

Kribbs, Kenneth D. History of Athletics at Maryville College. Maryville, Tenn.: Brazos Press, 1969.

Leuchtenburg, William E. The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1931. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Lucas, John A. and Ronald A. Smith. Saga of American Sport. Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1978.

Mowery, George E., ed. The Twenties: Fords, Flappers, and Fanatics. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_, and A. Blaine. Brownell, The Urban Nation: 1920-1980. Revised Edition. New York: Hill & Wang, 1981.

O'Neill, William L. Everyone Was Brave. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969.

Rader, Benjamin G. American Sports: From the Age of Folk Games to the Age of Spectators. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1983.

Rothman, Shelia M. Woman's Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present. New York: Basic Books, 1978.

Rudolph, Frederick. The American College and University: A History. New York: Knopf, 1962.

Ryan, Mary P. Womanhood in American: From Colonial Times to the Present. New York: New Viewpoints, 1975.

Schlesinger, Arthur M. The Rise of the City, 1878-1898. New York: Macmillan, 1933.

Twin, Stephanie L., ed. Out of the Bleachers: Writings on Women and Sport. Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1979.

#### B. Periodicals

Gerber, Ellen W. "The Controlled Development of Collegiate Sport for Women, 1923-1936," Journal of Sport History, vol. 2 (Spring 1975), pp. 1-27.

Hult, Joan S. "Have the Reports of the Death of Competitive Women's Athletics, 1920-1935, Been Greatly Exaggerated?" Proceedings of the North American Society for Sport History (1980), p. 42.

Robischeaux, Laura. "An Analysis of Attitudes Toward Women's Athletics in the U.S. in the Early Twentieth Century," Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education, vol. 6 (May 1975), pp. 12-19.

Smith, Ronald A. "The Rise of Basketball for Women in Colleges," Canadian Journal of History of Sport and Physical Education, vol. 1 (December 1970), pp. 18-36.

#### C. Unpublished Dissertations

Ihle, Elizabeth Lee. "Development of Coeducation in Major Southern State Universities," Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Tennessee, 1976.

D. University of Tennessee Publications

Montgomery, James Riley. "The Volunteer State Forges Its State University: The University of Tennessee, 1887-1919," The University of Tennessee Record, vol. 69 (November 1966).

\_\_\_\_\_. "Threshold of a New Day: The University of Tennessee, 1919-1946," The University of Tennessee Record, vol. 74 (November 1971).

## VITA

Adam R. Hornbuckle was born in Norfolk, Virginia on April 5, 1957. He attended elementary school in Richmond, Virginia and Jacksonville, Florida, and graduated from Samuel W. Wolfson High School in Jacksonville in June 1975. In January 1976, he entered The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and in March 1980 graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History.

In the fall of 1980, he entered The Graduate School of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, receiving from the History Department a Graduate Assistantship in 1980 and a Teaching Assistantship in 1981. Currently he is pursuing a Ph.D. in History.