

1973

# A Survey of Sport as an Art Form

R. Garey Hodge

*Eastern Illinois University*

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A SURVEY OF SPORT

AS AN ART FORM

(TITLE)

BY

R. GAREY HODGE

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
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1973

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
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Frontispiece

Football Hero 1970

Anonymous

Bronze

## Chapter 1

### DEVELOPMENT OF ART IN SPORTS

Ever since the beginning of man, he has felt a need to express himself through art forms and shed some light on his culture in regard to his needs, wants, habits and pastimes.

Man has always been a competitor, whether it has been against an animal, another individual or a group of people. There is something innate that has driven man to be a competitor.

The first factor to be considered is man's needs, so he can provide himself with existence. The second is his wants - the more he needs, the more he wants. Third, after man acquires the first two he then focuses his attention on his leisure time for competition. It is at this point that man emerged as a sportsman and recorded his activities as an art form.

Instinctively the Greeks realized that all men might fully appreciate beauty only by participating in the arts.<sup>1</sup>

No matter what project the Greeks undertook; athletics, painting, sculpture, religion, they devoted themselves completely striving for perfection. Keeping this in mind it is no surprise that the Greek civilization contributed a great deal especially in sporting events and art forms.

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<sup>1</sup>Lynn and Grey Poole, History of Olympic Games (New York: Ivan Obolinsky. Inc., 1963) p. 11.

No institution, no event in history has had a longer unbroken record than that of the Olympic Games, held continuously from 776 B.C. to 393 A.D., nearly twelve centuries. No other human event can equal that record.<sup>2</sup>

The Greeks had a very systematic way of determining when the games were to be held and this may be the way we arrived at the timing for football season and homecoming and possibly the timing for the World Series in baseball. It is not definite proof, but it is worthy of consideration, especially football, because of the length of our growing season and when we harvest our crops.

The Olympic Games were held in the late summer or early fall after the grain harvest and the olive picking. The exact date was determined by the full moon. According to tradition, the Olympic Games were scheduled for the second or the third full moon after the summer solstice, falling in either the month of Appollonius (August) or Parthenos (September). Due to the movements of the celestial bodies, the Games were held one year in August, the next time, forty or fifty lunar months later in September.<sup>3</sup>

The sequence of events for the pentathlon was the discus, jumping, javelin, running and wrestling. Since running and wrestling were also contests in their own right, only the discus, javelin and jumping were regarded as disciplines specific to the pentathlon.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

The order of events had been carefully planned, for the first four tested the athlete's arms and legs in an alternating sequence, while the last tested the whole body.<sup>4</sup>

The discus was a Greek invention. Presumably the round smooth stones which were to be found on the banks and shores gave the Greeks the idea of manufacturing bronze discs in various sizes suitable for throwing. Most Greek discuses were 1.4 centimetres thick, 21 centimetres in diameter and weighed 2 kilogrammes.<sup>5</sup>

One of the most noted forms of art in the sport world is the sculpture, Discobolus. The bronze original was completed by the Athenian sculptor, Myron, about 450 B.C. (Fig. 1)

The second event to be held was the long jump, the only type of jump practiced, and it is not sure if it was a standing jump or a running broad jump like we now use in track and field events. In many of the vase paintings, the jumpers are depicted holding weights in each hand to increase the momentum of the jump. The Greeks did employ a bater, a sort of sill or threshold which afforded additional purchase for take-off.

This sill marked the beginning of the skammers, i.e., the landing pit, which was simply a piece of ground fifty feet long that had been broken up with picks and subsequently raked over to form a level surface of soft earth.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p.75.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

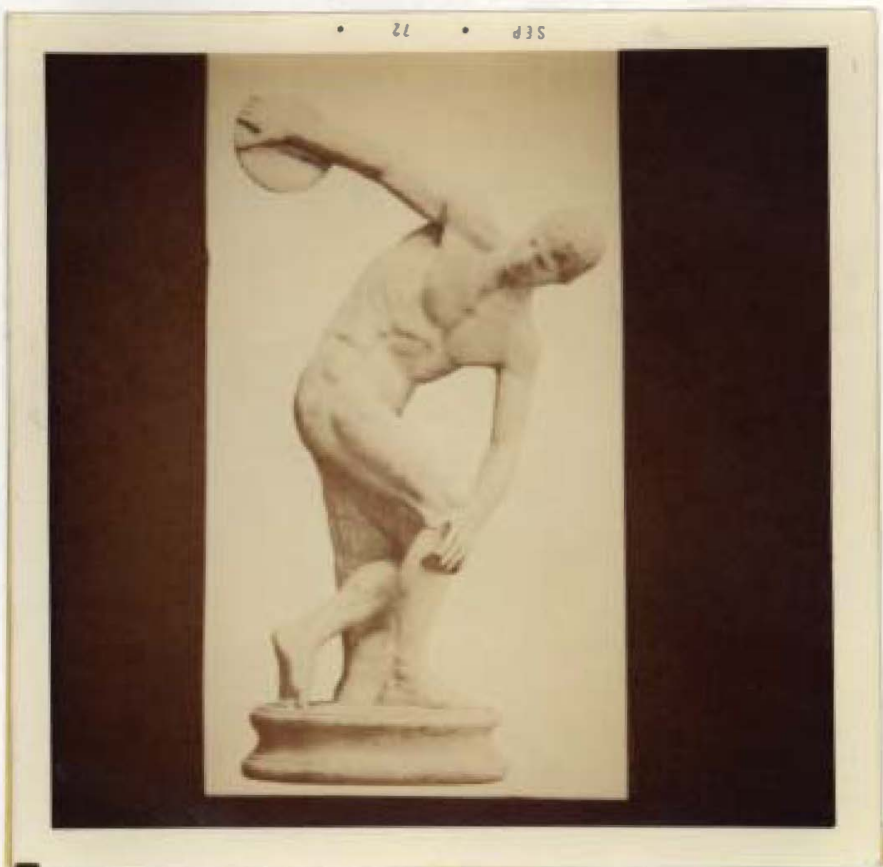


Figure 1

The Lancellotti Discobolus  
Marble - 4 ft. 1 in.

Terme Museum, Rome  
A Roman Copy from Myron's Original  
Ca. 450 B.C.

When one views a Greek vase painting and the pick and crouching figure is represented, there is little doubt it was to acknowledge a long jumper.

The next event in the pentathlon was the javelin throwing contest. This competition is of course derived from primitive man's nature of hunting--whether it would be animal or man. So this particular sporting event is directly connected to one of man's first thoughts--survival. Man has nearly always used a projectile to gain conquests.

In many of the vase paintings the javelin thrower is represented by two parallel lines which symbolize the javelin placed behind the human form. Perhaps the reason for depicting two javelins was the possibility that the thrower got two chances to send the javelin to its mark. The winner of the javelin competition was not determined by how far he could throw, but how accurate. Some type of target must have been placed in the distance and the winner was determined by accuracy and form.

The next event was the foot race, and this too is derived from one of man's desires for survival and that is running to or from something. Even though the foot race is the first recorded event there is little known about it.

Historians do not seem to know the precise length of the foot race in the pentathlon. It is a widely held belief that it was a stade race, in which the competitors covered a single length of the stadium.



The stade-race was the most convenient distance for a sprint event and for this reason alone it was likely to have been adopted for the pentathlon.<sup>7</sup>

Wrestling was the last contest in the pentathlon and it was also the most difficult and undoubtedly the most exciting.

The rules were the same as for the independent wrestling with the major difference between the two events being style. The wrestler had to make three gracefully executed falls or he was disqualified.

The pentathlon wrestlers were basically light athletic men, which meant that they depended far more on the correct application of strength and general expertise than on brute force.<sup>8</sup>

There are statements concerning the requirements for victory in the pentathlon, but there was only one thing for certain, the victor of the pentathlon had to win three of the five events.<sup>9</sup>

All of the aforementioned type of athletic events were recorded by artists, particularly in vase painting and sculpture. This form of graphic representation not only recorded historical events but paid homage to the men competing. It is interesting to note that in the scenes depicted the figures were almost always profile with a very definite two-dimensional appearance. The figures were usually incised

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p.78.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p.78.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p.78.

lines representing the schematic of the human form and the objects related to it. The athletes were depicted in the nude just as they performed.

Competing athletes at first wore loin cloths. But one day, so the story goes, a youth lost his. However, unashamed and unperturbed, he carried on and being unimpeded, excelled all his rivals. As a result of his superlative performance, from then on all participants in the games competed in the nude. (This is still recalled by our word gymnast, in which gymnos means "naked.")<sup>10</sup>

Note the outer circle with the strong geometric pattern, dark background with light profile running figure. The head, feet and the jumping weights in his hand are at the very edge of the circle which gives movement to a static figure in a concise area. The oblique parallel lines indicate that the athlete is a victor in javelin throwing as well as the running and jumping. (Fig. 2.)

The next athlete was a winner in the javelin throwing, discus and wrestling. Part of his wrestling equipment is indicated. Here again the figure is extended to the confines of the concentric shape, with the javelins oblique to balance out the design. The discus and wrestling symbol are visually balanced. (Fig. 3.)

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<sup>10</sup>R. Brasch, O.B.E., How Did Sports Begin? (New York: David McKay Company, Inc. 1970) p.412.



SEP 72

Figure 2

Greek Athlete  
 Panaitos Master  
 Vase Painting Ca. 500 B.C.



SEP 72

Figure 3

Greek Athlete  
 Panaitos Master  
 Vase Painting Ca. 500 B.C.

One of the earliest references is a relief sculpture, Young Men Playing Hockey, 500 B.C. This early work is striving for a representational appearance. This relief shows how close artists were inspired by the activities of athletes. (Fig. 4.)

In analyzing the art forms on Greek vase paintings it is very obvious that the principal interest is devoted to depicting man and his doings. The Greeks never seemed to tire of describing hunting, warfare, wrestling, chariot racing and dancing. The themes depicted on the exterior of the vases complemented the functional purpose of the vase, drinking a toast and to celebrate the accomplishments of their daily life. That was in essence their constant theme.

As stated earlier, the figures were flat outlines but the Greeks did make one dramatic change and contribution to painting the sporting scene. They developed more sophisticated flexible figures by adding a reddish color to the figures and vases, establishing tonal values. The later Greek vase paintings seem to have more of a naturalness and representational appearance. Cloth seems to fold and sway, with all of the features taking on more of a three-dimensional quality. Possibly one of the reasons for their development of three-dimensional effect was because of the stress on the representation of the human figure in their sculpture.

There is very little mention of any ball sports in Greek games but they did engage in a type of ball game.



Figure 4

Greek Hockey Players  
Stone Relief Ca. 500 B.C.



Figure 5

Statue of a Young Man from Antikythera  
6 ft. 5 in. Bronze Ca. 340 B.C.  
Greek National Museum, Athens

Statue of a Young Man From Antikythera C.340 B.C. Bronze  
6 ft. 5 in. (1.94 m) National Museum, Athens. Statue of a young man found in the sea near Antikythera, an island off the Peloponnese. The action of the figure seems to suggest throwing; he may have held a ball in his right hand. The statue has been restored from many fragments. The eyes are inlaid with colored glass.<sup>11</sup> (Fig. 5.)

Note all of the Greek art depicted the athlete in the active stage. Appolonius pointed out the passive side of an athlete with his Seated Boxer. (Fig. 6.)

The Greeks continued their sporting events and art forms with equal grace and pride. Since the Laurel Wreath was the official prize for the winners at the festivals they had to wait until they returned home before more lavish presentations and awards could be given. The winner's home city gave a hero's welcome complete with celebration that might last for days. At this point in society one can sense "materialism" creeping into athletic events. In some of the outlying areas valuable rewards were given to the winners. With this in mind, we can see the birth of the "professional" athlete.

Rome had by the end of the 3rd century B.C. achieved domination of the whole of Italy. The Romans couldn't have cared less about the Greek's tradition of athletic events. One of the main things the Romans did was to scorn the Greeks for their nakedness.

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<sup>11</sup>Donald E. Strong, The Classical World (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 90-91.



Figure 6

Boxer Resting  
Appolonius

Terme Museum, Rome  
Ca. 150 B.C.

Nevertheless, the Romans let the Greeks continue their athletic events if for no other reason than to appease them. The Romans were far more concerned with building their Empire than they were with foot racing, discus throwing or throwing the light-weight javelin. The Romans adapted boxing and wrestling with one change. Violence! The violent sport introduced by the Romans was that of the gladiators.

So with the emergence of the Romans and the subjugation of the Greeks the Olympic Games withered.

By the time of Augustus (63 B.C. - 14 A.D.) gladiators became a national passion. Twenty-one towns in Italy had their own arenas. By the middle of the first century A.D. there were fifty and at the end of the century there were sixty-four. In smaller communities the fighting took place, like the corridas of Spanish villages, in the market square.<sup>12</sup> The games reached their nadir in 66 A.D. when Emperor Nero turned the athletic competitions into a farce. So with this type of mockery, a decline in historic Olympic Games is not hard to envisage.

As the Roman Empire grew, so did the number of amphitheatres and spectacular events. The area inside the amphitheatre was called the arena. On the perimeter of the arena was a safety retaining wall, then row after row of tiered seats. Within the arena gladiators hacked and slashed each other to bits and pieces; men armed and unarmed,

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<sup>12</sup>Walter Umminger, Supermen, Heros & Gods, The Story of Sport Through the Ages, (New York: McGraw Hill Book Co., 1967), p. 185.



fought every strange and savage animal the Empire could capture.

The Roman arena has been carried over to today's society. The home of the St. Louis Blues Hockey Club is also called The Arena. When the Blues are not "playing" at home other events are sanctioned; rodeos (man vs. animal), the circus, and numerous other entertaining events. Once again times haven't changed that much. In fact, professional football players have been referred to as "Sunday Gladiators," and rightly so.

The Olympic Games were rapidly deteriorating and occasionally a Greek would manage to win a championship, but very seldom. Contestants poured in from all corners of the Roman Empire, skilled and, of course, eager to compete, but oblivious to tradition.

Prince Varastades, who later became King of Armenia, was the last recorded Olympic champion. Around 388 A.D. in the 291st Olympic Games, Varastades won the boxing championship.<sup>13</sup>

For several years after, the shrine of Olympia was ravaged by numerous marauding bands of warriors and consequently the Olympic Games were formally abolished.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Richard Schaap, An Illustrated History of the Olympics (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1963), p. 33.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

## TOURNAMENTS AND OTHER GAMES IN EUROPE

The rise of Christianity, with its teachings about the sinfulness of the body, found little room in the art forms for sport events.

Mosaics and murals depicting the teaching of Christ and the Scriptures were of utmost importance. Since there were no books available for the masses to use, the Bible stories had to be told visually. With Christianity placing so much emphasis on life in the hereafter, they strove to perfect funerary art with artists painting and decorating the Sarcophagus, the catacomb and the temple. Although the Christians neglected to depict sport as an art form they certainly did not hesitate to use it in their literature.

After the battle of Hastings, Angles, Saxons, Danes and Normans seethed and bubbled in the melting pot until a century and a half later the English nation emerged. The Crusades, the Hundred Years' War, gave an opportunity for the wealthy man whose interests lay in military sports to enjoy himself, but not be in any danger. The type of sporting event that evolved was jousting and tournaments as depicted by artists of the time.

The early form of tournament was really a mock battle between two miniature armies at one of the royal tourney fields. The carpenters built grandstands for the viewers and there was vast food and drink, with clashing, ringing and shouting. The tournament participants would put on their helmets wearing their coat of arms. The two teams

would then gather at opposite ends of the tourney field and at a given signal would surge forward. With the clashing, ringing and shouting the mock battle continued until one side had dismounted the other.<sup>15</sup>

From this particular sporting event there is a tradition that has been continued through present day, and that is the practice of college football teams represented by one or more colors. Every royal family or castle has its crest and colors, and a knight went forth into battle bearing the colors of the manor. Football uniforms are designed in the colors of the school, and many college nicknames refer to color such as the Syracuse Orangemen, Harvard Crimson, Cornell Big Red, or Alabama Crimson Tide.<sup>16</sup>

With the emergence of England, the countryside was springing up with towns and hamlets, and another form of sporting event was about to evolve. Historical records have it that after the Danes vacated England, workmen, excavating an old battlefield, uncovered a skull that was undeniably that of a Dane. These men, like all English, still smouldering with memories of Danish imperialism, kicked at the skull to show their feelings. Then all the others took to kicking the skull back and forth and work was neglected while the boot was being applied.

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<sup>15</sup>Peter Moss, Sports and Pastimes Through The Ages (New York: Arco Publishing Co., Inc., 1962) pp. 50-51.

<sup>16</sup>Zander Hollander and Paul Zimmerman, Football Lingo, (W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1967) New York, p.25.

Boys seeing this sensed a new form of diversion. They dug around and also found a skull...some of the boys were barefoot, so some of the anticipated pleasure was removed. Retaining the idea one of the boys reappeared with an inflated cow bladder and thus the basic principle of football was born.<sup>17</sup>

Although the popular sports of tournaments and archery and other pastimes are richly represented in medieval manuscripts, football does not seem to have attracted the special interest of the illuminators, probably because it did not seem significant at that time.

Ball games were starting to gain popularity among the Europeans and one of the first organized was that of "la Soule" that dates about the 12th century with the French being given credit. The idea was to move a ball to a predetermined goal, by the use of hands, sticks or feet. The playing field was the countryside. Sometimes entire villages would compose teams. This type of sport is the forerunner of soccer, football, lacrosse, baseball, and hockey.

The English adapted "la Soule" and refined it into Stoolball which is the father of cricket and eventually baseball. The idea was for the batter to stand in front of a three legged stool, upturned. The ball is pitched to the batter and if the stool is hit or the batter pops up he is out. The batter must hit the ball safely.

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<sup>17</sup>Frank G. Menke, The Encyclopedia of Sports (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1953) pp. 352-353.

Well, the interest of "football" became wide spread with people of all ages engaging in this new sport. A pig's bladder was used from time to time. In fact it was reported that due to the high price of bows and arrows archery was being discouraged and people were resorting to forbidden pastimes. So a proclamation was handed down in 1477.

Item, that according to the laws of this land no person shall practice any unlawful games such as dice, quoits, football and such games, but that every strong and able-bodied person shall practice with his bow for the reason that the national defense depends much on bowmen.<sup>18</sup>

A fourteenth-century illustration produced in England in a document issued under papal authority depicts a boy with a club and ball, and his tutor, who unmistakably is demonstrating a game very much like cricket.<sup>19</sup>

Pictorial representations of English football are exceedingly rare, but one of them is Football at Barnet, Herts, preserved in the Hertfordshire Country Museum at St. Alban's and probably dating from the eighteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Francis Peabody Magrun, Jr., History of Football from the Beginning to 1871 (Bochum-Langendeer: Verlag Heinrich Poppinghauss, O.H.G. 1938) p.13.

<sup>19</sup>R. Brasch, O.R.E., How Did Sports Begin? (New York: David McKay Co., Inc. 1970) p.84.

<sup>20</sup>A.E. Richardson, Georgian England (New York: Scribners 1931) plate 46, facing p.81. Noted in the Victoria History of the Counties of England: Hertfordshire: (Westminster 1902) Vol I., p.381, (dated C.A.1770).

Sometimes old prints remind us of children's games and amusements like Wilkie's picture of 'Blindman's Buff,' games which are old and seem to have been played in all countries with perhaps slight variations. Dancing has often been made the subject of prints, there is indeed no limit to the variety of a collection of those subjects which we have for convenience classed as 'sporting.'

Henry Alken excelled in field sports and in the representation of games and sporting prints. John Scott of Newcastle-on-Tyne, may also be mentioned as an engraver of good sporting prints, among them 'Rural Sports,' 'Horses and Dogs,' and the 'Sportsman's Cabinet.' D. Jenkins, an eighteenth century artist, working in London, engraved race horses.<sup>21</sup>

English artists noted for sporting events were Peter Roberts, boxing; John Young, boxing; Aston Bragg, track; John Leech and A. F. Tait, depicting various sports.

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<sup>21</sup>Fred W. Burgess, Old Prints and Engravings (New York: Tudor Publishing Company 1973) p.223.

## Chapter 2

### ATHLETICS AND ART IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA

The nineteenth century evolved some team sports that affected peoples' educational systems in Europe, Canada, and America.

There is nothing obscure about how Rugby began. Rugby derived its name from the school in Warwickshire, England. In 1823 William Ellis was playing inter-class "football" according to traditional soccer rules. He became bored, and on the spur of the moment picked the ball up and ran.<sup>22</sup> In 1839 a student suggested they have a go at the game at Rugby, and the name stuck. (Fig. 7.)

While soccer has definitely been established as the forerunner of American football, there is some question as to the origin of ice hockey.

The image of "hockey players" (youths with curved bats and ball) appeared even in the early sanctuaries. They are shown on a 1333 silver altar flask, now owned by the National Museum of Copenhagen and in a stained glass window of 1360 at Gloucester Cathedral.<sup>23</sup>

One of the early art forms depicting ice skating is Gilbert Stuart's The Skater, 1782. (Fig. 8.)

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<sup>22</sup>R. Brasch, O.B.E., How Did Sports Begin? p.152.

<sup>23</sup>Hal Butler, There's Nothing New in Sports, (New York: Simon & Shuster, 1967)



Figure 7

Rugby on the Village Green  
English, Anonymous Ca. 1810  
Etching



Figure 8

The Skater 1782  
Gilbert Stuart  
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.



The Indians in North and South America had a curved stick-ball game which was the aboriginal form of Lacrosse played by various tribes.

The first ball players in North America were depicted by George Catlin 1796-1872. His works included Ball Play of the Choctaws and Ball Players Choctaw and Sioux.

The word hockey is said to be an Anglicization of "hoquet," the French term for a shepherd's stick with which hockey is played. The Germans had a game called Kolbe and the Dutch Het-Kolven. Het-Kolven was a winter game played on ice.<sup>24</sup> (Fig. 9.)

Rembrandt is credited with an etching depicting men striking a ball with curved sticks.<sup>25</sup>

An artist that gained recognition for his art work in the sport world was A. F. Tait. He was born in England (1819-1905) and he became the chief illustrator of sporting and wild west scenes for Currier and Ives.

As the nineteenth century continued, so did the expansion of the American frontier, towns and educational institutions. More and more people were taking part in sports. Then the inevitable happened; two colleges, Rutgers and Princeton, agreed to play against each other. It was the first inter-collegiate game in American football. The match took place at New Brunswick, on November 6, 1869.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid

<sup>25</sup>R. Brasch, O.B.E., loc. cit. p. 164.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, p. 158.



Figure 9

Kolvspieler

Romeyn de Hooghe 1645-1708

Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

There were some other firsts to come out of that historic game, and one was the "uniform." The Rutgers students wore scarlet jerseys or caps.

Many of the Western artists painted scenes of the frontiersman participating in various sporting events. Some of the more noted are Frederic Remington, George Bingham, Seth Eastman, George Catlin, and Charles M. Russell. (Figs. 10, 11.)

With the expansion of the frontier another sport is organized and called baseball. There is still a great deal of controversy about just who invented baseball, Abner Doubleday or Alexander Cartwright. The first recorded meeting of two baseball teams was on July 19, 1846, with the New York Knickerbockers playing the New York club.

A drawing of an antediluvian encounter at Elysian Fields in the resort town of Hoboken, New Jersey, still exists.<sup>27</sup>

Other ball clubs were organized and by the time the Civil War broke out large numbers of boys and men were playing baseball. The Civil War spread the interest of baseball throughout the war-torn states. Many of the Southern soldiers were introduced to baseball while in the Union prison camp.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup>Harold Peterson, "Baseball's Johnny Appleseed" Sports Illustrated, April, 1969, p. 59.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid



Figure 10

Indian Ball Play on Ice Ca. 1829-30

Seth Eastman

Litho - New York Public Library



Figure 11

Lacrosse Playing Among the Sioux Ca. 1829-30

Seth Eastman

The Corcoran Gallery of Art

While the American sportsman was having fun with baseball and football, preparing for and waging a great Civil War, the Royal Canadian Rifles were not idle. Ice hockey's origin is about as confusing as baseball's. Supposedly the first hockey was played by the Royal Canadian Rifles, an Imperial unit, stationed at Halifax and Kingston in 1855.<sup>29</sup>

Following the Civil War, George Bingham painted the games of the frontiersman in the new surge of expansion.

The first professional baseball club was organized in 1868 in Cincinnati, Ohio--the Cincinnati Red Stockings.<sup>30</sup>

Organized ice hockey began about the mid-nineteenth century when soldiers tied skates to their boots, borrowed field hockey sticks and began crashing into one another. The goal keeper was the only one to wear pads and he borrowed wicket-keeper's leg guards from cricket. The popularity of ice hockey grew and McGill University is credited with organizing the first college team in 1875. This was the same year Regnier's lithograph The Ice Skater was completed.

The students at McGill University were interested in all types of sports and it wasn't long before there was a scheduled football game with Harvard. With this meeting, forward rushing and ball carrying

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<sup>29</sup>Trent Frayne, Hockey, (Chicago: Rand McNally, Inc. 1969)

<sup>30</sup>Peterson, loc. cit. p.59.

was introduced. The Americans then adopted even more rules: stop play after each down, line up for scrimmage, and interference for the ball carrier, and the eleven-man team.

Frederick Remington, Winslow Homer (Fig. 12), Thomas Eakins (Fig. 13) and Henri de Regnier (Fig. 14) were among the foremost artists that sketched and painted various sporting events. Winslow Homer did a series of paintings on games; among them, Crack The Whip, which made up the forerunner of the team sports as we know them today.

The last three decades of the nineteenth century introduced many innovations in the American sporting scene:

- 1871 The National Association of Baseball players formed
- 1885 Ice Hockey League formed in Canada
- 1893 Lord Stanley of Kingston donates the famed Stanley Cup
- 1896 The restoration of the Olympic Games in Greece

So with the close of the nineteenth century the American sporting scene is spreading across the country.



Figure 12

Snap the Whip 1872

Winslow Homer

Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio



Figure 13

Max Schmitt in a Single Scull 1871

Thomas Eakins

Metropolitan Museum of Art



Figure 14

The Ice Skater 1875  
Henri Francois de Regnier

Lithograph



## Chapter 3

### THE TWENTIETH CENTURY INFLUENCE ON ATHLETICS AND TEAM SPORTS IN ART

The turn of the century and the social and economic events that followed had a tremendous effect on art forms and the sporting world.

Football sank to its lowest depths during 1905 and 1906 owing to the fact that so many deaths occurred and players were injured. One of the early twentieth century paintings on football is A Game of Football (1908) by Henri Rousseau, in his typical primitive style. (Fig. 15.)

Boxing was a fast rising sport and its dynamics attracted such artists as George Bellows, Thomas Eakins and John Sloan.

When George Bellows painted Both Members in the Club, 1909, Robert Henri established his art school on upper Broadway in New York City. Many of Henri's students at the New York School of Art followed him there, including George Bellows and the young Edward Hopper. Baseball games with Bellows at shortstop encouraged the spirit of easy camaraderie Henri cultivated at his school, when Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders were the ideal of physical fitness and tough virility.<sup>31</sup>

This factor accounts for the vitality in most of Bellows' early sport paintings.

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<sup>31</sup>Barbara Rose, American Art (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publisher, 1967) p.26.



Figure 15

A Game of Football  
(Joueurs de Football) 1908  
Henri Rousseau

Oil 40 x 32  
Lent by Paul Rosenberg and Co.

At the close of the second decade of the twentieth century another milestone in the sporting world arrived. The National Hockey League came into being in Montreal, Canada on November 22, 1917.

Of course, World War I was a definite factor. Many of the athletes were fighting in Europe instead of the ring, icerink, or football field.

Another artist to rely on sport as a theme was Thomas Eakins. One of his early sport paintings was Baseball Practice, Ca. 1875. Eakins' approach to boxing was the opposite of Bellows' dynamic presentation.

Eakins' Between the Rounds reflects his preference for poised and controlled action and his analytical attitude toward the skillful side of boxing. A devotee of boxing will appreciate the air of expectancy which characterizes the ticking off the seconds, between rounds when the fighters rest before squaring off again.<sup>32</sup> (Fig. 16.)

While Eakins painted the quiet side of boxing, there were exciting moments in the ring being recorded by Bellows. His most noted is the Dempsey and Firpo Fight. Bellows' works, Stag at Sharkey's (Fig. 17), and Club Night (Fig. 18), are just as dynamic as Dempsey and Firpo Fight. Bellows did not limit his sport subject matter to boxing; he also touched on football scrimmage, but they are not as well known. In some of the other selected sports, Babe Ruth is hitting the ball out of the park.

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<sup>32</sup>Rose, loc. cit. p. 26.



Figure 16

Between the Round 1899  
Thomas Eakins



Figure 17

Stag at Sharkey's 1907  
George Bellows



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Figure 18

Club Night 1907  
George Bellows

## ARTISTS OF THE 1930'S

Then the "Roaring Twenties," Golden Era of sports and sport paintings, came to a crashing fall as did the stock market in 1929. Artists who were living on the fringes of the economy were especially hard hit. To give the artists economic relief, the Public Works of Art Projects was set up and administered by Edward Bruce and Forbes Watson through the Treasury Department in 1933. Abandoned in June 1934, it was replaced a year later by the Federal Art Project within the Works Progress Administration.<sup>33</sup>

The depression of the thirties gave America a serious pause for self-evaluation and a new awareness of the land they lived in. These values were reflected by the artists of the times and they transmitted in their art a new interest in the activities of the people. These activities, of course, included the popular games and sports, by and for the people. To divert their minds from the harsher aspects of their life, a renewed interest in the football hero, the champion of the ring, and the All-American game of baseball became the subject of the artist.

Among the artists representing this period with art pertaining to sports and in some cases supported by the government were some of the most competent artists working.

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid. p.125.

Paul Sample painted the simple pleasures and games of the people. A typical painting, Rogue, was painted in the old section of Los Angeles. It is a painting of deadly serious elderly Croquet players with time on their hands. This was a very popular game of the people during this period.

Ben Shahn extended the sphere of social comment in his painting to include baseball. A painting of his entitled Safe depicts a very dramatic moment at home plate. It is now in The National Art Museum of Sport. Norman Rockwell, a well known illustrator of this period, painted what was of general interest to the people, including their games. His painting on baseball The Rookie is also in The National Art Museum of Sport. James Chapin, a well known artist of the thirties, painted Batter Up. His most noted painting of the fight ring was The Beaten Boxer which depicted a fighter sitting in his corner unable to return to the fray. Robert Riggs' painting of The Baer-Carnera Fight is as equally well known.

#### WORLD WAR II INFLUENCE ON SPORT IN ART

The war clouds loom on the horizon in Europe and Hitler makes a mockery of the Olympic Games in Berlin. Then it happens - World War II. All sports are impeded along with everything else. Many of the artists are enjoying semi-abstract or abstract expressionism, with very little occurring on the sport-art scene, with a few exceptions. One of the exceptions was Ernest Ludwig Kirchner (1880-1938). One of his

noted pieces of work, Eishockeyspieler, has strong curving shapes in a semi-abstract style. (Fig. 19.) Byron Thomas became interested in baseball and while in York, Pennsylvania, he attended nightly the Minor League games. While there he did innumerable studies of the players from which he completed a final painting called The Minors. This was a large painting done in somewhat theatrical colors.

Edward Laning painted one of the greatest moments in baseball in 1941 when Joe DiMaggio tied the 44-year record for hitting safely in consecutive games. The painting catches the spirit of the occasion showing the dramatic action of the players on the field as well as the antics of the fans in the stands. (Fig. 20.)

A Romanian artist, Saul Steinberg, came to the United States in 1942 and became engrossed with the game of baseball. His interest was so strong that he accompanied the Milwaukee Braves on their road trips. The drawings, color sketches, and paintings he made from first hand observations have been widely exhibited across the land. A series of his sketches appeared in Life magazine a few years ago.

#### POST WORLD WAR II ERA

Following World War II, all sports revive along with numerous artists using them as the theme: John Falter did several paintings on team sports including both baseball and football, and Edmond Kohn painted a series on baseball including the Last Throw and The Longball Hitter. Both are in the collection of the actor Edmund O'Brien.





Figure 19

Eishockeyspieler

Oi Aut Leinwand 80 x 69 cm

Ernest Ludwig Kirchner

Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York

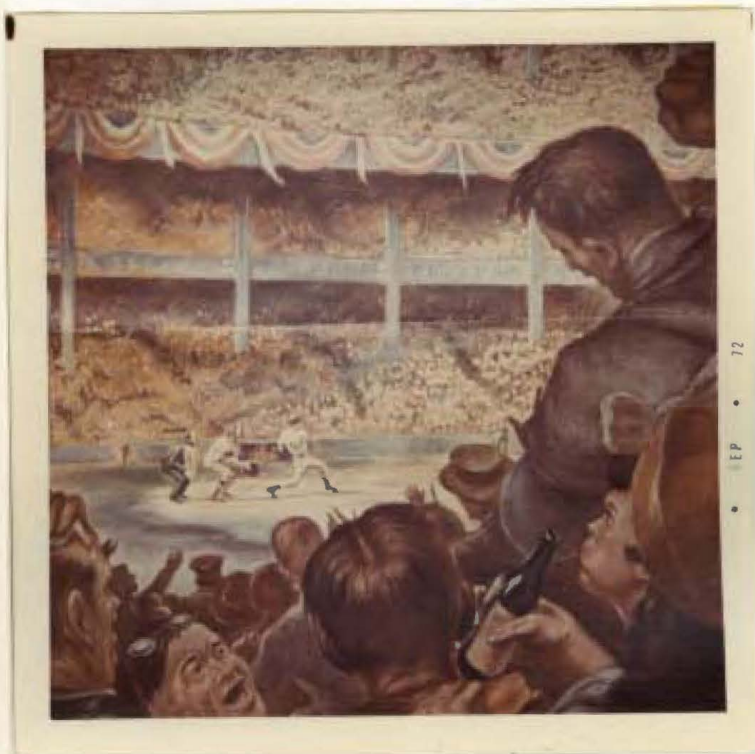


Figure 20

Joe DiMaggio's 41st Game Hit 1941

Edward Lanning

Oil

In the early forties, John Groth did several illustrations of baseball players and boxers in action in a loose, moving technique. His work was exhibited in the Ferargil Galleries in New York.

Mahoni Young, a grandson of Brigham Young, was an instructor at the Art Students' League at this time. He was primarily a sculptor, but was also working in other media. His main subjects were sport figures of the ring, including a study of Rocket, the noted Parisian boxer. He also did, among other pictures of the boxers' arena, The Knockdown and The Winner.

Fletcher Martin, a native artist of California served four years in the Navy at the outbreak of World War II. From his experience as a light heavyweight in the Navy and from the memory of his shipboard bouts, he painted The Lad from the Fleet. The painting depicts a seated boxer between the rounds waiting for the bell. (Fig. 21.)

Gustav Rehberger did a series of pictures on the prize ring. His many muscular boxers gained considerable recognition in the art magazines. He won a first award in the 1948 Audubon Annual. Joseph Shepherd was another artist interested in the World of Sports. His prime interest concerned boxers and he presented paintings of them at several New York shows. Among his splendid series on this subject are included Knockdown, The Corner, Between Rounds, and I'm the Greatest.

Hedda Sterne, wife of Steinberg, was a noted artist in her own right. She was also interested in the sport world. She gained her



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Figure 21

A Lad From the Fleet  
Fletcher Martin

visual knowledge by the study of action crammed photographs from the sport pages of the daily papers. Later she exhibited such an action filled painting of football, called Combat, in the Betty Parson Gallery in New York.

Lawrence Urbscheit did a series of sketches similar to that of Rehberger but used the football players as his subject. He also painted them in encaustic while at the University of Wisconsin in 1950. His most noted work was a mad scramble called Wednesday Football.

From 1950 to 1960, this decade can be considered the quiet years so far as the sport in art theme is concerned. In fact they head in opposite directions, with only a few artists concentrating on the sports theme.

Daniel Schwartz was an artist who painted in the world of sport. His most noted work was Big Daddy Lipscomb that appeared in the 1965 exhibition at New York City's Grand Central Gallery. Football paintings were made by Lee Jackson Fall Practice and Jim Johnson who gave us a semi-abstract version of the Kick Off. Bob Kilcullen (Chicago Bears) and Ernie Barnes (New York Jets) were former football professionals who became artists of the game. Their talents were soon exhibited in the galleries instead of the playing field. Robert Peak, an avid sport fan, has painted almost all the sports, including tennis, golf, football, baseball, etc., and his work has appeared in several publications.

Recently, it seems like a revival of artists using the sport in art theme. Some of the other artists that should be mentioned for painting athletics are: Savo Radulovic, The Catcher; Lee Jackson, Alain Moreau (Fig. 22), Jay O'Meilia (Fig. 23), Bernard Fuchs (Figs. 24, 25, 26), Stephen Lesnick (Fig. 27), and Austin Briggs, with new names being added to the roster every day. Some of the more recent artists are George Bartell (Figs. 28, 29, 30), Mike Gaines (Fig. 31), Peter Lloyd (Fig. 32), Bruce Brown (Fig. 33), Mary Jo Swalbach (Fig. 34), and Robert Weaver (Fig. 35).

Some of the artists that developed sports as a theme for their paintings during the 1960's were: Joseph Sheppard, Daniel Schwartz, Lee Jackson, Austin Briggs, and Homer Schmidt depicting football. Artists that worked with the baseball theme were Jim Johnson, John Falter, Edmond Kohn, and Sano Radulovic.

During the 1970's color television can be given much of the credit for the revived interest in all sports. There is a greater amount of leisure time for viewing and participating in sporting events and artists have always capitalized on man's leisure moments.

So looking back at the twentieth century, it can be found that the art and sport theme supported each other when the times were great and that there will be a closer relationship between the two in the remaining part of the century.



Figure 22

The Gods of Instant Legend  
 Alain Moreau  
 Mixed Media



Figure 23

First Serve 1971  
 Jay O'Meilia



Figure 24

Loose Ball  
Bernard Fuchs



Figure 25

Fearless Foursome  
Bernard Fuchs



Figure 26

Big #79  
Bernard Fuchs



Figure 27

No Gain  
Steve Lesnik





Figure 28

Elroy "Crazy Legs" Hirsch  
George Bartell



Figure 29

- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Top Left: Guard         | c. Below Left: Leo Nomellini   |
| b. Top Right: Jerry Kramer | d. Below Right: Geno Marchetti |
| George Bartell             |                                |

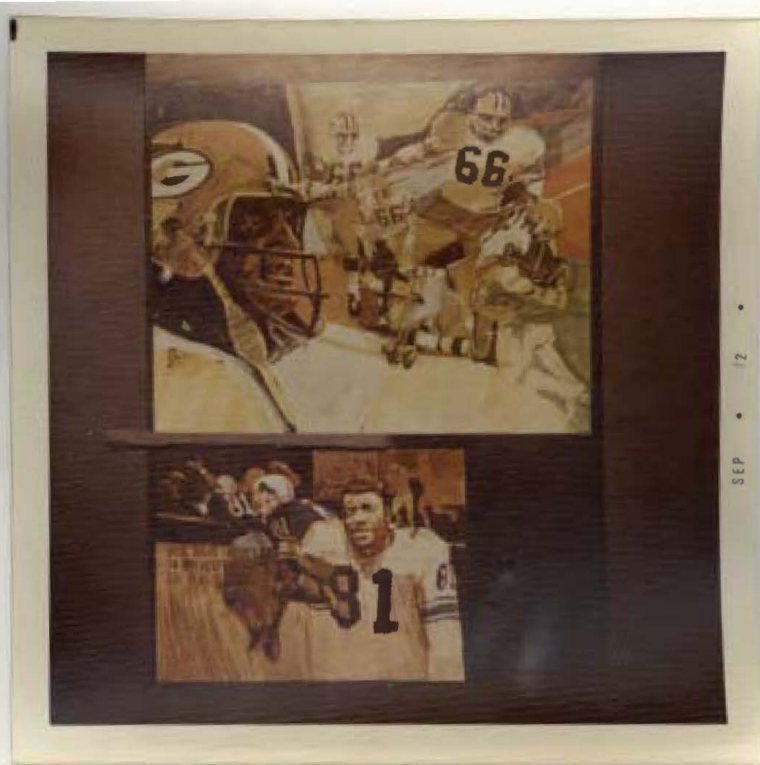


Figure 30

- a. Above: Ray Nitschke  
 b. Below: Dick "Night Train" Lane  
 George Bartell  
 Mixed Media



Figure 31

In The Pocket 1969  
 Mike Gaines  
 Aquatint



Figure 32

The Light Warriors 1969  
 Peter Lloyd  
 Stained Glass Window



Figure 33

Mahaffey Shuts Out Cincinnati  
 Bruce R. Brown  
 Oil 60 x 48

American Academy of Arts and Letters Collection



Figure 34

Hockey Players

Mary Jo Swalbalch

Mixed Media 24-3/4 x 48-3/4 x 7"

Danenberg Gallery, New York



Figure 35

Workout

Robert Weaver

## Chapter 4

### ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS AND THEIR SPORTING THEME

GEORGE BELLOWS

ALAN E. COHEN

BERNARD FUCHS

DOUGLAS GORSLINE

HOWARD KANOVITZ

FRANK MULLINS

CLAES OLDENBERG

MEL RAMOS

ROBERT RIGGS

BENTON SPRUANCE

ROBERT STANLEY

#### GEORGE BELLOWS

One of the foremost sports painters was George Bellows. His painting, Both Members of This Club, 1909 (Fig. 36) is typical of his graphic statements on boxing. It has dark, massive backgrounds with the figures off center illuminated by the strong source of light. The Caucasian figure on the left is sharply contrasted against the inky background. The Negro opponent looms out of the darkness, with only the slick, perspiring areas reflecting small amounts of light. Both

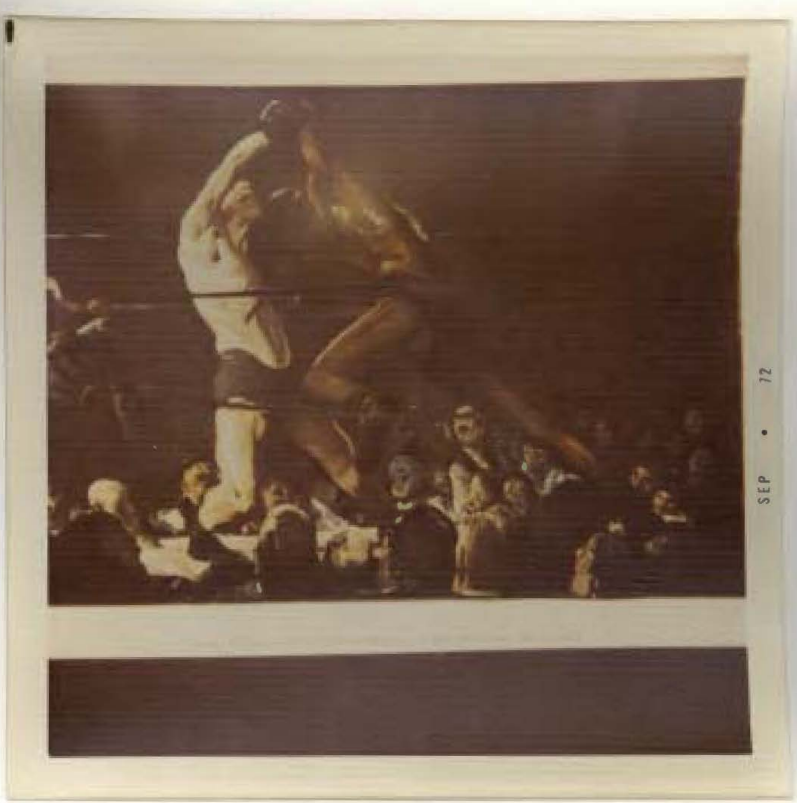


Figure 36

Both Members of This Club 1909  
George Bellows



Figure 37

Dempsey-Firpo 1924  
George Bellows  
Whitney Museum of Modern Art

Members of This Club is done in a very strong, quick, and decisive way, as opposed to his later Dempsey and Firpo, 1924. (Fig. 37.)

#### ALAN E. COHEN

This pen and ink study of slouched, hulking figure entitled George Blanda (Fig. 38) represents the pain and agony of an exhausted, tired "old man" that is almost too old for professional football, but is still alive and kicking. Cohen has given less emphasis to the arms and lower torso by using contour lines. A large massive area of crosshatching on the right and a smaller area on the left shoulder emphasize the forward projection of the right shoulder and arm. The strongest development of form is in the facial structure. Using crosshatching, the pensive look in the eye has been brought out in a way that evokes the mood of the drawing. The other facial features and textures have been brought out too, but so as not to detract from the eye and mouth. He left the background open for the same reason, but Cohen has added a few dots from the pen so as not to have an antiseptic work.

#### BERNARD FUCHS

Bernard Fuchs is one of America's leading painter-illustrators of the contemporary sport scene.

In most of Fuchs' work he will use mixed media of pencil, crayon, acrylic and anything that will give him the result he desires.



Figure 38

George Blanda  
Alan E. Cohen  
Pen and Ink



Figure 39

TD Run  
Bernard Fuchs  
Mixed Media



Many times he will have a segment of the figure suggested by contour lines of the preliminary sketch. In his painting TD Run (Fig. 39) the red background surface plane ties all of the red figures together. The background is penetrated at left, center and right by penetrating whitish figures. The red background is so varied as not to become monotonous, which is very effective. Most people thinking of painting football would paint the ground green - not Fuchs. In his TD Run he reverses the idea he used for the background, whitish surface for the entire lower two-thirds of the area, penetrated by ochre forms. Most of his painting seems to have been painted in detail, then painted out to create continuous movement of given surface planes so the figures are fluid, twisting and turning at a high rate of speed. Fuchs also relies on an occasional transparent brush stroke to imply blurred movement, such as found in the red-shirted figure on the right.

In Fuchs' painting Goal Line Stance (Fig. 40) he makes excellent use of field and ground contrast. Rich earthy browns, reds, black and greens play through each other by the use of rugged brush strokes, which add to the mood of the painting. The painting is divided in half by the oblique white line representing the goal. To give unity the players are curved and overlapped, so their white and grey uniforms create a tremendous and effective moving surface plane from the top to lower right. The umpire figure penetrates the reddish-brown end zone and the suggestion of greenish letters also help break up the area in the upper left. The

single umpire figure is balanced out by the introduction of a small group of white helmets on the extreme right. Once again Fuchs seems to have drawn and painted the figures in and then painted them out so as to achieve interwoven geometric planes.

In Bernard Fuchs' drawing of Rockne and Parseghian (Fig. 41) he has contrasted the two figures by making the one on the left open, barely suggesting the form of the torso by a simple contour with emphasis on the study. The forms and structure have been suggested by darkening areas. The way the background enters the top of the head and continues through the remaining part of the face draws the viewer's eye where it is intended. To balance this figure, Fuchs superimposed a large head study of Parseghian. This dramatic study contrasts with the other figure because of the strong vertical pencil strokes and massive dark areas around the eyes and hair. He developed a stronger three-dimensional structure by leaving the bridge of the nose, the lips, and point of the chin blank.

#### DOUGLAS GORSLINE

Douglas Gorsline approached basketball as an art form much in the same way the cubist might approach a figure in motion, for example. Gorsline has broken the surface planes into a prismatic effect, so as to give the viewer interesting facets of a jammed, packed, action sport. He divided his painting Figures (Fig. 42) into three definite areas; top, center, and bottom.



Figure 40

Goal Line Stance  
Bernard Fuchs  
Mixed Media



Figure 41

Rockne and Parseghian  
Bernard Fuchs  
Pencil and Ink

In all of the sections he has reacted to the subject as player-artist, which gives the viewer a closer relationship to the work particularly if the viewer has ever played any basketball.

The upper one-third of Figures is devoted to arm and head action in the process of jumping, blocking, and shooting. The center section of Figures is devoted to bending and turning torsos. Note how Gorsline divided the section with the referee into more slivers than any other section in the entire painting. This brings to mind that fans as well as players and coaches, verbally cut the officiating up like a package of bacon—he did it visually—with perhaps the same thing in mind. In the lower one-third of Figures, Gorsline has captured the sharp angles of the legs and feet, often entangled, always starting and stopping.

Even though he painted the figures representatively, they are difficult to identify, because he carefully overlapped them, obscuring faces and some numbers. His approach to sport is effective because his composition is light and organized, and at the same time not cluttered.

Gorsline once again used the prismatic effect in his painting Willis Reed #19, (Fig. 43) but this time he relies on all vertical lines to divide the work. His multiple action with adjacent edges moved slightly up or down from each other create a kinetic action. The early abstractionists used this same approach to "break-up" their subject matter. It's almost like looking into a three-way mirror at the same time. In the Willis Reed #19 painting the vertical divisions are suited for this



Figure 42

Figures  
Douglas Gorsline  
Acrylic



Figure 43

Willis Reed #19  
Douglas Gorsline  
Acrylic

approach to representing basketball as an art form not only for lateral movement but a great deal of vertical action.

In the painting Walt Frazier #10, (Fig. 44) Gorsline again divided the canvas in narrow vertical strips. The viewer's eye is forced to move over the entire surface. The point Gorsline is trying to make is the emphasis on Walt Frazier's head and shoulder fake and the rocker-step just before he heads for the basket. The contrast of light areas against dark also help keep the eye moving. The area of the white uniform creates a surface plane, with the "motion" of the player visually carrying over to the other white surface plane on the far right.

#### HOWARD KANOVITZ

One of the most unusual treatments of sport as an art form is that of Howard Kanovitz. His subject matter is the college basketball star, combining slick two-dimensional pop-art style, a touch of op-art and free standing wood cutouts. The figures create an illusion of depth. All-in-all his work is technically good, but at the same time, clever and commercial. Maybe this is the point he wanted to make, for if it is, he gets it across. (Fig. 45.)

#### FRANK MULLINS

In Frank Mullins' painting Football Players (Fig. 46) he makes a very simple and direct statement. His background is one large surface plane of dark blackish green. The geometric stylized figures are overlapped with arms and legs extended penetrating the green background.



Figure 44

Walt Frazier #10  
 Douglas Gorsline  
 Acrylic



Figure 45

Painted Sculpture  
 Howard Kanovitz  
 Acrylic, Canvas, Plywood  
 Wadell Gallery, New York

The figure #40 has had a muted grayish-green tone worked into it to visually hold it down and keep it from floating around. The same is true for #35. Very little detail has been included, except for the numerals, a player's form of identity. Slight traces of pencil can be seen to indicate form. To keep the figures from floating around on the canvas, Mullins outlines the figures with a muted tone of thalo-green so as to give the figures unity.

#### CLAES OLDENBERG

The sporting theme can not escape the grasp of pop-artists. Claes Oldenberg has used the sport of boxing for one of his recent noted "soft sculptures."

His sculpture is a combination of wood and canvas. Oldenberg provides food for thought. His statement about a segment of boxing is very passive, almost anti-boxing, with his Punching Bag. (Fig. 47.)

#### MEL RAMOS

The approach that Mel Ramos used for painting Surfers (Fig. 48) is what is considered pop-art. This work has a magic, three-dimensional effect. The tonal values and shadows on the figures have been carefully blended to help with the illusion. The figures seem stiffly posed and unnatural, which conflicts with the fast moving, bending, turning and slashing through the water of which surfing is composed.





Figure 46

Football Players  
 Frank Mullins  
 Mixed Media



Figure 47

Punching Bag 1968  
 Claes Oldenberg  
 Stuffed Canvas 51 x 24 x 16  
 Mixed Media

The viewer gets the feeling he was more concerned with painting sexy, virile figures rather than exciting emotional and physical qualities of the sport.

### ROBERT RIGGS

The sporting world was complimented in the 1920's and 30's by American artists. Boxing was one of the popular spectator sports of the 30's, featuring champions like Max Baer and Joe Louis.

This painting is typical of many of the boxing paintings of this era. The entire canvas is extremely dark, having only one source of light (as Rembrandt often did) illuminating the sprawling boxers and screaming crowd.

The Baer-Carnera Fight (1934), (Fig. 49) is Riggs' impression of the moment that Max Baer defeated a giant of a man named Primo Carnera. Carnera is supposed to have been about seven feet tall.

Most of the lines and forms of the composition point to Carnera sprawling through the ropes. Riggs also places light and dark areas very carefully and effectively.

Another interesting fact about Robert Riggs is that he was born in Decatur, Illinois in 1896.



Figure 48

Surfers  
Mel Ramos  
Acrylic



Figure 49

Baer-Carnera Fight 1934  
Robert Riggs  
Whitney Museum of American Art

### BENTON SPRUANCE

The lithograph, Touchdown Play (Fig. 50) by Benton Spruance, depicts a running figure, far right, nearing the goal line. He is balanced by the mass of players on the left half. The treatment of the figures is disturbing in developing smooth, rounded forms through gradual tonal values. This style of work was popular in the early 20th century, and does not lend anything to the character of football. The lithograph seems to lack a certain vitality.

### ROBERT STANLEY

Robert Stanley is an artist with an approach that abandons traditional forms of painting sport scenes on canvas. His Hockey Players (Fig. 51) is transferred to plexiglass by the silk screen process. He achieved moving blurred figures depending on the speed of the camera, and then projects it for transfer. Indeed he gets some exciting results, but he is truly missing a great feeling by not completing the paintings, using some of the violent strokes the hockey player might use. This would be a form of mental and physical projection.



Figure 50

Touchdown Play  
Benton Spruance  
Lithograph



Figure 51

Hockey Players 1968  
Robert Stanley  
Photo-Silkscreen on Plastic

## Chapter 5

## ANALYSIS OF R. GAREY HODGE'S

## SPORTS PAINTINGS

## AND DRAWINGS

IMAGES

acrylic, 32" x 22" (Fig. 52)

This was the first painting of the entire sports theme series. It was done initially as a preliminary study or exercise to loosen up with.

The most obvious figure is the purple shirted one, and second is the opposing yellow figure carrying the ball and is composed of the complementary color. From his yellow helmet extending down is a yellow surface plane that is later broken up with white. The white continues down the right one-half creating a ghost-like football player image.

This figure was created with short vertical brush strokes so as to work into the greenish yellow background and symbolized a mystic, God-like creature, representing images of the past. Moving from the center of the picture plane, a white surface plane suggesting a player's legs moves up and to the left combining with vertical strokes of black and white suggesting or indicating a referee and continuing up to the left-hand corner to the middle and contrasting with the dark purple helmet.

The entire composition is from imagination and trying to set up a push-pull effect through colors and surface planes.



Figure 52

Images  
R. Garey Hodge

Acrylic, 32 x 22

FIRE, FIRE, FIRE

acrylic, 48" x 48" (Fig. 53)

The title for this painting is descriptive of the subject matter, not for the reason that it is in reds and white, but the term "fire" in professional football is sometimes shouted by the defense to indicate a forward pass.

Running across the middle of the picture plane are ragged, angular geometric shapes indicating the fragmented figures of the offensive team attempting a forward pass. In sharp contrast to the ~~white~~ is a red surface plane with glimpses and traces of the defense. Some of the figures have multiple lines of arms or legs to indicate movement.

The background at the top is a strong prussian blue with some areas slightly lighter.

The foreground and the bottom are of rich dark greens, browns, and black. The top and bottom set up a very strong contrast to the red and white. The personality of professional football is expressed in the painting by the aid of the brush strokes. Large areas with quick, decisive strokes cutting in red or white areas, dry brush to suggest movement, and a certain looseness so as not to have a realistic look. The brush was applied much in the way the game is played; pushing, turning, slashing, strong forms continually moving.





Figure 53

Fire, Fire, Fire  
R. Garey Hodge

Acrylic, 48 x 48

TWO-ON-ONE

acrylic , 32" x 40" (Fig. 54)

This is one of the ice hockey paintings that have been developed from sketches and gesture drawings made on location during practice sessions of the St. Louis Blues.

One thing emphasized is how the white jerseys blend into the white retaining wall around the rink , and contrast with their blue pants or the red and blue of the New York Ranger's uniform.

The fast moving players are fused together when they double team an opponent. This is brought out by the blue surface plane and line running across the middle of the picture plane. At the bottom is the joining of the blue sweater band and pants of one player with the stripe of another player , setting up a balance with the large massive white areas. The lower background is blue grey to represent the icy surface but not overpower the blue or white surface planes, establishing a plane in itself. Running across the top of the painting is a deep thalo purple plane representing the darkened background where the spectators would be. The Ranger jersey can be noticed, but not obviously, for it would detract. The heads of the two defense men have multiple lines in repetition suggesting motion. To set up a push-pull effect the red pants of the Ranger uniform was placed behind the heads so as to visually tie everything together and balance the white and blue areas.



Figure 54

Two-On-One 1971  
R. Garey Hodge

Acrylic, 32 x 40

The brush technique used is the fast moving bold ones that suggest moving forms or motion.

### BULWARK OF DEFENSE

acrylic, 32" x 40" (Fig. 55)

The goal keeper or "goalie" is the bulwark of defense. The outcome of a hockey match depends on how well he uses his stick, leggings, board, and glove to ward off the speeding, curving shots. This is the reason that so much emphasis was given to his equipment. The viewer is the shooter and trying to find that ever-so-slight opening in the nets. The goalie takes on a witch doctor like appearance warding off evil spirits, (the offensive shooters) with his brightly colored uniform, face mask, and stick.

The purple surface at the top indicates the darkened arena seats with the remaining whitish area the boards and ice surface. The red horizontal and vertical lines frame the goalie and represent the cage.

The large massive brownish and black area is the left leg pad, enormous and bulky.

On the left is the trapper's mitt and legging, on the far right is the blocking board used to carrom off high flying slap shots. To tie all this together is the angle of the goalie's wide stick, wrapped with black tape. The strong contrast of yellow to brown, black to white pulls the composition together. Even though the stick is taken off the picture plane on the left, the eye is not. The eye travels up the red vertical line,



Figure 55

Bulwark of Defense 1971  
R. Garey Hodge

Acrylic, 32 x 40

across and through the player and back down and around again. The major focal point is the red pants with the other objects moving around.

The face mask was painted white over brown and then sgraffitoed in to represent the marks and scratches inflicted.

This is one of the most symbolic and mystic paintings of the entire series.

### DEFENSEMAN #1

mixed media, 21" x 26" (Fig. 56)

The objective of this drawing was to create a loose, fluid, moving form that was structured but yet not tight. Large massive blue and grey watercolor and ink washes were established from a few bending, curving, twisting lines. Light areas penetrate dark areas and vice-versa so as to lock the composition together. Slashing and often violent strokes are used. To pull the actual form out of the background various lines — thick, thin, short, long, straight, curved, and swinging—had to be used. Some of the lines are ink, some are conte, some are pencil.

Some of the areas have a definite amount of detail, like the structured eyes, nose, mouth, and the gloves. While on the other hand areas have been suggested by not drawing them in and let the viewer visually connect them. The top of the head and arms are examples of this.

An occasional spattering of ink wash adds overall interest and helps keep the eye finding new and interesting areas throughout the entire piece of work.

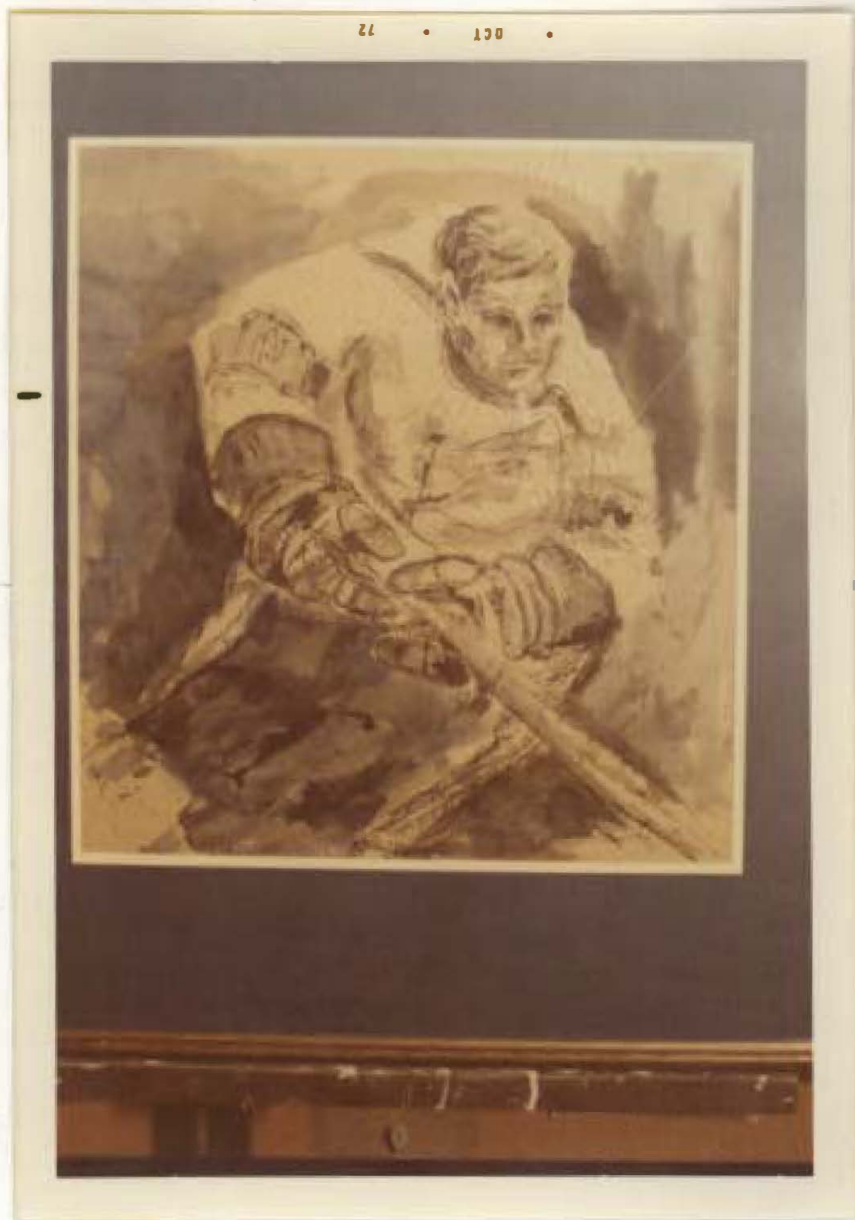


Figure 56

Defenseman #1 1971  
R. Garey Hodge

Mixed media, 21 x 26

### THE PUT OUT

acrylic, 32" x 40" (Fig. 57)

The play action of home plate is expressed. Brush strokes suggest the action by being very direct and obscuring detail in the lower left quarter. The representational figure of the catcher is composed of very solid blue grey forms. Strength had been indicated in the blue leg guard and a blue line used to carry the vision into the catcher and direct the line of movement to top center. Running across the top is a greyish surface plane and directly below this is a flat black surface plane to create a push-pull effect in field and ground and to contrast with this a thalo-yellow green surface plane. The arm of the catcher was painted with emphasis on the orange tones to compile with the strong blue leg guard.

This painting relies on brush stroke direction for the strongest factor in creating visual movement.

### CATCHER

acrylic, 36" x 40" (Fig. 58)

The subject matter is the strong position a catcher assumes when making a play at the plate. The point of the painting is to produce the fast action that takes place in a play at the plate.

Background details have been eliminated, so as to concentrate on the player. Violent, strong brush strokes, blending and fusing color create the mood. Brilliant red tones playing through each other by the





Figure 57

The Put Out 1971  
R. Garey Hodge

Acrylic, 32 x 40



Figure 58

Catcher 1972  
R. Garey Hodge

Acrylic, 36 x 40

rise of washes compete with the white areas and of course, balance out the composition. The distribution of the strong red areas do this by having a large, medium, and small size.

The thalo-yellow green midground ties background, foreground and object together, suggesting a surface plane behind the object.

### THE OPENING ROUND

ink, 21 3/4" x 21 3/4" (Fig. 59)

The composition for this work was deliberately arranged so as to depict a strong contrast between light and dark and object and background. The strong dynamic force of the boxers is emphasized by contrasting the form against the background, in an alternating pattern—dark against light and light against dark. The lines, washes and spatters are suggested and fuse with the form, avoiding a hard outline. The subject matter was interpreted as the active state of boxing, projecting the forceful, dynamic quality of the sport.



Figure 59

The Opening Round 1972  
R. Garey Hodge

Ink, 21-3/4 x 21-3/4

## Chapter 6

### SUMMARY

In researching the development of sport as an art theme, it occurred that the artist and athlete are very much alike in their emotional experiences and responses.

### CONTROL

A person should think and understand control as the opposite of accident or wildness, and perceive the necessity for it in numerous human activities. A good example is found in baseball where control and wildness are applied to pitching with easily understood significance.

Artists know when they have achieved control over a conception, because knowledge of something successfully completed is one of the pleasures of artistry, and not being able to "go-the-distance," is thwarting and frustrating.

### EMOTIONAL REACTION TO COLOR

Colors reverberate throughout the whole human organism stirring up feelings and tensions from non-linguistic and unimaginable levels. The sensation of excitation is not localized and undefinable, like distant repercussions. The effect is immediate.

A color, red for instance, has the power to set up an immediate reaction inside both the artist and athlete. The moment it becomes an object or a thing—the goal light at the end of the ice rink used to indicate a score, or a slashing line screaming across the canvas—there is a tremendous emotional vibration and reaction with the hockey player and artist respectively. It has taken on or released itself into the experiences which such an image might call up.

Both the athlete and artist will have a feeling of satisfaction in their reaction to the red image.

#### AWARENESS TO ENVIRONMENT

When the artist and athlete are working in their respective environment, a great many times both become oblivious to their surroundings. The reason for this is absolute concentration.

When the artist is completing a piece of work, his personal involvement is so great he would overlook a messy studio, the sound of traffic outside, etc. and the athlete too would not be aware of surroundings. For example, a field goal kicker, with only seconds to go, might not be aware of the thousands of screaming fans because he has shut everything out of his mind except concentrating on the football in front of him.

## LOSS OF IDENTITY

The artist and athlete are both known for what they do, and not who they are.

Not too many people in our society would recognize George Bellows, Thomas Eakins, John Sloan, or Claes Oldenberg, if they saw them walking down the street and at the same time, how many people would recognize Billie Williams, Gordie Howe, Brad Park, Mel Ott, George Blanda; but yet when these men are seen in their respective environments, or we discuss their records they all assume their own identity.

Whether a person goes to a gallery or stadium, there are programs for identification purposes . . . you can't tell a player without a scorecard.

## DEVELOPMENT OF STYLE

Through preparation, practice, and dedication the artist and athlete arrive at a style known only to them. With this, an individual artist or a school may develop a unique style of work and then have others copy and follow their movement. Any of the "isms" of the 19th and 20th centuries would fall in with this line of thinking.

The same is true for the individual athlete or school. The forward pass was used and everyone followed. Notre Dame had the "T" formation. In ice hockey Jacques Plante introduced the face mask for

the goalie with most of the others following. Ernie Banks fingered the bat while awaiting the pitch.

Basically, in both art and sport the true greats set styles and trends that are picked up by followers.

Through the research and development of this paper, a deeper and more meaningful relationship to art history has been gained. Many of the artists and works brought forth in this paper had positive influences on the art forms found in art history. It was found necessary to devote a great deal more to the Greek and Roman art forms than previously thought. The reason for this is that they established the threshold for many of the concepts we cling to today.

In writing this paper, a greater perception of sport as an art form has been achieved. Sport in art is a great deal more than sport plus art as in illustrations of sporting methods, or than art plus sport, as in masterpieces. It is a manifold history, in which all that belongs to sport is represented side by side with changing customs and costumes, and with numerous and varied interests which belong forever to the gradual changes made in life.

Whether it be Bellows, Sloan, Eakins, or Myron, a better understanding of their interpretations has been gained. By analyzing



individual artists' work, a person is more capable of grasping some of the attitudes expressed toward sport as an art form.

As far as personal development, this project has enabled me to develop the technical and mental attitudes as an individual.

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