

are eight feet long, and sixteen to twenty-four inches wide. Across the upper side ribs or cleats of wood are fastened to give them strength, and along the side are hand-rails, to which the coasters may cling, and to which cushions are often strapped. The front is bent backward in a curve to form a sort of dashboard. The original toboggan slide was a natural one down the side of a hill. The artificial slide, the idea of which came from Russia, is made of boards covered with snow and ice, and often slopes down to the ground from a height of from 40 to 50 feet. In Canada and the Northern States they are a great feature of the Ice Carnivals, and furnish much sport for both sexes, who disport themselves in gay attire specially suited to the frequent spills in the snow, to which the skilled as well as the unskilled performer is often liable.

TRACK AND FIELD ATHLETICS.

BY

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TRACK Athletics in America must now be considered as being on a very solid foundation, and experts are of the opinion that Track Athletics is the very foundation of our entire physical training structure. Running, walking, jumping, and throwing are natural forms of exercise; natural to the child and natural to the boy, and as such are considered to-day as valuable adjuncts in all educational institutions throughout America.

The history of track and field athletics in America is interesting because it shows a steady growth. There has never been a boom recorded in its history; it has steadily and quietly gone forward, and its present position is due to the hard and energetic work performed by a great many men in America during the past twenty-five years.

America held its first championship meeting, recognized as such, in 1876, and from that time to this track and field championships have been fixtures. The colleges took up track and field athletics about the same time, and from '76 to date they have held annual track and field championships.

How athletics has grown both in the outside and the college world is well known to all. The most remarkable growth in the past ten years has been school-boy athletics, and to-day the school-boy element is an important factor in athletics. The creation of the Public Schools Athletic League in the City of New York has done more for school-boy athletics than has ever been accomplished by any similar organization.

Athletics in public schools, or track and field play as it might be termed, is now conducted in a business-like manner—there is system

to it—and the boys are given ample opportunity to indulge in all forms of sport under proper regulations. What is being done by them is best shown by glancing at the report of the recent World's Elementary Schools Championships, wherein no less than 20,000 boys competed in the games held among the different schools, and 2,000 took part in the final-day competition. Such a meeting is simply remarkable and speaks well for the growth of athletics. The Public Schools Athletic League will, from now on, be popular.

It has always mystified New Yorkers that cities like Chicago, Pittsburg, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Boston, and others too numerous to mention, have not as yet organized Public Schools Athletic Leagues. It has been proven that these leagues are needed in many ways. According to the present plan in New York, a boy must be a student; he cannot have all play. The principal and teacher control the boy's right to compete. Besides that it teaches them to play fair and makes them subject to discipline. As a whole it has worked remarkably well in New York, and the benefits that will be derived from it in later years cannot be appreciated now. The members will naturally be the competitors for the high schools and colleges, they will make better students, and therefore in five or ten years from now our colleges will have phenomenal athletes.

The question of amateurism is one that is being discussed, and discussed quite generally. We have had a case of a so-called college man and amateur, who was nothing more than a fraud; who, while he was an amateur, was getting all the money he could, deceiving his companions and national officials, and then upon his retirement from athletics, he personally came forward and proclaimed that he had made money all through his athletic career. Of course, the finding out of a specimen of this kind hurts sport, and it is to be hoped that in the future the high schools, preparatory schools, and colleges will teach straightforwardness and honesty to the contestants. If they are taught these qualities they cannot go far wrong.

The history of athletics from a record standpoint is interesting. A glance at the records of '74 and '75 show that the American amateur athlete was not the possessor of an athletic "best on record." With, however, the coming of the world's greatest runner, L. E. Myers, in the early eighties, came a change in America's record books, and from that time to this America has excelled in athletics, and nearly all of the records to-day are a credit to the American athlete. We have excelled the English each time we have met them in International competition. The famous International Meeting of 1895 was the first meritorious win. Again at Paris in 1900, and at Athens in 1906, the American athlete proved conclusively his superiority. It must be said, however, that in distance running England is our superior. England produces distance men that are superior to Americans. This will be changed. Cross-country running in America will benefit the distance men, and just now we are enjoying a cross-country boom.