

# Physical culture in early canada: first nations and colonists

[Sport & Tourism](#)



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Physical Culture in Early Canada: First Nations and Colonists

First Nations \*

Limited historical information \*

Oral accounts \*

Oral tradition (memories and stories from elders) passed down the generations \*

Elders had important role in education \*

Written records \*

Second-hand observations of colonizers (French/English) \*

Written by white men, severely biased \*

Explorers, fur traders, priests, etc., \*

Generalizations made despite striking differences in North American Indians \*

Eurocentric views: a tendency to interpret other cultures with Western European cultural biases \*

Often devalues other cultures, traditions, values, religious beliefs \*

E. g., Gambling — redistribution of wealth vs. grave evil Lacrosse \*

Early missionaries considered game crude, dangerous and chaotic \*

National Lacrosse Association: \*

1867 classed white teams as amateurs and Indian teams as professionals \*

Expulsion of Indian teams in 1880 \*

Explanation: to rid games of violence and professionalism \*

Historians often fail to document how race/racism was a major factor in these restrictions \*

Indigenous games had purposes: taught values and education (honesty, courage, respect, personal excellence)

Cultural Relativism \*

The worth of any culture is judged only in terms of its own cultural and ethical principles, not by any universal standard

What is known and examples: \*

Northern athletes: head pull, airplane — pushing pain limits \*

Head, finger or stick pull, high kick, snow snake, airplane, running races, moose-skin ball (women), shinny \*

Social cohesion, cultural sharing, and exchange of goods between peoples: \*

Males wrestling as greeting (before European handshake) \*

Song and dance \*

Blanket toss; lacrosse

Inuit of Arctic Sport: games had to be highly portable and meaningful

1. Survival on the land \*

Games of strength and endurance \*

Resistance to

pain \* Survival skills 2. Education for life on the land \* Games in children's education/children's training 3. Gatherings \* Sharing and celebrations Inuit Games/Sport and Survival \* Skills developed by these games were necessary for everyday survival in the harsh environment \* Blanket toss \* Made from seal or walrus skins \* The winner is the person who bounces the highest \* Games of pain and endurance: important to ignore pain and discomfort to be able to work and survive \* Mouth pull: 2 people pull on each others mouth until someone drops out \* Earpull, knuckle hop \* Boxing Match (in the North) \* Taking turns hitting each other on the chest, shoulders, temple, or eye — no blocking punches \* The boxer who was unable to endure the pain any longer dropped out and lost the round, the winner faced a new challenger.

Examples 1. Artic Winter Games 2. Northern Games 3. Trappers Festival 4. North American Indigenous Games \* Keep traditions alive \* Promote sport \* Anchor and re-cultures young people King Trapper Event \* Tree felling, wood cutting, wood splitting, canoe packing, flour packing, trap setting, muskrat skinning, tea boiling, bannock baking, moose calling, goose calling, etc. \* Competitors must enter at least 19 out of 21 events \* Contest is based on points system The Aboriginal Sport Circle (ASC) \* Canada's national voice for Aboriginal sport: First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples \* 1995: created for more accessible and equitable sport and recreation opportunities for Aboriginal peoples \* Less indigenous professional athletes, ASC tries to address this North American Indigenous Games \* Every 3 years \* Celebrate cultural heritage and sporting achievements \* Time period after these games often drops suicide rates, otherwise high suicide rates \* All sport events are cultural events; we must not think of Aboriginal sport as 'cultural' and Euro-

Canadian traditions as 'real' Traditional Games and Pastimes: \* Are traditional physical activities worth preserving? Explain why or why not? \* What kind of cultural identity is relevant to the modern world? \* Can schools effectively sustain or preserve a traditional physical activity since children are taught to "play with" a tradition rather than to be traditional? Early Colonial Life and Physical Culture \* Time period: 1600s and 1700s \* European-Native contact: \* Exchange and trade \* Cultural sharing but also conflict \* Native sharing of physical skills necessary for survival on the land — canoe, snowshoeing, travel skills \* Indigenous sharing skills with coureurs de bois \* Examples of European physical cultural life in Canada: New France \* Colonization of lower Canada 1600s and 1700s, especially St. Lawrence corridor (Montreal-Quebec) \* Seigneurial system: system of land holdings based mainly on French feudal estate system \* Seigneurs: land holders \* Habitants: resident, house dweller and worked land \* Ethnic groups battling to claim Canada's religion, culture and language \* Socially isolated from main land — more freedom around cultural pursuits \* Habitant cultural life: \* A glimpse into early Canadian physical cultural life \* Relative freedom and cultural pursuits: \* Seasonal celebrations, wedding feasts, singing, card-playing, gambling, drinking, dancing etc., \* Little law enforcement and church control \* Coureurs de bois (runners of the woods) \* Men who worked independently of the seigneurial system (freelancers) \* Fur and other goods trade \* Extremely skilled at travel and survival in harsh conditions \* Middle men between natives and French \* Reputation for being unruly \* They wrestled, ran races, drank and paddled \* Bred rough masculinity \* Voyageurs (travellers) \* 1700s \* Employed by trading companies to transport and trade

fur and other goods \* Great respect for voyageurs skills and physical tenacity  
\* Lived shorter lives, had to consume a lot \* Masculine contests of strength:  
races, fist fights, drinking \* Middle class reaction: The Beaver Club \* Montreal  
1785 \* Trade merchants (masters of the voyageurs) \* Social club based on  
class distinction \* Voyageurs and other labourers not welcome \* Stories and  
self-aggrandizing but w/out actual wilderness experience \* Reinforced  
masculine middle-class values (e. g. discipline and vigour) \* Forming sporting  
activities and social activities around SES They Call Me Chief Documentary \*  
Hockey: big for sports evolved from lacrosse, prepared natives for war \*  
Indigenous excluded from professional level \* Fred Saskamoose \* Played for  
Chicago Blackhawks \* " To be a native is difficult, it was a dream to be in the  
NHL" \* He felt alone (isolated/unique/different and it took a special effort to  
get to know him with the obstacles he faced in the NHL) \* Culture  
shock/stereotyping/racism (skwahumper) \* Started Federation of Saskatoon  
Indian Nations \* George Armstrong \* Longest serving captain of TML \*  
Longest Native player in NHL \* Called " the Chief" \* Jim Neilson \* " Kickapoo  
Joy Juice" — stereotyping for alcoholism \* Grew up without traditions \* Stan  
Jonathan \* Boston Bruins \* " Little Chief" \* Got the name for fist fighting,  
became a role model \* Known for Bouchard Fight \* Wasn't getting minutes \*  
Fighter on and off the ice \* Exploitation: coach trying to gain extra Canadian  
player because he didn't require a green card \* Reggie Leach \* Did not make  
it to the NHL hall of fame because of drinking \* Miserable personal life:  
brothers and sisters died tragically due to alcoholism \* Ruined marriage and  
relationship with kids \* Talks to kids about life story and impact of alcohol \*  
Brian Trottier \* Highly regarded and trusted \* Business dealings left him 9. 5

million in debt \* Suicidal \* 7 Stanley Cup wins, elected to Hockey Hall of Fame \* Ted Nolan \* Detroit and Pittsburgh \* Kenora league: almost had to fight to survive, had to learn how to fight, much racism \* NHL coach of the year with Buffalo Sabres \* Honoured traditional upbringing \* Sacrifices for NHL = loneliness, travel, class of alcoholism and drugs \* System was set up that Natives have to be "better" not "as good" as other kids, scouts not willing to take a chance \* Elite Native Junior Hockey teams started as a result — became an opportunity to get looked at for college/NHL level \* OCM Blizzards: native hockey team \* Increases chance to achieve success \* To do this natives need proper facilities/coaches/equipment \* Use famous Native players to fundraise British North America: Social Class, The Military and Clubs \* Focus post-conquest/pre-confederation (1763-1866) \* The British Elite: most dominant, French became more marginalized \* Key Themes \* Social class tensions: attempts by upper/middle class to regulate behaviours of working class \* Moral control: control of unruly behaviour \* Attempt to create a rational and disciplined workforce \* An emerging middle-upper class created Canada's first organized sports clubs and organizations \* Controlled the meaning of sport \* Gender \* Male clubs and taverns \* Segregation of women \* Increased reinforcement of female domestic role: sexes seen as opposite \* Ethnicity \* Emerging Nationalism and Social Order Removal of Aboriginals \* Reserves \* 1878 Indian Act \* Following the Indian Act, Aboriginals who lived on reserves were forced to carry an identity card, like a passport every time they stepped off reserve land \* Prohibited religious ceremonies that were not of Judeo-Christian values \* Legacies of this seen in Fred Saskasmoose Taverns \* Key sites for entertainment \* Legislation/liquor

license \* Drinking — sin taxes \* Gambling \* Blood sport \* Government wanted to stop these as they were unruly and against Judeo-Christian values \* However, they could be sources of revenue \* Social class \* Tension between tavern life and government control \* Government reliance on taxes of alcohol, yet wish to control unruly behaviour \* Control of the working class vs. men in clubs who were respectable \* Mansion house: first bar in St. Catharines, oldest legalized bar in Canada \* Angel inn: 1800s, burnt in 1812, legend of ghost Blood Sport \* Animal baits and prize fighting \* Bear and bull baiting, dog fights, cockfighting, rattling etc., \* Common for taverns to have a pit for cock and dog fighting \* No concern for safety \* Physically brutal \* Attacked as 'un-Christian' because of the gambling and alcohol consumption that accompanied the sport \* Bull and Bear Baiting \* Animal, often tethered, is attacked by a succession of dogs \* Sport, gambling and alcohol in working class taverns \* By 1870, federal government banned blood sports, animal baits and prizefighting though it continued illegally Hunting and Fishing \* Legislation (class and race-based assumptions) \* Hunting for subsistence versus gentlemen hunters \* License became a requirement \* British sportsmen: aristocracy and military \* Ownership of land \* Rod and Gun clubs \* Fish and Game protection societies \* Criticized Native people and 'pot-hunters' who hunted and fished to survive or to supplement income \* Notion of respectability, very much based on class Horseracing \* Informal races \* Money prizes and or wager \* Garrison towns organized racing tracks \* Canada's premier thoroughbred race, the Queens Plate, began in 1860 \* Symbolizes connection to the monarch Stampedes and Rodeos \* Buffalo Bill's Wild West show \* Buffalo Bill: former military man who started WWS \*

Stage coach, horses, steer, buffalo, soldiers and Indians \* Annie Oakley: talented shooter, ambidextrous shooter, she was a woman who could shoot as well as any man while still maintaining her innocence \* Notion of rugged individualism Masculinities in 19C Canada \* Sport provided for the public display of masculinity \* Social power associated with men's bodies \* Sporting activity by middle and upper class men legitimated their public status as community leaders Internationally Famous athletes from this time period: \* Ned Hanlan \* Louis Cyr \* Tommy Burns \* Canada's first and only heavy weight boxing champion (1906) \* Boxing held huge social significance \* Disliked by Americans for not honouring colour bar \* Boxing was very segregated, blacks and whites never fought \* Sports have provided a public venue to address social issues like race/racism \* Deerfoot \* A Seneca Indian from the Cattaraugus Reservation \* Dominated long distance running \* 18.3 km in 1 hr, record lasted till 1950s \* Tactics and strategy \* Run in moccasins vs. Englishers with spiked shoes \* 10 miles in 51 minutes \* Train with weighted moccasins, avoided certain foods \* Tom Longboat (1886-1949) \* Six Nations Reserve \* Won 1907 Boston Marathon: in his first marathon he broke the record by 5 minutes, wasn't allowed to defend his title \* Collapsed at finish line in 1908 Olympics: rumours that he had been drugged \* Success in professional marathons \* Highly trained: alternate long runs with walks, rest days and handball \* Indoor marathons: 272 lap race around a 400 meter track, over 9000 paid to see him race one other athlete \* Only lost 3 races: racism — lazy Indian when he lost \* In his first 3 seasons he grossed \$17,000 \* Held 2 national track records and world records for 15 and 20 mile road races \* Media response \* Valued and devalued as Indian \* If he ever



refused a pre-race interview, media would write a story anyways \* After Boston Marathon victory Toronto city said they would hold money in trust for his education, could not accept during career as professionals could not compete in other marathons \* WWI \* Dispatch runner in France taking messages from post to post \* Twice wounded \* 1918 was reported dead, his wife remarried

Foot Racing: The Professional Running Booms \* Footrace = most common sporting event in the 1850s-60s \* Winter races continued on snow shoes \* Cash prizes as large as \$100 = annual salary of a school teacher \* Native Runners were usually the winners \* Boom continued till 1910 and picked up in 1970s again \* Boston Marathon 1900 — Canadians picked up 1st, 2nd, 3rd \* Gambling The End of the Running Boom \* Hamilton was the centre of Canadian road racing until the 1900s \* 1912 running boom ended

Modern Sport — Guttman's Modernization Theory Modern Sport: theories of development \* Several different frameworks to determine the degree to which sport has been modernized \* 7 characteristics that define modern sport \* Secularism: not directly linked to religious beliefs or rituals, indigenous beliefs not considered modern \* Equality: not regulated by social background, standardization and codification of rules and competition \* Bureaucratization: organization oversee and sanction sport and athletes \* Specialization: specific roles for players, sometimes including equipment \* Rationalization: application of scientific technique to the improvement of athletic skill \* Quantification: refined systems of measuring performance (measurement and statistics) \* Records: emphasize setting and breaking records

Sport and Recreation \* Became a social technology \* Use sport as a tool to achieve other means/ends \* Right to Play: use sport for social

development \* Cultivate sense of Canadianess and adhere to middle-class values  
Checkered Game of Life: 1866 \* Popular board game is visual artifact that documents the official values and aspirations of the U. S as it strained to:  
\* Use sport for social development \* Absorb millions of new immigrants \* Gain international commercial power \* Shift from predominantly agrarian to urban living  
Industrialization and the Growth of Organized Sport  
Technological changes: \* Transportation: steamboats and railways \* Ex. rolling stock rail cars \* Allowed easier travel, fairs to get people to sporting events, allowed team and spectator travel \* Equipment: mass production, cheaper costs, standardization \* Ex. bicycle \* Communications: telegraph, newspaper \* Sport can now be broadcasted  
Montreal: the Cradle of Organized Sport \* Montreal Curling Club (1807) — 1st organized sporting club in Canada \* Association with drinking \* Scots and military garrison \* Making rocks of cannons because granite not always available  
Snowshoeing: \* Montreal Snow Shoe Club (1843) — small group of elite wealthy men \* Tramping (outings) \* Like curling, activities that provided a distinct sense of social membership \* Dinners and drinking \* Specific uniforms \* Social exclusion: anti-Native rules, or use Native races as entertainment  
Montreal Amateur Athletic Association (1851) \* Combined MSSC with Montreal Lacrosse and Bicycle Clubs \* Many activities and sports \* Defended amateurism  
Amateurism \* Created to fight off creeping social inclusion \* Amateur rules always based on what the person is not \* An “instrument of class warfare” \* 1880-1920s: \* Amateur: ‘pure’ athlete who performs for the love of sport and without remuneration \* Professional: one who has ‘prostituted’ himself for money \* Amateur Athletic Association of Canada

formed in 1884 to defend amateurism nation-wide \* Held a lot of power, determined who would represent Canada on national team \* Could be accused without proof \* Later became Canadian Amateur Athletic Union (1898) Church and State Regulated Sport \* Sabbath Legislation: Lords Day Act (1906) \* Many activities and business = illegal on Sundays \* Significant impact on those who were not wealthy because play could not happen on workdays due to lack of time \* The Act made it illegal to: \* Engage in any game or contest for gain or for prize of reward... or be present at any performance at which any fee is charged \* Sunday only work-free day for working class spectators \* Moral regulation: marked the habits of the working class as immoral and illegitimate \* Class distinctions: wealthy hunters and fishermen protected from Sabbath Law with access to private lands Muscular Christianity\*\*\* \* Protestant churches preached the virtues of physicality \* Image of Christ: Robust and manly (physical toughness) \* Ex. of Christian manliness drew from author Thomas Hughes \* Tom Brown's Schooldays: men of privilege sent off to boarding schools, taught sport to confront fears, stand up to obstacles and become upstanding strong men. \* Needed good temple for your soul \* Athletic skill tied into moral fibre \* Attempted to win middle-class boys to the Church \* Sport as a means of developing men of good character (youth athletic teams at Churches) \* Healthy bodies = healthy faith \* Leaders of "muscular Christianity" mov't concerned with: \* A feminized Church \* Sports on Sunday? \* The decline of Protestant power \* Urbanization and Catholic immigrants \* YMCA started it of this muscular Christianity: focus on integration of mind, body, spirit \* Physical and moral training \* Evangelistic/Protestant based \* Eventually

opened to all religions, races \* Sports invented: Basketball, Volleyball, Racquetball Medical Profession and Women's Sport in the Late 1800s \* Role of physicians began to take on morality \* Medical world had a huge role in what women could/could not do with their bodies \* Doctors: a dominant role in dictating safe and appropriate sporting activities for women \* Recommend light exercise to prepare for motherhood \* Male doctors were athletic directors (in Canada and US) \* Universities were a big place for organized sport \* Major segregation around gender \* Social class: wealthy women vs. rural working women Late 1800s \* Doctors: influence over moral life \* Women intellectually inferior but moral compass of the family \* Private: domestic sphere \* Women considered morally superior but physically inferior Sports Medicine \* Specialization occurs in the 1920s \* Doctors argued that women's: \* Anatomy/physiology were unique \* Special moral obligations \* Disqualified women from vigorous physical activity Fashion \* Victorian Era: restricted clothing, heavy garment, pushed to extremes in this time period \* Restricted to low energy activities like croquet Female Frailty Myth \* Vital energy was necessary for human life, considered limited and non-renewable \* Vitalist theory of physiology: \* The development of women's reproductive systems demanded a substantial share of women's vital energy \* \*reproductive capacity of Anglo-saxon and middle-class women vs. working class and non-white/immigrant women \* Higher education, employment, social and recreational pursuits were commonly identified as threats to female health \* Sport: excessive muscular development; deplete nerves; contribute to difficult childbirth Female Modesty \* Doctors 1870s-1880s \* Modesty required women to wear clothing that concealed the limbs,

especially the legs and ensured that the wearer could not move in the free, vigorous manner associated with masculinity. The Bicycle \* Single greatest emancipator for women's bodies \* Velocipedes aka the "boneshaker" \* Solid iron with 2 wooden wheels \* Penny Farthing \* High front wheel, small back one \* Solid rubber tires \* Highly perched seat \* For recreation not transport \* The role of the bicycle in women's physical emancipation \* Provided form of recreation \* Un-chaperoned \* Solitude \* Means to commute on own \* Mid-1880s: smaller, lighter bicycles; invention of pneumatic tire \* Significantly increased the leisure options for all women \* "Battle of the Bloomer" \* Bloomers (cross between a skirt and trousers) was developed for the lady cyclist \* Helped liberate women from the corset and other rigid Victorian standards of acceptable dress and behaviour \* Drop Frame Safety Bicycle Female Modesty and Medical Advice \* Required clothing that concealed the limbs \* Restricted movement associated with femininity \* Monthly incapacity \* Menstruation treated as condition not a normal function \* Jumping was believed to cause uterine displacement \* 1916: high jump, long jump and basketball (men's rules) considered unacceptable for girls Race, Sport and Moral Physiology Anthropometry: \* The study of human body measurement for use in classification \* Recording physical variation among people \* I. e. pediatric growth charts \* First used in the 1880s to identify criminals by facial characteristics \* Could determine based on experience if you are predisposed to any crime 1900s — Europe and US \* Anthropologists attempted to differentiate between races \* Often to frame particular races as inferior to others Craniometry \* Measurement of cranial features to classify people according to race, criminal temperament, intelligence \*

Assumption: skull size and shape determine intelligence and capacity for moral behaviour \* Irish, Black, Women Race and athletic performance: biological ?, genetic?, sociological?, psychological? Early 1900s \* Common opinions re: boxing \* Blacks had great speed but little stamina \* The stomach was an inherent weak spot in all black fighters \* Opponents told to pummel ribs of black fighters Marshal "Major" Taylor \* Worlds fastest racer (12 years) \* At the time cycling was as popular as baseball Jesse Owens \* Radically stereotyped theories were formulated \* Survival skills \* Projecting heel bone \* Slave selection/breeding The Black Athlete \* US Civil War (1861-1865) \* Lincoln (opponent of slavery) \* 11 of the southern states formed the Confederate States of America \* Wanting: their own nation and laws, to maintain segregation/slavery \* Charting the rise of the black athlete \* Before the Civil War — few well known black athletes, except for jockeys and horse trainers \* Sport was played and promoted in: \* Colleges and universities \* The workplace \* In early 1900s blacks were virtually shut out of both \* Jim Crow Era: the legalization of segregation \* 1876-1964 laws in the southern US required racial segregation in all public facilities \* Blacks could perform (sport of entertainment) for whites as long as there was no suggestion of racial equality \* "Sambo" stereotype — lazy, senseless, childlike, uncontrollably smiling, dancing, content with life as a servant/slave \* Battle Royals: often 5 or 6 slaves fighting blindfolded and bare-knuckled \* Predominantly \* US Southern phenomenon \* Opening event on boxing card \* Blacks fought for white pleasure \* Messages transmitted: ridicule and worthlessness \* Rise of the black athlete: Jack Johnson \* 1st Black heavyweight champion (1908-1915) \* 1st African American pop culture icon

\* More press coverage than all other black men combined \* Boxing's race crisis: \* Johnson infuriated many whites who didn't like a black public figure \* Gloated his victories \* Paraded his wealth \* Open affairs with white women