BADMINTON IN SASKATCHEWAN,
1919-1959
ELITISM AND MASS PARTICIPATION
IN SPORT

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BADMINTON IN SASKATCHEWAN, 1919-1993:
Elitism and Mass Participation
in Sport

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to study the historical evolution of the sport of badminton within the province of Saskatchewan from 1919 to 1993. The study has two major themes. First, it chronicles the beginnings, development and growth of the game. In doing so, it analyzes the nature of the sport, to whom it appealed, who was most influential in establishing its place in the province, and why it could never totally eliminate its elitist element. Second, the study investigates the historical background and social context that surrounded and influenced the emergence of badminton in an industrialized British society that was in transition. Also, it shows how it maintained its viability throughout the period in Saskatchewan by analyzing how this sport of the military, which was initially played almost exclusively by the upper class, gradually became a sport enjoyed by the middle class and accessible to the working class. Slowly badminton changed from being the refined sport of "ladies and gentlemen" to a sport that could be either played competitively or for pleasure, irrespective of race, class or gender.
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INTRODUCTION

Since its introduction in 1919, badminton has gradually gained a permanent place within the Saskatchewan sporting community and has become an integral part of the social fabric of the province. Yet, for the most part its history remains unwritten. Works chronicling individual, team and club successes exist, but there is no systematic analysis of the impact of badminton on the province or more specifically within the leisure field. Neither is there any sense of how the sport evolved nor how race, class and gender played a role in that evolution. Further, it is not clear if those involved in the sport learned how to balance the potentially conflicting demands of competition and participation. There is also the problem of government funding and its effects. This thesis addresses all these concerns by delineating the major developments of the sport of badminton and by analyzing the broadening appeal of the sport from its elitist beginnings to its more recent mass appeal.

The main body of the thesis contains four sections, reflecting four periods of development: 1919-1939; 1939-1970; 1970-1979; and 1979-1993. The first section begins by dealing with the origins of the game in India and Britain. It shows how badminton became the sport of the wealthy and a symbol of status in the parent country before it spread to the British Empire and especially to Canada. It traces both the development of the sport as it came to be increasingly defined in terms of rules, court size and official status as well as why it was the sport
of the privileged. The key is to understand the entire framework of how society viewed leisure and who was entitled to it.

The thesis then briefly traces the spread of badminton to Canada and its establishment nationally. The purpose of describing the national beginnings of the sport is to show how a representative body formed which would later provide direction, focus and motivation to the local and provincial clubs. The chapter then focuses on the introduction of badminton to Saskatchewan. It describes who brought the game into the province and who initially played it and controlled its growth up to the Depression. The Great Depression of the 1930s had a profound effect on the democratization of the sport just as the Great War had had on its initial development. This section further analyzes why women were encouraged to play badminton yet they remained absent from the executive boards that oversaw its play. Furthermore, it investigates why and how badminton gradually moved from a sport initially organized and dominated by a white Anglo-Saxon military to a much wider base within the civilian population. In terms of class this period witnessed a significant change but to a lesser degree regarding gender. However, in terms of race the sport remained exclusively white until after World War II when a touring team from India broke the racial line and ended the myth of white Anglo-Saxon superiority.

The second section, 1939-1970, shows the devastating effects that the war had on the sport as the army reclaimed buildings long used by badminton enthusiasts. This signaled the end of the golden age as participation in badminton declined and never recovered. After the war there was the need to recoup what had been lost and rebuild the sport on
This period of rebuilding, from the conclusion of World War II to the late 1960s, saw a transformation in the way that leisure was viewed by society. Leisure which used to belong to the private domain now moved gradually to the public sphere. It also moved from something that individuals chose to do out of interest and for pleasure, to something that was seen as integral to the public good and thus the government found it necessary in the public interest to regulate it. For example, the National Physical Fitness Act in 1943 promoted fitness among Canadians through programs in education, recreation and sports as a result of high percentage of unfit Canadians for military services during World War II. Physical education also became an important part of the educational curriculum as the province formed the Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association (SHSAA) in late 1940s to promote athletic competitions among high schools. This section will show how badminton was able to gain a foothold in the SHSAA and remained viable in the high schools throughout this period. As the National Fitness and Amateur Sports Act of 1961 made federal funds available for the fostering of physical fitness, and the first Canada Games in Quebec City in 1967 made sport part of Canadian psyche, sports in general and badminton in particular became firmly rooted in the provincial community.

The next section of the thesis covers the years of consolidation, 1970-1979. It describes how television completely redefined the world of sport. This period witnessed an increased government involvement in sport and its struggle whether government funding should be directed toward the cultivation of elite athletes or mass participation.
PARTICIPaction Movement which began in Saskatoon as a pilot project in 1972 led to an increase in participation in physical activities. The thesis shows how the Movement affected badminton’s play and participation. Furthermore, as each sport pursued funding and sought to find a unified voice through increased organization, badminton soon became a member of Sask Sport which was formed in 1972. The Saskatchewan Badminton Association (SBA) came to receive substantial financial support from Sask Sport when in 1973 it was given the right to establish a sport lottery. However, the 1970s saw badminton receive a serious blow as the Wascana Winter Club, a traditional center of the sport, went up in flames. Unfortunately the new club that replaced it was private, profit-motivated and elitist.

The final section of the paper, from 1979-1993, concentrates on how badminton looked to redefine itself. It sought to secure its place in the face of increased competition against the more high-profile sports for government assistance. The chapter describes how badminton attempted to find a niche within the provincial sports scene by offering itself as a sport for competitive, high-calibre athletes as well as for the leisure-inspired, fitness-concerned general public. Funding dictated a new form of elitism -- a meritocracy that was no longer based on race or class, but skill. As the SBA attempted to change the image of badminton to a sport that would become popular and at the same time produce nationally ranked players, it found that it had to devote more and more time and energy to coaching clinics, high-school programs and the development of junior players.
Limitation of the Study

There were fifty-five badminton-related interviews conducted throughout the province during the course of this study. Ten of those were women. They were helpful in revealing the human dimension and supplementing the written sources. They also provided materials and information which were not otherwise available. However, since memories are subject to selective recall and may well become distorted with time, it was essential to use the interviews judiciously. At the same time, by cross-referencing the information obtained from those involved in the growth of the sport with the available written sources, an accurate and valuable history emerged. Furthermore, answers from another seventy-three individuals in different communities across the province added to the analysis of provincial-wide interest and participation in badminton.

The Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan was helpful and produced extensive and useful materials. However, the papers focused mostly on Saskatoon, Regina and Moose Jaw. The SBA offered vast amounts of historical materials covering the last twenty years. But, because of poor record keeping, there are numerous lapses especially in the minutes of the executive meetings. Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame was also helpful, providing biographies of Dorothy Walton, Claire Lovett and Frank Longridge. The research at the SHSAA office in Regina also yielded a full history of Saskatchewan badminton in high schools.

1 Research at the libraries and museums located in the smaller communities throughout the province yielded little useful materials. The National Archives of Canada in Ottawa had no material relating to the history of badminton in Saskatchewan, while the office of Badminton Canada in Ottawa, although eager to help, related that it had very little information either on badminton in Saskatchewan or on the national badminton magazine.
Similarly, at the Kelsey campus of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) in Saskatoon there was substantial material on Prairie Athletic Conference (PAC) badminton. The libraries and archives at both the University of Saskatchewan and University of Regina also produced considerable amount of information relative to the history of badminton in the university. The Saskatoon Riverside Badminton and Tennis Club made available a large amount of material on badminton, especially for Saskatoon.

Newspapers represented the major source of information for this study. While they must be analyzed with caution, as Don Kerr and Stan Hansen, authors of Saskatoon: The First Half-Century underline, they should not be ignored.\(^2\) These newspapers understandably have a tendency to be biased, reporting inaccurately as well as misrepresenting the significance of certain events. Nevertheless, they still provide information that can be reliable and complete, relative to other available sources.

\(^2\) Kerr and Hansen report: ... Newspapers then [in the early 1900s] were a much better source of information than they are now, presumably because they held a monopoly on the news. By 1932 there were indeed radio news broadcast but they usually consisted of reading the good bits out of the newspapers. The newspaper and the public meeting were the forums of public expression. ... Major events ... would receive remarkably full coverage. ... " D. Kerr and S. Hanson, Saskatoon: The First Half-Century, (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1982). p. xii.
BADMINTON, A SPORT FOR THE EMPIRE:

Its Growth in Saskatchewan,

1919-1939
CHAPTER 1

To understand the place badminton came to have in Saskatchewan one must first see its origins in Britain. It was the British soldiers who played a major role in bringing battledore to Britain and then exporting badminton back to India. It was also soldiers who first introduced the game to Saskatchewan. These Canadian soldiers who were returning from World War I where they had fought for and under British command, were simply adhering to the imperialist culture by imitating the sport of their British officers.

Badminton in Britain was part of a much larger leisure and sport culture that came to permeate British society in the nineteenth century. Prior to the nineteenth century, sport as leisure was predominantly the right of those who did not have to work for a living. Leisure was a sign of social prestige and divine blessing since the hierarchy of heaven was thought to be mirrored on earth.¹ By mid-eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution began to change this view of leisure as it gradually transformed Britain into a nation where industry became more important than agriculture, and where cities came to dominate the landscape. This industrialization was based on capitalism that was competitive by nature and it consequently gave rise to a very wealthy middle class that would challenge the rule of the landed elite. This upper middle class saw leisure as a privilege earned by work and not a right given by birth.² By the middle of the nineteenth century this

¹ "The world was conceived as mirroring the Heavens." H. Kissinger, Diplomacy, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 56.

² The aristocracy was born privileged while the middle class had to work to attain a life of privilege.
view of society dominated the British public schools and sport became an integral part of their programs. However, this does not mean to imply that the worldview of the middle class had replaced that of the aristocracy, but instead the values of each class had merged in a manner that redefined how society saw sport, and the prominence that society gave to it.3

The Industrial Revolution confirmed the British sense of racial superiority. It instilled in the British a missionary desire to impose their culture and values upon peoples they considered racially inferior and culturally less gifted. The emergence of Social Darwinism in the mid 1870s further strengthened this view as it stated unequivocally that the world belonged to the strong and racially pure.4 The so-called Scramble for Africa (1880-1900) for example, saw the major powers of Europe carve up Africa without any qualm of conscience and justify that on the basis of racial superiority.5 Rudyard Kipling, a famous writer in the late nineteenth century, also wrote that it was the 'white man's burden' to dominate and educate the other (lesser) races.6


4 "Social Darwinists argued that nations and races like species of animals, were locked in a struggle for existence in which only the fittest survived and deserved to survive." M. Perry et al., Sources of the Western Tradition: From the Renaissance to the Present, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1991), p. 215.


It was within this historical background and social context that sport became important and leisure was redefined. Sport would become a place for testing, preparing and training those who would be defending the empire. For example, the schools saw how well an individual played a team sport as an indication of how well he would perform in the army. Sport was also a source of leisure for those army officers who were stationed in the colonies. Later, as Social Darwinism with its notion of the 'survival of the fittest' emerged, the same competitive spirit of capitalism came to dominate all of society. Thus, sport as leisure was seen as the fruit of conquest and competition was the means of conquering.

However, sport was not simply the result of imperialism. It also found a place domestically as it seemed to fit in well with the new industrialized society. First, the competitive nature of sport allowed a mingling of the upper middle class and the aristocracy. Second, sport gave a place to the industrialized elite since winning a game was similar to its philosophy of creating and then conquering a market. Third, sport offered the potential of counterbalancing the monotony of

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7 Holt, Sport and the British, p. 204.

* "The schools were, in fact, responding to the pressures and demands of an external world for a supply of the type of human produce required - forceful, but obedient and well-indoctrinated officers and apostles of imperial orthodoxy trained and 'prepared to be citizens' and more, governors and developers 'of the greatest empire under the sun'." J. Chandos. Boys Together: English Public Schools 1800 - 1864. (London: Hutchinson, 1984), p. 340.

the city and the impersonal character of the factory system. Further, for the upper-middle class, sport became a sign of achievement for only those who were independently wealthy could either afford to participate or have the time for leisure.

It was within this social setting that British officers first played badminton in England in the 1860s. Although its beginnings are sketchy and roots obscure, it is certain that its name was derived from the estate of the seventh Duke of Beaufort in Gloustershire, England. The Duke was an avid sport enthusiast, and one weekend he invited some officers who had recently returned from their station in the Indian city of Poona. While in Poona these officers had learned to play an Indian game that was similar to battledore or shuttlecock. It was a game that had begun with the players originally hitting a shuttlecock with an outstretched palm. Later, a bat of wood replaced the hand until finally catgut strings stretched over a racket frame became the norm. The officers renamed this game Poona and brought it back to England. It was only after showing it to the Duke that it took on the name of his estate.

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10 "Concern over the way the lower classes amused themselves became increasingly acute during the third quarter of the nineteenth century." Holt, Sport and the British, p. 136.

11 "This leisure class was rural as well as urban." H. Cunningham, Leisure in the Industrial Revolution, (New York: St. Martin's Press), p. 17.


14 Ibid., p. 23.
The Duke of Beaufort and his friends modified the game and later brought it back to India. Interestingly, while at his estate, the officers played the game on a court shaped like an hourglass. This came about because the doors of the Victorian hall were large and opened in the centre of the room beside the net. This resulted in the court being "narrower at the net than at the four corners." In turn, British officers first played this newly improved game in India in the city of Karachi. In 1877, Karachi published the first rules of badminton. Ten years later back in England, the English formed its first organized badminton association, known as the Bath Badminton Club. The Club anglicized and standardized the rules which to this day continue to remain the basis of the game.

Thus the British Empire was central to the origin of badminton. The British saw the sport not only as a fruit of their military conquest but also as a means of bringing about cultural unity among its colonies. Besides, to have the colonies imitate the British culture was a more powerful form of control than the actual use of military force. This was particularly true in India, the most prized colony. In 1857, the native Indian troops mutinied against the British rule and as a result...

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16 Brasch, p. 23.


18 "Sports were thought to help create a climate of relations that would bind the Empire together.", Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 212.

Britain changed its colonial policy. It began to encourage social interaction between the soldiers and the civilian elite of the two countries on a sporting level. The main intent here was to give the appearance that both governments were sharing power while under the pretense of sharing leisure.\textsuperscript{20}

In 1893, the fourteen founding members met at Southsea and formed the Badminton Association of England. The Association's impact upon the game was profound in terms of popularizing and structuring the game. Its aims were to regulate the game in terms of the size and shape of the badminton court, as well as to refine the existing rules.\textsuperscript{21} In 1899, the Association organized the first All-England Championships for men. In the following year the Association organized a similar tournament for women. Although both were not official championships, the Association had set a process in place that would take root a few years later.\textsuperscript{22} In 1901, the Badminton Association of England decided that the badminton court would henceforth be rectangular in shape.\textsuperscript{23} In 1903, England and Ireland played the first international badminton match.\textsuperscript{24} A year

\textsuperscript{20} "Sports may have been seen initially as training and amusement for a colonial élite, but as the Empire expanded the value of building cultural bridges through games became more important." Holt, \textit{Sport and the British}, p. 212.

\textsuperscript{21} Brasch, \textit{How Did Sports Begin?}, p. 23.

\textsuperscript{22} Connors, Dupuis, and Morgan, \textit{The Olympics Factbook}, p. 195.

\textsuperscript{23} Brasch, \textit{How Did Sports Begin?}, p. 23.

later, the Association held the inaugural official All-England matches.  

The consolidation of the game took place in Britain. Its structuring, organization and enthusiasm soon spread to the British Empire. These British players brought expertise and an infectious enthusiasm that promoted great interest and fascination for this new game in the countries they visited. Canada was one of the countries that welcomed this new sport.

Military personnel in Vancouver brought badminton to Canada in the 1890s. The earliest badminton club formed in Canada was the Ladies' Montreal Tennis and Badminton Club in Quebec, founded in 1907. The British Columbia Championships, held in the 1913-14 season constituted the first open badminton tournament in Canada. The game gradually spread and attracted more players. Toward the end of World War I, badminton was well established in Canada, especially in the major cities of Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver. With the conclusion of World War I, the returning Canadian soldiers who had been stationed in England

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brought back with them a new vigor and enthusiasm for the game. It was this group that introduced the game to Saskatchewan in 1919.

Integral to the development of sport in general within the province was the growth of cities, combined with the transportation and communication which would connect them. This period from the birth of the province to the 1920s was a period of enormous change. Railway lines began to connect cities as did highways and the increased use of the automobile. Newspapers, telephones and radios also played a significant role in bringing a sense of community and organization to the province. Not only could ideas be readily communicated but mobility enabled sporting events to be organized and players to travel to them.

The war brought change especially to the social status of women. Women had played badminton since its beginnings in England. There are numerous paintings and photographs showing women in long skirts playing either battledore or badminton. This form of participation was based on the ideology that viewed women not only as mothers and homemakers, but as individuals in their own right, who were coming out from the shadow of men and wanting to become physically fit. This they hoped would lead them to delineate their individualism and eventually

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establish a place in society. It was a move from passivity to activity and from the idea of the weaker sex to the competitor. Just as the bicycle would revolutionize the clothing women wore, thus making their participation in sport far easier, the war accelerated the independence of women by moving them quite abruptly into the public sphere.34

During the war, as men went to the front, women began to take over the jobs which were traditionally reserved for men. The ability that they demonstrated in the workforce gradually diminished the stereotypes that had confined them to the private sphere. The new perception that women could show strength and should be physically fit began to replace the traditional notion of fragility.35 Badminton would find a niche in bringing about this fitness and it would become a popular sport among women. This was so, not because badminton was seen as a sport for the weak, but rather a sport that required speed, finesse and conditioning, while at the same time it could be graceful and played purely as a pastime. Hence, badminton could appeal to the individualist as well as the prospective mother; the athlete looking for competition and the wife seeking socialization with her peers.36

34 "By the war years, in line with the usual premium placed on manpower and womanpower in times of national crisis, there was increased emphasis on women's responsibility to develop to their full physical potential." H. Lenskyj, "Physical Activity for Canadian Women, 1890-1930: Media Views", From 'Fair Sex' to Feminism: Sport and the Socialization of Women in the Industrial and Post-Industrial Eras, edited by J.A. Mangan and R.J. Park, (London: Frank Cass, 1987), p. 216.


36 Ibid., Ann Hall and Richardson argue: "Two images of women existed simultaneously. On the one hand they were lauded as ideal homemakers feminine and maternal, morally superior to men but requiring protection."
The year 1919 marked the beginning of badminton in Saskatchewan. World War I veterans would prove to be the catalyst for the spread of the sport in its early years in the province. Ample evidence supports this view, with the writings of Robert "Robbie" Robinson, who began his badminton in Saskatchewan in 1921, providing one example:

The game of badminton was practically unknown in Western Canada when our troops came back from Great Britain at the close of World War I in 1919. I know of several that reside in some of our small villages who returned with rackets, shuttlecocks and a net and commenced the game in a small way; while in the cities badminton was begun in the armories and for the most part was sponsored by army officers.7

The army officers mentioned by Robinson played a fundamental role in the introduction, growth and development of badminton in its initial stages in Saskatchewan. They were largely responsible for bringing people together and exposing them to this new game:

In Saskatoon, Captain John R. Jackson and Major F. H. McLorg were instrumental in organizing a club which played the winter of 1920-21 on two courts on the fourth floor of the Hudson’s Bay store and later moved to the Saskatoon Armory where it was known as the Officers Badminton Club. The same year the Rev. Askey, an Army Padre, organized a club in his Christ Church Hall. About the same time officers’ clubs were formed in the Armories at Moose Jaw,

There was concern that too much education and work might destroy their maternal instincts. On the other hand, a new image of women was becoming increasingly prevalent. It portrayed women as equal to men and endowed with the same capabilities. Their potential could be successfully developed in all areas, including those like sports, which had been associated almost exclusively with men."

Prince Albert, and later in Regina, while numerous small clubs played in schools and halls throughout the province.\(^{38}\)

It is striking how both the prevalence of the British Empire and the predominance of the soldier continued from the origin of the sport at the Duke of Beaufort's residence right up to the spread of badminton throughout Saskatchewan. These war veterans from the province had fought under the British and had now returned to the province filled with an enthusiasm for the sport of their officers. It was rare for a British sport to become popular in Canada as both polo and cricket had made little progress against hockey and baseball. Nevertheless, badminton provided a sense of solidarity to the soldiers. It gave them an identity with their war experience along with the exclusive elitism of playing a sport that spoke of empire, aristocracy and a military world dominated by men.\(^{39}\)

It is not surprising that it was the military that brought badminton back to Saskatchewan since it was a game that soldiers had learned from the officers whom they had obeyed in war. However, in view of the different status that the military had in England in contrast to Canada, it was striking to see that the presence of the military remained so prominent in the sport even until World War II. In England, the military was the elite of elite, identified with the Empire and imbued with a sense of superiority. But, in Canada, it was the army of a

\(^{38}\) Robinson, "History of Badminton in Saskatchewan," Badminton in Saskatchewan.

\(^{39}\) "Wherever the British went, the gospel of sport went with them." "The history of sport in modern Britain is a history of men." Holt, Sport and the British, pp. 6, 8.
colony that had neither stature nor social status. Nonetheless, by preserving and administering this British sport, the military would maintain a place within civilian society besides protecting it.

As Canadians entered the 1920s, they initially experienced a short post-war depression that gradually gave way to a period of prosperity. This prosperity led to an increased interest in sport:

This prosperity was witnessed in sport too with the rapid construction of indoor and outdoor facilities, the frequency of international sporting exchanges, the growth of middle and upper class sports such as golf, tennis and badminton, the rise of professional hockey and players salaries and the expansion of industrial or commercial sports.40

As a result of increased economic wealth, people in Saskatchewan had more time and money for sports. They also began to "recognize the value and the potential of leisure."41 Sports subsequently became an integral part of everyday life in the province. Community groups and private interest parties also took it upon themselves to establish sports facilities and programs.42 Examples include increased support for sports from Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), and churches. Badminton was prominent as one of those sports and active moves were also made to encourage the

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42 Ibid.
participation of women at all levels. 43 This was an encouragement that very much resulted from the position of prominence and importance that the war had given women in the community.

From 1919 to 1924, badminton was played mainly recreationally in Saskatchewan among army officers and their wives, with no known official organized tournaments of clubs being recorded. It was during this early post-war period that the Canadian Badminton Association (CBA) was formed in Montreal in 1921. Its aim was to "control and foster the game of badminton in Canada", and all the existing badminton clubs nation wide were invited to join. 44 Four out of seven representatives at the first meeting were army officials, with Col. S.H. McKee and Col. A.E. Harris elected President and Vice-President respectively. 45 The formation of the CBA marked the first national body dedicated to the sport outside of Great Britain. One year after its founding, Montreal held the first Canadian Closed Championships. 46 There were no Saskatchewan participants present either in a playing or administrative capacity at the Championships.

Saskatchewan badminton did not remain isolated. With increasing support and interest for the sport throughout the province, along with the impetus given to it by the formation of the CBA, badminton players


45 Ibid.

in Saskatchewan found it necessary to establish a provincial organization. In April 1924, the province’s badminton players met at the Mill City Armoury in Moose Jaw and agreed that they would organize a provincial body the following year to govern the sport. They made their intentions clear:

Saskatchewan badminton players will form a provincial association and arrange for a provincial tournament in Moose Jaw next year, it was decided at a meeting held in the Mill City armory on Saturday. An effort will be made to interest all known clubs in the province among them Regina, Moose Jaw, Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Yorkton.

Thus, in the fall of 1925, the Saskatchewan Badminton Association (SBA) established itself and according to Robinson’s article in "Badminton In Saskatchewan", almost all of the officials in the Association were army officers:

One has only to read the early minutes of the Association’s meeting to note that almost all officials referred to were known as Colonel, Captain, Major, etc., to be assured that it was then an Officer’s Association, though others were welcomed as players.

The dominance of the army was therefore carried through to the formation of the first association. In the same year the attachment to Britain was also confirmed when the CBA invited a British badminton team, led by Sir George Thomas, to tour Canada. Even though it is not known if this team played or toured in Saskatchewan, several writers

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47 "Will Organize for Badminton," Regina Leader-Post, April 8, 1924.

felt that this British team did much to foster an interest in badminton in Canada as a whole:

It is not an exaggeration to say that the tremendous growth in the popularity of Badminton in Canada since 1925 is very largely due to the influence of Sir George [Thomas] and his men during that memorable tour. The visit of the English team caused a wonder to badminton in 1925.49

The SBA held its first inaugural provincial championships in the Moose Jaw Armoury in February 1926, with local players winning the tournament.50 A month after these championship matches, the Association conducted its first annual meeting in Moose Jaw. It appointed Colonel E. Murray Thomson as the Chairman and Mr. H.W. Pope acted as Secretary. It also appointed officers assigning Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Justice Martin, Colonel Rosser, Colonel E.M. Thomson and J.G. Sinclair to the positions of Patron, Honorary President, President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer respectively. The Association's membership was open to all badminton clubs in the province, each club having the right to nominate a member to the executive of the provincial organization. Membership fees were low, a mere twenty-five cents per member per club. The SBA also decided to become a member of the CBA in 1926.51

49 "British Internationalists Tour Canada," Canada Lawn Tennis and Badminton 1930, Montreal, Vol. III. No. 1, Nov. 1930, p. 5.


As the stock market collapsed in 1929, the Depression would have a profound effect on the early growth of the sport. During this period, badminton would change from a sport that was first played by army officers and their wives to a sport that was democratized to include a wider range of people. The initial exclusiveness that badminton was founded upon could not maintain the same cohesion under such economic strain. Furthermore, with the high level of unemployment during this decade, people came to perceive badminton in a different light. The sport had suddenly changed from its exclusive to a popular appeal. An increasing number of people were now looking for a sport that they could enjoy as a leisurely exercise:

Due to the high unemployment rate Canadians had an abundance of leisure time, and as a result sport became an even more favourite pastime for both the spectator and the participant. The type of sports played depended largely upon the size of the person's pocket book. In some respects, sport seemed to act as a safety valve through which Canadians could release their pent-up emotions which had been accentuated by the depression.52

The Depression had also redefined leisure. Engaging in sporting activities was no longer the privilege of the wealthy but had become the necessity of the unemployed. Those without work did not deal with the devastating effects of the economic situation by brooding over it, but instead they sought community and social contact. Badminton offered an easy means to achieve this contact because all that was necessary to enjoy the game was simply two rackets and a shuttle.

The badminton clubs in Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon, which had formed before the Depression showed a process of democratization during the Depression. It also revealed a gradual shift from a military to civil elite which governed them. In Regina, for example, badminton had been introduced by a General Ormond. He was instrumental in forming the Regina Badminton Club which played at Eaton’s. Ironically, yet not inconsistent with the thought of the period, most of the hundred members were ladies, yet the structure of the club was not governed by them -- that women be physically fit did not imply that they also should hold positions of power. Fitness had come to be seen as essential to motherhood:

The whole significance of the 1920s is epitomized by the fact that the symbol of the decade was not the emancipated career woman, but the flapper. Although she was sexually liberated and had greater social freedom than her predecessors, the flapper fit easily into a society that saw women in predominantly sexual terms. When her dancing and drinking days were over, she settled down as wife and mother.\(^3\)

In 1928 a group of individuals met in Regina to form what would become the Wascana Badminton Club (WBC). It is interesting to note that it was a doctor (Alpert) who was elected as the first president rather than someone from the military. There was a transference of elitism here,\(^4\) and one trusted professionally and socially was, in turn, given authority over this emerging sport. The members decided immediately to


\(^4\) The shift was from military authority controlling badminton to members of the upper middle class from civil society controlling it.
build a club house and obtained financial backing for the building project from the private sector. The club house was erected in 1926—
the very same year that club houses were erected in Kelowna and Victoria.
These were a notable social trend. Yanks, the annual book review of
the Philadelphia Inquirer, and the Popular Science and the newspaper accounts that outlined the construction that accompanied the
building of such club houses. Indeed, during the season of depression,
the nature of capitalism was demonstrated to the public in a way that
prevented the growth of a wide sector of people who could not afford
such luxury. In,

Figure 1. THE WASCANA CLUB, Regina Sports Review
December, 1931, p. 10.
build a club house and obtained financial backing for the building project from the private sector. The club house was erected in 1930 -- the very same year other club houses were erected in Saskatoon and Moose Jaw. There was a twofold trend here. First, the actual boom years of badminton in the province were during the Depression. There were many newspaper accounts that evidenced the enthusiasm that surrounded the building of each club house. Second, during the decade of Depression, the sport of badminton was democratized in two different ways. One was that it became the sport of a wider sector of people who could not afford to join the clubs yet took up the sport in a casual manner:

During the 1930s on the Prairies there was a trend toward participation in indoor winter sports. In addition to the most popular indoor winter activities, curling and hockey, the three sports -- bowling, badminton and basketball -- increased in popularity. Clearly, the lower classes could not afford to belong to the exclusive (badminton) clubs, but they were able to participate in the game (badminton) in smaller clubs headquarter ed in schools, churches, barns, dance halls, former skating rinks and any other adaptable type of building. Badminton could be a relatively inexpensive sport and this fact partially accounted for its phenomenal growth on the impoverished Prairies during the Depression years.⁵⁵

The other was within the clubs themselves. There was a shift from a purely upper-class elite to a broader understanding of elitism as inclusive of the middle class.

The WBC had its official opening on January 18, 1930. It boasted a very up-to-date club house and its courts were considered among the best

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in western Canada. Judging from the following statements in Badminton
In Saskatchewan, it was an overwhelming success:

So much interest has been created before the club opened in 1930
that when the official opening was held in the form of a large tea
and reception open to the general public to give them an opportunity
to examine the club, so many hundreds crowded into the building, it
was difficult to serve them, or even in fact to move around at all.
Many of the visitors actually arrived before the hour announced for
that opening, and the lounge windows overlooking the courts were
crowded to capacity for the entire afternoon as top players in the
club put on exhibition games. Those who came so early said they did
so because they knew there would be such a crowd and hoped to avoid
it. There was, and they didn’t.56

On November 20 of that same year, another British badminton team led
by Sir George Thomas toured across Canada and paid a visit to Regina’s
WBC. It played several friendly games with the local Club’s players. A
writer from the Regina Sports Review observed:

The visitors played an entirely different type of game than was
current here, being naturally cool and confident of themselves at
all times, but in addition they added science to their skill, and
the result was rather rough on our local stars, who did not do as
well as could be wished. The exhibition was thoroughly enjoyed
regardless of a defeat or no.57

Despite the victory of the British team over the Saskatchewan
players, the British players spoke highly of the WBC. Further, their
visit to Regina not only stimulated interest in local badminton clubs
but the entire province as well. Besides the WBC, badminton also

56 Rooke. "History of the Wascana Winter Club." Badminton In
Saskatchewan, p. 11.

flourished in Regina not only in the Wascana Club but in the Capital Badminton Club, the Regina Armory Badminton Club and the Carmichael Badminton Club.58

As the interest in badminton rose in Regina, it was necessary to add two additional courts at Wascana Club in 1932. One member reported:

We have 275 paid up members, the building is all paid for, we are members of the Provincial Badminton Association, and not only are we using every effort to build up the game among the juniors, but we are also planning on a strenuous series of tournament matches with Moose Jaw, the Garrison Club, and Carmichael. I think we will have an active season this year.59

In the early history of the club, there was a badminton professional, Guy Reed, who provided lessons for club members along with sharing his teaching time with the Moose Jaw Badminton Club (MJBC). The WBC greatly benefited from his instruction:

Mr. Guy Reed giving tuition [instruction] early and late, greatly improved the brand of badminton player. While not as many took advantage of his training as had been hoped he was very generous with his playing time and certainly left his mark on many of even our present day players.60

Each season in the 1930s the WBC planned a series of programs and tournaments. They even had return visits with the MJBC almost every season. The following account indicates that everyone enjoyed these visits:

59 Ibid.
60 Ibid.
Figure 2. "The Home of Champions" - Moose Jaw Badminton Club Late 1940s

Badminton in Saskatchewan, edited by D. Keough, (Saskatoon: Midwest Litho Printing Limited, year unknown), p. 27.
Each season a visit was made by a large number of players to the Moose Jaw Club, and they made a return visit. These trips took place on Saturday usually, and after a mixed tournament, a plate supper was served, and sometimes there was an informal dance, more often however, games were played after supper, and then the players left by car for home, tired but happy. Each Friday evening a Round Robin Tournament of mixed doubles was held which was tremendously popular. Badminton birds were given as prizes, and refreshments were served, these expenses being defrayed by the small sum paid to enter the tournament. Up until the war [World War II], the ladies' badminton section each Tuesday held a tournament which started about ten-thirty, then lunch was enjoyed at long tables placed down the centre of the main lounge, and after lunch many played cards while a few hardy spirits played more badminton. Birds were given as prizes, and attendance at these affairs ran from thirty to forty each Tuesday. Members were allowed to bring a playing friend to these tournaments, and there were always several guests, who frequently ended up by becoming members.61

In 1932, four Regina players, a Miss Gentles, a Mrs. Smith, Harrold Jacobson, and Jimmy Hind, went to their first Dominion Badminton Championships in Winnipeg. Not surprisingly, the tournament was an enlightening experience for all of these players, as Jimmy Hind, the Saskatchewan singles champion in 1931 remarked:

What impressed us first was the ease and smoothness of every shot made by the other players. They seemed to know exactly how and when to make each shot, and it was rather surprising at first to realize that practically all players used the same style game, until I learned that every player entered in the tournament, outside of Saskatchewan players, represented clubs where they have a

professional teacher. Another surprise we received when we first went on the courts in a match was the fact that the shuttles used were ever so much slower than the ones we had been using here, which certainly affected our game. The play of the top flight players was a revelation to us. No matter, whether the shot was a tip, drop, smash or drive, opponents hadn't the slightest idea what was coming until the shot was actually made and the shuttle was half way over the net. The footwork was perfect, and rarely are they caught out of position. The huge crowd got [sic] absolutely out of hand during this match and no wonder. Some of the rallies were actually breathtaking, and no hockey match was ever more exciting. Time after time during a rally the crowd would start cheering as they figured the point was won, and the cheering would end in a gasp as one of the players would dash in and seemingly return the bird a quarter of an inch from the floor. The Free Press reported that in one rally the bird crossed and re-crossed the net fifty-three times, and impossible as it seems I can quite believe it. After watching and playing in the tournament it is easily realized that Regina will never win a Dominion Championship until we have a professional coach here.62

In that same year, Jack Purcell paid a visit to Regina's WBC and put a series of exhibition games with the local players. He held a view very similar to the one of Jimmy Hind regarding Regina players: "Regina's great need is a professional instructor."63 Jack Purcell was the former Dominion amateur badminton champion and a good-will representative of A.C. Spaulding Company of Brantford. He was generous in his compliments of WBC:

You [members of WBC] have a wonderful clubhouse here. Your people are so enthusiastic about the game. Of all the cities I have visited in my tour across Canada, I can honestly tell you that Regina has an appeal and a hospitality all her own.64

In 1934, the WBC decided to amalgamate with the Regina Skating Club. From then on it would jointly be called the Wascana Winter Club (WWC). As a result of the merger several new quarters were added to the original club house, including a large sheet of ice, a practise rink, locker rooms, and two large lounges overlooking the rink.65

Badminton continued to grow in popularity in Regina throughout the 1930s until the advent of the World War II in September 1939. Badminton was "at the height of its popularity" when the war arrived. It was "busy from morning to night."66 As the war continued, the membership at the WWC gradually decreased and eventually the Navy took over the entire building for training purposes:

Rapidly the ranks of club members began to be depleted, and when in 1942 recruiting in all branches had reached such momentum the Navy found themselves [sic] being crowded out of the armories where they had had training quarters for some years, after looking around decided if the Winter Club could be obtained it would be ideal for training the greatly increased and increasing personnel. And so many of our members had by this time left on active service in the Navy, Army and Air-Force, and more leaving all the time, and those remaining at home were busy with other forms of war work, it was considered advantageous as well as patriotic to permit the Navy the

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64 G. Tinning, p. 23.
65 Rooke, "History of the Wascana Winter Club." Badminton In Saskatchewan, p. 13.
66 Ibid.
use of the Club, and it then became H.M.C.S. Queen, and remained so for the duration of the war, and for sometime afterwards until the Navy was able to secure suitable quarters elsewhere. The agreement finally reached was that the navy should convert the Club to its uses, and when the war was over it would be handed back in as nearly as possible the same shape as when H.M.C.S. Queen took over. This seemed an eminently satisfactory arrangement, and proved so.

With a "crow's nest" erected at the back of the club, and the ceremony of flag raising and lowering each dawn and dusk from a flagpole at the front, not to mention the continuous entry and exit of Navy personnel, bugle calls, and daily parades, the club took on a truly nautical appearance.67 (The Club did not open for badminton until 1947).

The Moose Jaw Badminton Club which also prospered during the 1930s, was also founded by a doctor (Dr. Gordon Young). Some of the notable players at the Club were the future premier, Ross Thatcher, Peggy and Leslie McNaughton, Alf Ingall, Barry Ursell, Frank Longridge and Sleeman Lovis. They were all juniors at the time. As there were only a few juniors in any of the provincial tournaments, when they entered they played mainly against the seniors.68 This proved to be rewarding as players like Frank Longridge, Alf Ingall and Barry Ursell later won numerous city and provincial titles when they became senior themselves.

It was also in 1930 that the Saskatoon Badminton Club (SBC) opened its doors. The Club’s first president was "Monty" Thayer. The membership averaged around 225 in the 1930s and kept increasing each year until finally the club decided that it needed to set a limit:


As a result of the many new membership applications already placed before the directors, the Saskatoon Badminton Club has placed the limit of full playing memberships at 250, which is considered the club’s capacity.\(^69\)

One of the major highlights for the Club during the 1930s was the numerous visits by J. Frank Devlin, the former six-time All-England singles champion and the then professional at the Winnipeg Winter Club. He came to SBC in 1932, 1934 and 1935.\(^70\) He put on exhibition games and coaching clinics thrilling club members who also benefitted from his instruction.

Another highlight was Robert "Robbie" Robinson. One of the founders of the SBC, he was also the club secretary-treasurer and club professional for several years. Many members regarded him as the one who "did more for the club than anyone."\(^71\) He put in long hours making sure that the club ran smoothly. Robbie also "gave hours of his time to beginners and youngsters alike, trying to develop players."\(^72\)

One other major phenomenon during the 1930s was that badminton had become "one of the leading winter sports with millions of dollars

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\(^69\) "Player Limit Set At Badminton Club For Current Season," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, September 20, 1935.

\(^70\) "Winnipeg Badminton Pro To Coach At Saskatoon Courts," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, October 6, 1934, and "Badminton," Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, October 26, 1935.

\(^71\) "Saskatoon Badminton Club," Badminton In Saskatchewan, p. 41.

\(^72\) Ibid.
Figure 3. Saskatoon Badminton Club, early 1960s
(Source Unknown)
invested in club premises and equipment." Jack Failey, Jr., remarked in *Sports Review* in 1933:

Badminton has made amazing strides in popularity throughout the Dominion during the last few years. This is particularly evident in Saskatchewan, where the game has taken its place as the most popular indoor sport, far surpassing basketball, or such games. Like golf, badminton lends itself particularly to individual effort and initiative. For this reason, thousands find it their most popular recreation."

As a result, the SBC in the 1933-34 season decided that it intended to become a major meeting place in town:

Special attention is being directed this season to the comfort and entertainment of the associate members who for a small membership fee, enjoy all the privileges of the club except the playing courts, and it is hoped that the club will become one of the social centers of the city."

In anticipation of a great season in 1938, the Club decided to establish different categories of memberships in order to meet the membership's needs. Thus, besides the full-playing membership, other categories such as day-time, Saturday night, junior and social membership were included. Another interesting feature of the Club for 1938-39 season was its affiliation with the Saskatoon Bridge Club. All the adult members of the SBC were also members of the Saskatoon Bridge Club.

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73 "Local Badminton Club To Open for Play On Saturday." *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 27, 1933.


75 "Local Badminton Club To Open For Play On Saturday." *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, October 27, 1933.
Club, with the result that there was an increase of membership in the SBC:

All adult members of the club [Saskatoon Badminton Club] are also members of the Saskatoon Bridge Club, which was recently affiliated with badminton activities. An encouraging feature this year is to be found in the large number of men who have already become members, and locker accommodation is showing signs of being taxed to the limit.76

In the 1938-39 season, the junior section of the Club showed great signs of progress. There were about ninety junior members, twice the number of the previous year and the largest group it ever had since the formation of the Club. Several of the notable juniors were John and Joe Leicester, Allan Francis, Jean Lovell, Joan McDonald and Warren Bransby.77

Unfortunately all this had to come to a halt in 1939 as Canada began preparing for World War II. Like other club houses in Regina and Moose Jaw, many badminton members in the SBC had to leave for service in the war effort. Badminton continued to be played in the club house for several more seasons but with fewer members, and eventually the whole building was given over to the army for recruitment and training purposes.

In each of the three cities that became centers of badminton in Saskatchewan prior to the Depression, the popularity of the sport as indicated by the numerous newspaper articles reporting on it, show its growth and changing character. The period as a whole saw a gradual

77 Ibid.
transition from the military organization of the sport to a civilian elite that was more inclusive of the middle class.78 Furthermore, badminton gained a wider popularity especially during the Depression, as many newspaper articles repeatedly reported the playing of it in school halls and church basements. Also of equal significance, the period witnessed the shift among women from fitness to competition, from ladylike behaviour to showing physical strength. However, women continued through the Depression to remain without any direct authority over the direction of the sport. Just a glance at the governing board of the Saskatchewan Badminton Association from 1926-1936 would confirm this, as not one single woman was present.

78 From military officers organizing and controlling its play to the elite of civilian society (doctors, lawyers, etc.).
A TIME OF TRANSITION:
From Elitism to Mass Participation,
1939-1970
CHAPTER II

World War II had an enormous impact on sport. The war’s conclusion resulted in the formation of a different world order. First, Germany was defeated and divided -- but it was a victory that had come with great difficulty. During the war the Allied countries realized that they needed to take an interest in the physical fitness of their respective citizens if they wanted to win the war. After the war, sport would take on greater significance and would become like a national expression of the moral worth of democracy in the face of communism. Second, Britain lost much of its empire and it was no longer the ruler of the seas. It also lost its dominance of badminton as the various countries that now gained independence, used sport as a means of cultural expression, nationalism, and social cohesion. Third, two super-powers emerged and divided the world into two spheres of influence that opposed each other. Within this atmosphere of tension, sport became another form of warfare but at the same time, a means to cooperate.

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3 The United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The period 1939 to 1970 saw a complete transformation of the place of sport within Canadian society. Canadian governments at all levels increasingly took physical fitness and sport from the private to the public sphere. Sport would become part of the education curriculum and the 1967 Canada Games would make sport part of the national psyche. Television would increasingly make sports more visible and popular. It helped to establish individual athletes as household names and models to admire. Also, the period witnessed a major change as baseball finally allowed African Americans among its ranks. The British sport of badminton would cease to be an expression of empire during this time. Badminton would no longer be an example of British imperialism but instead it became a means for other countries to express their nationalism. Furthermore, an increasing number of women would enter the work force and sport would provide them with a means of social mobility.

This period also witnessed the expansion of the leisure class as the western world saw the ranks of the middle class seek security in consumerism and relaxation in sports.

Provincially, badminton went through a time of transition. In 1939, an ex-Saskatchewanian, Dorothy McKenzie Walton, won the All-England

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6 In other words badminton ceased to be an example of British imperialism and instead became a means for other nations to express their nationalism.

7 "Men who had observed women working as truckdrivers and welders were somewhat less amenable than they had been to the notion that sports were too strenuous for the 'weaker sex'." A. Cuttman, *Women's Sports: A History*. (New York: Columbia University Press. 1961), p. 190.

8 Hall et al., *Sport In Canadian Society*, p. 73.
Championship. It was a title that was not only prestigious but unprecedented for a Canadian. However, the advent of war forced badminton membership to drop and its clubs to eventually close. After the war, the recovery was slow and steady but not without difficulties. For instance, the MJBC struggled financially to keep its doors open and finally it had to close forever in 1951. The WWC and the SBC continued their operations, but it was mainly through the dedication of a few determined individuals. However, the most important change during this transitional period was that badminton lost its British elite status and became more inclusive. But this did not imply that badminton ceased to have an elitist element in it. It meant that World War II had destroyed the British form of elitism that was attached to the game. After the war, the colour barrier was broken and badminton was no longer based on race but skill.

Several factors contributed to the transformation of badminton from an elitist sport to a game that provided for healthy competition and family fun during this period. First, during the Depression the poor economy led to increased play of badminton, while the post-World War II economy created a more affluent society and redefined the middle class in much broader terms. Second, the war witnessed the convincing results of the emphasis that the Fascists had placed on physical fitness. With the end of the war, nations replaced empire and the

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9 The affluent society that gradually emerged after World War II distributed the wealth that previously had been enjoyed almost exclusively by the upper middle class.

United Nations was proposed as a means of keeping peace. Countries all over the world began to seek ways to strengthen their nationalism and cooperation. Sport seemed to provide the answer. It could bring people together either as participants or spectators. Sport also promoted the spirit of cooperation and healthy competition. As such, since badminton could be either intensely competitive or simply enjoyed, it would appeal to a wide range of people. Third, badminton also became a symbol of racial cooperation, for after World War II its best players were no longer white Anglo-Saxons.

However, to understand fully what resulted after the war's conclusion one must see its immediate impact. Before the war, Canada boasted having more badminton players per capita than any other nation in the world. Most of the badminton clubs or groups across the country had been playing in the armoury facilities but with the war the military repossessed them for recruiting and training purposes. With fewer playing facilities there was a substantial drop in the number of players. The national membership declined from 15,941 in 1940 to 5,948 in 1947. Further, there were no CBA meetings held during the war.11 The Canadian Championships were also suspended from 1941 to 1946, as were such international competitions as the All-England Championships which were not resumed until 1947.

Provincially, there was no organized badminton between 1944 and 1946. The SBA held neither tournaments nor meetings. However, recreational players continued to enjoy badminton in town halls and

school gymnasiums throughout the province. For example, the University of Saskatchewan Badminton Club which met from 1943 to 1945, with women holding all the memberships. As a result of many men players leaving for "active service in the Navy, Army and Airforce, with more leaving all the time, those remaining at home were busy with other forms of war work," and badminton clubs were dominated by women.

One such woman was Dorothy McKenzie, a native of Swift Current, Saskatchewan, who graduated from the University of Saskatchewan with a B.A. and M.A. in Political Economics. She was introduced to badminton at the WRC in Regina when she was the private secretary of a provincial cabinet minister. In 1932, McKenzie married William Walton and they moved to Toronto. She resumed her pursuit of badminton two years later and experienced much success:

In 1934 she went to the singles final in both the Toronto and Canadian tournaments. She won her first important victories the next year, taking the Toronto and Ontario titles. From 1936 to 1940, she dominated Canadian women's badminton, winning sixty-four singles and doubles championships in that span, including the Canadian, Ontario and New England Open titles. In 1939-40 Mrs. Walton so completely outclassed her North American competition in badminton that she made a clean sweep of every major singles title, seven in all, without the loss of a game. In addition, she won eight ladies and mixed doubles titles in badminton during the same period.\footnote{14}

\footnote{14}Ibid.
Figure 4. University of Saskatchewan Badminton Club 1943-1944

*Greystone 1944*, published by Student Representative Council (Winnipeg: Intercollegiate Press), 1944.

Figure 5. University of Saskatchewan Badminton Club 1944-1945

*Greystone 1945*, published by Student Representative Council (Winnipeg: Intercollegiate Press), 1945
In March 1939, Dorothy Walton entered the All-England Championships. She completely dominated the play of the tournament:

In the semifinal she lost the first game 8-11 to defending champion D.M.S. Young of Britain. Young's style figured out, Walton went on to edge her in the second game, 11-7, and humiliate her in the rubber match, 11-0. In the final, Walton easily disposed of D. Doverton of England 11-4, 11-5. Dorothy Walton had become the first Canadian to win an All-England championship, and also the first person ever to hold Canadian, American and All-England titles simultaneously.15

According to S.F. Wise and Douglas Fisher in Canada's Sporting Heroes, Walton was able to capture the world number one title because:

... of a rare combination of abilities. Her strength, speed and agility gave her the court coverage so vital in singles. The intelligence and deception of her play, especially at the net and in the production of beautifully placed, tantalizingly soft drop shots, enabled her to seize and hold the psychological edge that gives mastery in any sport.16

Just as MacKenzie was at the peak of her badminton career, World War II came along and completely circumvented all opportunities to defend her crowns. Whether she could have continued to dominate the international badminton circles is speculative, but the convincing manner with which she won them shows how much she deserved them. David McDonald and Lauren Drewery in For the Record: Canada's Greatest Women Athletes write:


Figure 6. Dorothy McKenzie Walton

*Chatelaine*, January, 1976, p. 28
It is not farfetched to imagine, too, that had she specialized in badminton at an earlier age, had she not been raising a family, and had she not pursued a demanding business and academic career, Dorothy Walton might have gone down as the greatest woman badminton player of all time.  

Even though she stopped competing because of the war, Dorothy continued to receive more awards:  

In 1940, just as the war cut off her athletic career at its peak, Dorothy Walton was awarded the Rose Bowl as Canada's outstanding female athlete. She was runner-up for the Lou Marsh Trophy in the same year. That she never won it can only be attributed to the relative lack of publicity accorded to the sport in which she excelled, for this Saskatchewan girl must be numbered among the most superlative athletes so far to emerge in Canada.  

In addition to all the above honours, she was also elected to three Sports Hall of Fame: The Canadian Sports Hall of Fame in 1961, the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame in 1966, and the Canadian Amateur Athletic Sports Hall of Fame in 1970. Prior to that, she captained and managed Canada's first International Uber Cup women's badminton team in 1957 and 1960; in 1950, she was named "one of the top six Canadian women athletes in first half of this century". In 1973, she was made a member of the Order of Canada and on October 17, 1981, after a long...

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17 McDonald and Drewery. *For the Record: Canada's Greatest Women Athletes*, pp. 63-6.


19 An article in Dorothy McKenzie Walton's file at Saskatchewan Provincial Archives, author and date unknown.

20 "Walton Passes Away." Newspaper Article, name and date unknown.
illness at the age of seventy-three, she passed away. She was the best badminton player to come out of the province or to represent Canada.

After the war ended, leisure formed an integral part of the process of rebuilding Canada and revitalizing the economy:

The construction of sports fields, parks, rinks, civic centres, pools, libraries and the like represented people's determination to build war memorials that lived rather than the cenotaphs and monuments that commemorated the First World War. As military bases closed down, many of their indoor facilities were moved, renovated and put to good use in the communities across Saskatchewan. Halls in Regina, Nokomis, Eston, Melfort, Langham, Oxbow, Mossbank, LaFleche, Watrous, Macklin, Moosomin, Hillmond, Shaunavon, Estevan, Rocanville, Broadview, Nipawin and Indian Head were either planned or in the process of construction in 1946.

This move toward recreation was very different from the trend that followed World War I. For example, the military presence in badminton that was so prominent in the province after World War I, all but disappeared after World War II. Also, it seemed that society celebrated and rejoiced after World War I but only wanted to forget World War II. Recreation provided a way of forgetting and sport gradually became a means of avoiding another war by transferring combat to competition. Furthermore following the war, sport received more

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21 "Walton - Dorothy L., " Newspaper article, name unknown, 1981.

22 "Walton Passes Away," Newspaper article, name and date unknown.

23 Ellis and Nixon, Saskatchewan Recreation Legacy, p. 38.

24 The pictures of the death camps left a nightmarish imprint that people wanted to escape from since the inhumanity they revealed was undeniable.
attention from the media. Prior to World War II, radio was the most prominent source of sport coverage. But beginning in the 1950s and more so in the 1960s, television replaced radio thereby making sport more immediate to the audience.\footnote{J.J. Coakley, \textit{Sport in Society: Issues and Controversies}, (Toronto: Mosby, 1994), pp. 336-7.} In July 1943, the Canadian government introduced the National Physical Fitness Act. It emerged from "a growing awareness of the government actions of foreign countries in similar areas of concern, and the high percentage of rejections of unfit Canadian personnel for military service."\footnote{Howell, \textit{History of Sport in Canada}, p. 322.} This resulted in the formation of a National Council on Physical Fitness: "with the object of promoting the physical fitness of Canadians through various programmes connected with education, recreation and sport."\footnote{Ibid.} This was the first stage of what in 1961 would become a more active involvement of government in sport.

In Saskatchewan, the situation varied in the three major clubs after the war. In Regina, for example, the military returned the WWC facility to its membership in 1947. The members wanted to hold a reopening celebration in the fall of that year, but delayed it because of "the necessary alterations which had to be made to the club house and certain difficulties in obtaining materials."\footnote{Rooke, "History of the Wascana Winter Club," \textit{Badminton in Saskatchewan}, pp. 13-5.} Later in the year, they had a reopening tea reception, along with badminton and skating exhibitions. Interestingly, while the reopening was well attended, the actual...
membership for that year was disappointingly low, only regaining its support in the following year."

Toward the end of the 1940s the WWC witnessed the interest in badminton rising to a new level. One newspaper article informed that "nearly 100 players from four Regina clubs are entered in the annual Regina badminton championship tournament which commences at the Wascana Winter Club tonight." While another stated, "that the largest badminton tournament in the history of Regina will be staged at the Wascana Club Friday and Saturday with 170 players from three provinces competing for Saskatchewan Championships."

The reason for the renewed enthusiasm in badminton went beyond fitness and competition: the social aspect of the sport was paramount. Players of all levels joined the Club, enjoyed the game and entered the tournaments. They were neither intimidated nor threatened by other or better players. They came to play and compete, but most importantly to have fun and socialize. As club member Barry Ursell put it: "We played the game for fun, competition came second, and conditioning not at all. We didn't like to lose and we played as well and as hard as we could." The same support for the game was not duplicated in Moose Jaw. After the MJBC club house was recovered from the Canadian military, the membership decline caused by the war was not reversed and each season

29 Rooke, Badminton In Saskatchewan, pp. 13-5.
30 "Jim Gets Nod," Newspaper article, name and date unknown.
31 "Big Shuttle Entry." Newspaper article, name and date unknown.
32 B.A. Ursell, Winnipeg, personal letter to author, 1943.
the clubs' leaders wondered whether the club was any longer viable. Thirty years later the Moose Jaw Times Herald recalled the situation: "At a meeting to decide the fate of the Moose Jaw Badminton Club, the board of governors decided to carry on for at least another season. For a time it was feared that the club would be unable to re-open due to the wartime loss of members."

The Club managed to remain open until 1951. The fundamental reason for its closure was financial but it is unknown if it was city size or simply apathy that led to its demise: "The Moose Jaw Badminton Club was up for sale following a decision reached at a meeting of the board of directors. A committee comprised of Mr. C.N. Henderson, Mr. I.C. Sutton and Tupper McConnell was set up to administer the sale of the building."

In Saskatoon the situation was the reverse of Moose Jaw. The SBC was able to recapture interest through the visitation of India’s touring Thomas Cup Team. This visit in 1949 of the six member team from India was symbolic of the new political and social climate which had resulted after World War II. Instead of a team from England there arrived a team from the very country that had represented the cornerstone of England's former empire. The colour barrier was broken and sport was now showing the supremacy of a different race. Further, the team was well received. According to Badminton in Saskatchewan, "packed galleries at both clubs greeted the visitors who displayed an outstanding brand of


Figure 7. The India Team, 1948
Back Row, left to right: Mohan, Ullal, Ferreira; Front Row, Agasgar, Lewis, Mugve, 1948

Courtesy of Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, date unknown.
badminton."

The members of India touring team were in Saskatchewan for ten days, spending most of their time in Saskatoon. Several Saskatoon homes hosted them for Christmas dinner and other social functions. The Saskatoon players and fans were impressed not only by their ability on the court but by their grace and friendliness off it. One spectator summed this up well: "No group of athletes ever represented a country in a better manner than did these six from the other side of the world. They were all perfect gentlemen and outstanding badminton players."

Interest in the game was also shown and generated by different individuals who spent a great deal of time perfecting their skills or helping others to do so. One good example was Claire Lovett of Regina. She worked as a legal secretary and was introduced to badminton by her employer who was a member of the Legislative Assembly. She later reminisced: "I found out years later that one of the reasons [her boss] (for suggesting badminton) was that I was still playing basketball and (badminton) was a more dignified sport. So that's when my basketball career ended." It is striking how playing badminton yet remaining lady-like are implicitly linked here. It was part of an attitude that women should desire "no greater destiny than to glory in their own

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"The India Team." Badminton In Saskatchewan. p. 33.

Ibid.

femininity" and that the essence of life experience and formal education was simply a "preparation for the problems of marriage."38

Claire’s love for badminton translated into great success as she won numerous provincial singles and provincial ladies doubles championships. In all she won ten Saskatchewan championships. Like Dorothy Walton, she decided to leave Saskatchewan to pursue her badminton career. She moved to Vancouver during World War II. Since then she has "taken countless city, provincial, national and international titles in Canada and the U.S. She has even captured two world titles, her most recent in the 1983 World’s Interport Invitational veterans championships held in Taiwan."39

Claire Lovett won her first national singles and ladies doubles titles in 1947 and she successfully defended them the following year.40 She was also a representative on Canada’s first Uber team in 1957, which had Dorothy Walton as both team captain and manager. She won numerous other honours including the Mixed Doubles Open Championship in 1963 and the Senior Ladies Doubles Championship in 1973, 1974, 1975, and 1976. In total she was five times the Canadian Badminton Champion, held nine American state titles, twenty-five provincial titles and twenty city championships.41 The Canadian Amateur Athletic Hall of Fame


Figure 8. Claire Lovett (Private Collection)
inducted her in 1972 for "outstanding achievement in Badminton on local and national levels over many years." In 1976, she became a member of the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame.\textsuperscript{42}

Claire Lovett continues to be active in badminton. She still travels to different places and countries to play the game and has never lost her interest in the sport. Asked what keeps her going in badminton she replied: "It's a pastime. I still can play fairly well and I meet so many nice people. It's just like a family gathering."\textsuperscript{43} This stress on the family is important to underline for it gives one a glimpse into the very nature of why badminton was not only able to attract but equally hold the interest of its participants. It also shows the essence of the transition of the sport played by a few to the sport that fit in so well with the sense of community that the post-war era ushered in.

Frank Longridge, the man called Mr. Badminton by the \textit{Saskatoon Star-Phoenix} in 1947, also offers insight into why badminton gained such a place in the province -- a place he helped very much to establish. Recently he recalled: "My mother and father both played badminton and they took me to a couple of city tournaments and I really got hooked. We had a brand new Moose Jaw Badminton Club at about the time I joined. We had six courts and probably [had] between 200 and 300 active

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{43} "Pair Have Racked Up The Titles." \textit{Regina Leader-Post}. April 19, 1988.
He liked the sport so much it literally became his obsession:

I like the physical challenge of the game. I liked the one-on-one competition in the singles and the faster tempo of the doubles. You had to be physically fit. I remember when I was in Saskatoon, I played every day of the week, at least two hours each day, sometimes three and four. 

Frank was to become not only a prominent player, but a promoter of badminton in the province particularly in the late 1940s. During his badminton career, he accumulated numerous trophies and honours. Among them were: eight provincial singles title, nine Saskatchewan mixed doubles championships, and twelve provincial men’s doubles crowns. He was a provincial triple crown winner numerous times as well.

Frank Longridge’s badminton success was remarkable. Ned Powers, of the Saskatoon Sun, believed Frank’s achievements "left an indelible mark in the Saskatchewan badminton record books" underlining that "his dominance over a stretch of years had not been equalled by a male athlete in sport." During his prime, Frank travelled to many tournaments in Alberta and Manitoba, entering also numerous Canadian national championships especially if they were in the west. The players


45 Ibid.

46 "Frank Longridge - Badminton," An article written for Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame, author and date unknown.


48 Ibid.
Figure 9. Frank Longridge

Courtesy of Saskatoon Star Phoenix, date unknown.
could not afford to go to the tournaments in the east simply because they did not have the travel allowances then. This, of course, would later change, as the federal government eventually assumed the costs of training and travel, taking away at the same time the freedom as to how its financial support was spent.

In the area of administration, Frank spent his time on "the executives of the Moose Jaw and Saskatoon clubs. He held the presidential chair for the Saskatchewan Badminton Association. He represented [the] province nationally, and in 1940 [he] was the inter-provincial team captain during the year's competition." In 1950 Doug Keough, editor for Badminton In Saskatchewan, commented on the invaluable contributions that Frank made to provincial badminton:

Badminton enthusiasts in this province and particularly Saskatoon, can thank Frank for the popularity which the game is enjoying these past few years. Frank donates hours of his time to the work behind the scenes in this association and at the Saskatoon Badminton Club, while untold numbers of players were started and coached by Longridge. A few of Frank's latest pupils are Joanne Legger, Ted Benesh and Bob Thomson. After World War II when the clubs were opening up again and the association was revived, Frank took the office of president, with a bank balance of but a few dollars. Now this Association, through his untiring efforts and work of the persons he has organized, is in the position to encourage and promote the game. The past three annual Saskatchewan provincial

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50 "F. Longridge - Badminton," a one-paged article. Author and date unknown.
tournaments have been tremendous successes and it was Frank who laid
the cornerstone and set the pattern.\textsuperscript{51}

More than anything he was an ambassador for the sport and his interest
in it was infectious.

In the early 1950s a new badminton star emerged. Kae Grant, nee
Otton, was a member of the University of Saskatchewan Badminton Club in
Saskatoon. Otton had already had some success in her university years
in several Inter-University Championships. In 1940-41, for example, she
and Margaret Robinson captured the Intervarsity Championship.

\textit{Greystone}, the University of Saskatchewan student publication, described
the victory in 1941:

Keeping up one hundred percent record of all wins and no losses the
women’s badminton team consists of Kae Otton and Marg. Robinson,
once again came through with a decisive victory over their opponents
from the University of Alberta. At no time was there any doubt as
to the outcome, the Huskiettes being in good shape and showing more
experience. After winning each of their singles, the girls went on
to take the doubles handily, and win the Intervarsity
Championships.\textsuperscript{52}

Ten years later Otton entered the Canadian National Championships
and won the ladies singles title.\textsuperscript{53} The following year, she underwent

\textsuperscript{51} D. Keough, "Our President, Frank Longridge," \textit{Badminton In
Saskatchewan}, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{52} "Badminton," \textit{Greystone 1941}, published by students of the
University of Saskatchewan.

\textsuperscript{53} H.A.E. Scheele, editor. \textit{The International Badminton Association
p. 150.
rigorous training with her sights fixed on the All-England title. A newspaper reported:

The Canadian champion, known to the fans as Kay Otton of Regina before her recent marriage, hopes to emulate the success of Dorothy McKenzie Walton, of Swift Current, who came to England 13 years ago and won the singles crown. Since then Canada has not been represented until this year.54

What is particularly interesting about Otton's preparation was that she received coaching tips from the Malayan badminton experts, Eddie and Dave Choong, while they were in Canada. She described them as, "simply wizards at the game" underlining that she had benefited greatly from their expertise.55 Again one sees how far the game had moved from its upper-class Anglo-Saxon origins to the place where other races were experts. She went to the All-England Championship in 1952, but she did not take part. One source explained her non-participation in this way:

Mrs. Kay Grant, holder of the Canadian women's badminton championship, has withdrawn from the All-England championships now under way, it was learned Thursday. The tournament opened Wednesday at London's Empress Hall with an entry list of nearly 300 players from seven countries. Mrs. Grant, the former Kay Otton, of Regina, trained for the championship but now has advised officials she will not participate because of an [undisclosed] indisposition.56

Otton Grant continued to be active as a player after she came back. She was also one of the team members in Canada's first Uber Cup team in 1957 in which Dorothy Walton was the team captain and manager. Claire Lovett

54 "Regina Shuttler Eyes High Honors." Newspaper article, name unknown. 1952.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
Figure 10. Kae Otton, 1941, University of Saskatchewan

was also on the team. In all, Saskatchewan boasted three representatives in the seven member Uber Cup team in 1957.

It was not only Kae Otton who benefited from the advice of the Choong brothers, but the entire badminton community of the WWC who welcomed them in March of 1954. According to the Regina Leader-Post, the two brothers held "no fewer than 47 open titles" and were "regarded as the leading players in the [badminton] shuttle at the time."57 They put on a series of exhibition matches at the WWC. The local players taking part in the exhibition were Tommy Drope, Barry Ursell, Jack England, Carman Woolsey, Stu Barnard, Art Booth, Ted Child, Carol Engel and Jean Storey.58

The SBC did not have the benefit of a similar exhibition in 1954, but it did undergo a crisis in that same year. The Club had been faithfully paying taxes to the city of Saskatoon ever since it was built in 1930. But because of the financial difficulties in the early 1950s, the Club had been struggling financially to stay in operation. It appointed A.H. Bence who was a solicitor and Frank Chisholm, the Club's secretary-manager, to appear before the City Council's standing committee to ask for a tax rebate. They made the case for the Council's support:

The club was having a desperate struggle to keep its door open and raising the fees, from past experience, only tended to reduce membership. The club would simply have to close its doors unless it received some subsidy. It would be better for the city to have it

57 "Shuttle Display." Regina Leader-Post, 1954.

58 Ibid.
Figure 11. Eddie and Dave Choong in Regina

Courtesy of Regina Leader Post, 1934.
operating as it is now. Considerable voluntary labour was done by club members now, and if the club came before council asking that its operation be taken over by the Playgrounds Association, it would be more costly to the city. With the club offering recreation to 60 youngsters as well as a large number of students from the Technical Collegiate, it should have the full co-operation of all members of council.\textsuperscript{59}

Mayor John McAskill thought that having the Playgrounds Association operate the club would be a good idea. Besides, why should the citizens at large "pay for the recreation of a few through taxation."\textsuperscript{60}

Alderman Bert Sears supported the mayor's view and added the following:

The present membership now was being subsidized by about $3 per member. The labor halls in the city were refused tax rebates, although they were non-profit organizations. If the Playgrounds Association took over operations of the club, I think it would serve 600 youngsters instead of 60.\textsuperscript{61}

Mr. Frank Chisholm replied:

It is impossible to accommodate 600 youngsters with the present facilities. The courts could hold 48 players and a match lasted about half an hour. Membership [already] had dropped from its peak of 225 in the 1930s due to competition from other badminton courts that had been built since.\textsuperscript{62}

Finally, the City Council approved the motion to rebate half the 1954 taxes, making it clear at the same time that the Club would not be

\textsuperscript{59} "Badminton Club Gets Rebate On '54 and That's All," \textit{Saskatoon Star-Phoenix}, September 19, 1955.

\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{61} \textit{Ibid.}

\textsuperscript{62} \textit{Ibid.}
receiving any more rebates in the future. The Club could do nothing but accept the Council's decision, forcing it to continue operating under unfavourable but not impossible financial circumstances. Nevertheless, the tax issue would continue to be a point of contention between the Club and City Council in the years to come.

Beginning in the 1950s, sport increasingly became a fundamental part of the public education system. This was in part due to the increased urbanization taking place in the province which in turn led to increased organization of schools and their curricula. This inevitably resulted in an increase of juniors participating in various sports with badminton being one of them. The Saskatchewan High School Athletic Association (SHSAA), formed in the 1940s, took on a major role after the war in the high schools. It not only fostered sporting activities but offered some training in those sports. Sport became an integral part of high school and badminton was included in the SHSAA program in 1951. It enabled badminton to not only have a much wider exposure, but the program also produced several prominent players in the 1950s. Some notable examples were: Barry Grey-Owen, Tom Bergstrom, Cathy Wolfe, Jim Kortje, Carol Capeling, Dave Chisholm and Ann Thorpe. They won various provincial high school badminton titles.

Badminton was becoming such a popular sport among the juniors that almost all the high schools in the province had a badminton team. The season would normally start in January and last until April, concluding

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Ibid.

each year with regional and divisional playoffs along with a provincial
tournament. In the 1950s, high schools from Saskatoon, especially
Saskatoon Nutana and Saskatoon Technical Collegiate, were the dominant
forces. They often won the majority of the provincial championships. 65

Various badminton clubs in the province during this decade also had
a good number of juniors. The junior section looked promising and the
clubs, especially the SBC, were pleased with their prospects. In 1954
the Saskatoon Star Phoenix described this participation:

Great interest is being shown by the junior section and it is
anticipated that this section of the club, playing Tuesday, Thursday
and Saturday afternoons, will be as large as that of 1938, when the
SBC sported close to 100 juniors. 66

Frank Chisholm, a volunteer coach at the SBC, added in 1959:

The Northern High School Playoffs, and the Saskatchewan Playoffs are
also played here. On Mondays and Wednesdays we have roughly one
hundred Technical Collegiate students playing in the Club, and have
sixty-four players playing in the Inter-Collegiate Team Play every
Friday. We also have Public School Championships played here
[1959]. 67

Within the province the schools of the 1960s had well equipped
gymnasiums together with a physical education professional, thus
providing year-round programs for the students. 68 Most of these

65 Ibid.


67 F.R.A. Chisholm, personal letter to Mr. Austin McNab. February 11.
1959.

68 Ellis and Nixon, Saskatchewan Recreation Legacy, pp. 60-1.
Figure 12. The Juniors at Saskatoon Badminton Club, 1958

Courtesy of Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, date unknown.
gymnasiums had badminton courts and equipment, and the physical
educators were qualified to teach badminton. Mr. J.B. Leicester, Mr.
"Ches" Anderson and Miss Marigold Edward of the College of Physical
Education at University of Saskatchewan were instrumental in equipping
these physical educators. The result was that badminton was further
enhanced during this decade especially among the juniors. The decade
also witnessed the first Pepsi-Cola National junior tournament as well
as the inaugural Canada Winter Games in Quebec City.

Junior badminton in the province continued to be well supported by
teachers and volunteers who donated many hours of their time to instruct
and train the youngsters. Some of the more notable volunteers were
Frank Chisholm, Art Booth, Carol Capeling, Caroline McClure and Joanne
Jenkins. Badminton presentations, instructions and clinics were given
by these volunteers on a regular basis. Chisholm stated in 1963:

Mrs. Hughes of John Lake School phoned in to say that Miss Caroline
McClure and Miss Joanne Jenkins had made such a fine presentation of
Badminton to a large group of Grade 7 and 8 pupils. This same group
have been invited to the Badminton Club for a Saturday morning play.
Busy as Miss McClure and Miss Jenkins are at the University of
Saskatchewan, I [Frank Chisholm] am sure that they will be willing
to make a repeat performance for other groups.69

At times there were incentives to attract and keep the juniors
interested in the game. A report from Frank Chisholm notes that they
were rather successful: "with the set up of free use of a Badminton
Racquet for a year to junior members, the courts for Junior play on

69 F. Chisholm. "Saskatoon Badminton Club." Typewritten article to be
submitted to Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, 1963.
Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and any school holidays are nearly always full. Junior badminton was regarded as one of the major highlights during the 1960s in Saskatchewan badminton. By 1961, the work of those volunteers bore fruit as Saskatchewan sent its first junior representative to the Canadian junior championships. The players were Joanne Jenkins, Carolyn McClure and Joan MacAuley. They did very well in the tournament as in the year following when Carolyn McClure and Joanne Jenkins were ranked seventh in the Canadian junior women's doubles, a first for Saskatchewan juniors.

The type of voluntarism that produced such success in high school in junior badminton seemed to be an indication of the viability of the sport, yet at the same time voluntarism could not produce the success that the federal government soon came to expect from sport in general. Beginning in 1952, the Soviet Union broke the socialist taboo by joining the capitalist countries at the Olympics in Helsinki. Their impressive performance shocked the western world. As a result, sport received a new impetus and emphasis in the west. Furthermore, during the 1950s there was a gradual moving away from the position stated by Prime Minister Mackenzie King in 1936: "It is doubtful that anyone participating in the Olympic Games is a representative of the Government.

of this country," to that stated by Prime Minister John Diefenbaker in 1960:

There are tremendous dividends in national pride from some degree of success in athletics. The uncommitted [communist] countries of the world are now using these athletic contests as measurements of the strength and power of the nations participating."

Also throughout the late 1950s and the 1960s Canadians were awakening to national sentiments. The poor showing of Canada at the Olympics throughout the 1950s, and especially the fact that the Soviet Union had defeated the Canadian Olympic Hockey Team in 1956 were both major blows to Canadian national pride. It showed clearly that Canadian athletes could not compete internationally without a federal financial commitment to improve the calibre of Canadian athletes. Furthermore, the flag debate in 1964 caused divisions within the country and sport was seen as a means to unite Canada.

On September 29, 1961, the federal government passed Bill C-131, the Fitness and Amateur Sports Act. Its goals were many. Most importantly, the act resulted in the establishment of a federal bureaucracy that increasingly came to control what was initially a 5 million dollar budget. The act was to promote fitness among Canadians and help elite

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74 Ibid., p. 73.


athletes to act as ambassadors of excellence in international competition. Ironically, the ambiguity of the act would limit its effectiveness for an entire decade." The federal document indicated implicitly that Canadians in general, as the Duke of Edinburgh had reminded them in 1959," were far from fit and that it was incumbent upon the federal government to rectify the situation. However, the government's determination to produce elite athletes who could win gold medals would soon overshadow this intention of encouraging mass participation.

The act encouraged fitness research and supported programs which would put those studies into practice. It hoped that a more scientific structure of what produced excellence in athletes would gradually come into existence. The federal government had initially believed that reliance on volunteers and mass participation would produce international calibre athletes, but it soon saw the consistently poor performance of Canadian athletes in international competitions and realized that something much more was needed. As a result, instead of always approaching and listening to the National Advisory Council, which the act had set up to distribute money to provincial programs, the federal government now gradually turned inward to its own bureaucracy and away from the Council." Consequently, in the 1970s the federal


78 Hall et al., Sport In Canadian Society, p. 73.

79 Macintosh et al., Sport and Politics in Canada, p. 32.
government adopted a completely different direction as it chose to emphasize elitism over mass participation.

Bill C-13l did not have any immediate effect on badminton in Saskatchewan. However, the centralized bureaucracy which resulted for the governance of sport and the maintenance of its standards completely changed the whole complexion of sport and its administration within the country. Since the viability of a given sport depended on funding, each sport had to establish its own bureaucracy in order to apply and compete for the government grant. In Saskatchewan, the CBA and the SBA would be the two major bureaucracies that badminton depended upon for funding application. Furthermore, each sport recognized that only success could really impress the federal government. This consequently forced badminton in Saskatchewan to move toward a new type of elitism, an elitism based on skill. What the act did, in effect, was set in motion the process of professionalization of amateur sport. Claire Lovett, in 1992, summed up the result of that process: "there is no amateur sport now. They all have coaches and training and I think that's sad in life because a lot of people would just like the friendship and to have fun playing something."80

In the early 1960s, the University of Saskatchewan badminton team began to exhibit its dominance in the Western Canada Intercollegiate Athletic Association (WCIAA) tournament. In 1963, for example, the University of Saskatchewan (U of S) Badminton team boasted several high-calibre players including Jeff Holland, Lorna Forbes, Sandra Estlia.

John McAulay, Chin Wah-Seng, Dave Frost, Joanne Jenkins and Carolyn McLure. Joanne Jenkins and Carolyn McLure were the nationally ranked junior doubles while Chin Wah-Seng had won many western-Canadian titles and was one of the top players in the country.

On February 28 and 29 of 1964, the University of Saskatchewan Regina Campus hosted the WCIAU badminton competition at the WWC. The U of S badminton team, led by Chin Wah-Seng, John MacCauley, Doug Frost and coached by John Leicester, captured the team championship by accumulating the highest aggregate. This was the first time the U of S badminton team ever won a major championship. Most of the credit, however, went to Chin Wah-Seng since he was the acknowledged back-bone of the team.

Chin Wah-Seng came to attend the U of S medical college in 1962. During his five years at the University, he brought many honours to the school capturing three singles titles and 3 WCIAU doubles titles. According to the University of Saskatchewan Wall of Fame, Chin Wah-Seng's "overall standard of play and gentlemanly deportment did much to further the sport in Western Canada." He was duly inducted into U of S Wall of Fame on September 29, 1984. Chin also did very well in the provincial and national levels capturing on three separate occasions provincial championships in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba. In 1965-66, he won the Canadian Open Men's Doubles with John McCauley.

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81 H.I. Evans, Personal Correspondence to Mr. S.R. Lowthian. February 20, 1964.
82 "Chin Wah Seng," University of Saskatchewan Athletic Wall of Fame. (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Printing Services).
83 Ibid.
Chin-Wah-Seng  Mr. J. Leicester, Coach

Back Row, left to right: D. Frost, W.S. Chin, C. McLure, J. Kortje
Front Row: J. Jenkins, Mr. J. Leicester (Coach), A. Saville, Missing: P. Hogg

W.C.I.A.U. - 63 - Champions

J. Kortje  D. Frost  J. Jenkins  C. McLure

Figure 13. W.C.I.A.U. Champions, 1963

Despite these successes, the University in the mid-1960s decided to cancel the badminton program due to budget constraint. It saw badminton as a low profile and mostly recreational sport on campus, as such it was unprofitable to support. Thus, the conflict between elitism and enjoyment, success and recreation soon undermined official support of a sport that found it hard to compete against other more high-profile sports.

The SBC also went through a time of transition during the same period that the university ceased to support its badminton team. In 1963, the City of Saskatoon decided to rezone the district in which the SBC was situated. Later on, City Council decided that a new freeway bridge was to be constructed in the area. The result was that the SBC had to either move or fold. The City made an initial offer to buy the property for $75,000 but the Club rejected it contending:

The Saskatoon Badminton Club has been in operation for 33 years and this will be our 34th season. The Board of Directors trust that the City Fathers and the citizens of Saskatoon will agree that this club has provided a necessary and useful service for the youth and adult life of our city, at a nominal cost. This club has made a winter activity, namely badminton, possible for young and old. The Badminton Club was instrumental in the revival of badminton in the City High Schools as well as starting this activity in many country centres -- chiefly through the annual school tournaments. For several years a very active junior group from the local high schools has been in existence. It would be a "crime" to destroy it. An appraisal by a reliable builder as to the cost of replacing the Badminton Club is $129,797.00 (building only). Land would, therefore, be an additional cost. There are several ways of making

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84 J. Leicester. personal interview by author. February 24, 1993.
a settlement which would be acceptable to the Saskatoon Badminton Club. These are:

1. A straight cash settlement of $149,797.00 from which we [the SBC] would buy our own land for rebuilding.

2. A cash settlement of $130,000.00 plus land for building purposes from the city.

3. That the city erect a building of equal value (accommodation) in a suitable location.

4. That the Saskatoon Badminton Club and City Playgrounds build combined badminton courts, tennis courts and swimming pool, the indoor swimming pool to be available to citizens in the summer. The indoor swimming pool would be supervised in the winter by the Badminton Club but on a membership basis only.  

The City made another offer of $77,000 but again the Club rejected it. According to Chisholm, a negotiator for SBC, the City and the Club finally reached a settlement in which the City would pay $75,000, with an additional $25,000 if the Club would take over the tennis club as well. The Club agreed. Initially other shareholders in the Club had wanted to just collect the money and disband the Club, but Chisholm bought out their shares and vetoed the disbandment of the Club.  

The old SBC by the Saskatoon Arena was demolished on May 29, 1965. Before the demolition took place, plans for the new building were already under way. Frank Chisholm was mainly responsible for the design of the new building which consisted of six courts and was solely

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85 F. Chisholm, typed written article on Saskatoon Badminton Club. (1930-1964).


87 Correspondence from Saskatoon's City Commissioner to F. Chisholm. May 18, 1965.
for badminton. The following year on October 29, the new badminton club house was ready for use and The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix reported its official opening:

A large crowd attended, including several original members of the old club. Jack Wells, a past president of the club, was chairman for the occasion and the ribbon cutting ceremony was performed by Alderman Ab Flavelle. Ald. Tom Quigley, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Board, led off a group of speakers which included Frank Chisholm, Bill Graham of Rosetown, Mr. Flavelle and Sid Strutton. Among early members of the club present were: Messrs. Chisholm, Flavelle and Strutton along with Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Lee, John Whalen and Tom Porteous. Club president Mike Hargreaves was around greeting the guests and Bella Ross and Eva Newcombe were in charge of the refreshment end of the program.

Frank Chisholm's contributions to the new club house were tremendous:

He worked out the design for the new building to the point where the planning could be turned over to an architect. He subsequently spent many hours supervising its construction. He is solely responsible for the improved design of the six courts, constructed in 1965. He ran tournaments, set up draws, ran leagues and drilled young players in badminton skills. In addition to his efforts at the club, he also, for a number of years, wrote a column "Hints on Badminton" for the Star Phoenix."

In 1988 he was inducted into the Saskatoon Sports Hall of Fame:


Ibid.
"His mark is still felt. He truly 'firmed up the foundation and helped put down the roots of badminton in Saskatoon'."  

Badminton in Saskatchewan had gone through a number of changes during this period of transition. The collapse of the University program seemed symbolic of its struggle to becoming a high-profile sport on campus. The commitment of the schools and the dedication of individuals showed how badminton had adapted during this time in the province. Furthermore, the 1967 Canada Games represented a turning point of federal involvement in sport. The Games convinced the federal government of the political usefulness of sport, as the slogan "unity through sport" portrayed. They also emphasized that voluntarism could not bring victory, and victory was what the federal government wanted most. Equally important, since eligibility in the Games was dependent upon each sport becoming affiliated to its provincial and national organization, a bureaucracy came into existence which the federal government was increasingly able to control. The federal government's eventual break with the National Advisory Council in 1968 was a sign of its new direction and dedication to elitism in the 1970s.

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SPORT REDEFINED:

The Impact of Television and the Place of Badminton,

1970 - 1979
CHAPTER III

The bureaucracy which resulted from the entry of both the federal and provincial governments into sports in the 1960s became much more pervasive and entrenched during the 1970s. The reason for this increased intrusion by the two levels of government was the influence of television combined with the ideology of the Welfare State. Although badminton would never become a saleable sport for television, it was nevertheless very much affected by the changes that television brought to sport in general and society in particular.

The influence and impact of television was immense. First, it made sport visible on a scale that was unheard of in previous generations and in a manner that was immediate. Suddenly, people all over could instantly be part of the excitement of an event. They need not wait to read it in the newspaper the following day. Second, television made sport powerful because of the profit that could be derived from it. Its potential to attract a wide spectrum of consumers with its endless varieties of sports programs seemed limitless. Third, as television had the ability to fascinate, everyone including governments, big businesses and advertisers wanted to use it to achieve their own ends. Fourth, television made the spectators knowledgeable and more informed. This gave the consumers a sense of belonging and a means of participating.

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without actually playing the sport. For example, in 1972 millions of people witnessed Paul Henderson’s goal for Team Canada against the Soviet Union’s National Hockey Team. The sense of being part of that excitement was brought about by television. Also, not being part of the actual event would make one unable to engage in the numerous casual conversations that would subsequently be based upon that event. In a way, watching had taken the place of participating.

The first television appeared in Canada in 1951. However, it was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that it gained a prominent place in most Canadian homes. The delay was due to the gradual rise in the standard of living which resulted from increased industrialization. Eventually, a television set became a measure of what was essential to a home as well as an important source of entertainment. Television also established a distinction between professional and amateur sport, with the result that professional sport set a standard of play that became the norm expected by the masses. Thus, the amateur sport of the Olympics was somehow regarded as unsatisfactory if it did not produce champion athletes that equalled the calibre of professional sport.

The amateur sport of the Olympics was seen as a pure sport uncorrupted by personal motives and financial gain. Ideally, all the Olympians participated with the sole desire to win or demonstrate their excellence in their particular sport. However, this ideal of pure sport

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4 Hall et al., *Sport in Canadian Society*, p. 69.

5 Macintosh et al., *Sport and Politics in Canada*, p. 67.
still had to be profitable for television to market it. Consequently, the standard of excellence established by professional sport had to be present. Governments wanted to encourage and at the same time benefit from their support of Olympic athletes. They wanted to be seen as fostering the ideal of excellence purely for itself, yet knew at the same time, if the excellence did not produce gold medals then the government support would be criticized. As a result, in 1970, the Canadian government set up a policy entitled, "A Proposed Sports Policy For Canadians" with a goal of supporting elitism over mass participation in sports.

What made this government document possible was not simply the powerful influence of television, but also the ideology of the Welfare State. This ideology justified government intervention in the affairs of society in order to readjust the inequalities caused by capitalism. The concept of the Welfare State took shape during the Depression when it seemed apparent that private enterprise alone could not help in the recovery of the economy. Gradually the idea of government being responsible for the health and welfare of its citizens became widely accepted as federal programs such as baby bonuses, unemployment insurance and old-age pension were put in place. Over time, the government came to be seen as the regulator and protector of society and its involvement in sport was only a logical extension of that.

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6 Macintosh et al., Sport and Politics in Canada, pp. 51-2.
7 Harvey et al., Not Just A Game, p. 99.
8 Hall et al., Sport in Canadian Society, pp. 85-6.
ideology. After all, if the government was expected to be involved in the workplace then it would also seem justified being involved in programs which would increase the productivity of the workplace.

Here is where a dichotomy developed. On the one hand, the federal government set up a policy which had little to do with mass participation and everything to do with elitism. On the other hand, provincial governments were left with the masses. Even though the federal government could claim that its policy was "for Canadians", there were few concrete program commitments to achieve "these goals". Thus in reality "the most significant of these new measures was the establishment of new organizations that allowed the federal government to exert a more direct influence on elite athletes."\(^9\)

This new and increased government intervention in sport, together with the high standard of living and the powerful influence of television, were all equally evident during the same period in Saskatchewan. For example, between 1972 and 1978 the total personal income in the province would increase dramatically by as much as 250 per cent.\(^11\) Also, in the early 1970s, the Saskatchewan government would sign the Interprovincial Lotteries Act, thereby channelling lottery funds into sports, culture and recreation. This would have an enormous impact on sport since the available financial support would enable program development. Further, in 1972, Sask Sport came into being and became the central federation representing various sports organizations.

\(^9\) Hall et al., *Sport in Canadian Society*, pp. 87-8.

\(^10\) Macintosh et al., *Sport and Politics in Canada*, p. 95.

in the province. In that same year, the College of Physical Education at the University of Saskatchewan initiated the pilot project for the PARTICIPAction Movement. In 1975, the City of Saskatoon became known as the "Fitness Capital of the World" after a successful challenge to the City of Umeå in Sweden. Under all these optimal conditions, people in the province were becoming more fitness and health conscious. Badminton would benefit from this process.

Badminton initially benefited in 1971, when the CBA organized its fifth annual tour of foreign players. That year the players were invited from the mainland of communist China. At the time, the People’s Republic of China was not a member of the International Badminton Federation, and as such the Chinese players were not allowed to play in the Thomas Cup, Uber Cup, All-England as well as other internationally recognized open tournaments. Consequently, no one knew with certainty the calibre of their play. However, there were several reports of their playing abilities prior to their arrival in Saskatchewan:

In October, 1966, a Chinese team visited Denmark for a series of friendly exhibition matches. At the time, Denmark was rated No. 2 in the world in men's competition, trailing only Indonesia. China won 15 matches and Denmark won none. In April 1967 the Danes travelled to China for another exchange. This time they played 24 matches and China won all 24. Denmark managed to extend the opposition to three games in only two of those 24 contests. There is a vague report of an exhibition contest between China and Indonesia which occurred in 1967, and resulted in 4-4 tie. Details

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12 Ellis and Nixon, Saskatchewan's Recreation Legacy, p. 80.
of the time, places, scores and names of competitors are not known.\textsuperscript{13}

Apparently badminton had become one of the major sports in China since the mid-1950s. A Canadian tourist who came back from China in 1971 reported that there were "20 courts badminton halls in Peking, every court occupied and a lineup of 10 or 15 players waiting behind each end of every court."\textsuperscript{14} The Chinese players were said to be "self-taught", and two major areas were stressed: physical conditioning and good sportsmanship.\textsuperscript{15} Their physical conditioning was superb:

Their dedication to physical fitness is almost fanatical. Chinese players do not warm up on the court. They are expected to arrive on the court ready to play. Chinese players reportedly go through 45 minutes of calisthenics before they even appear on the court, and observers say they do incredibly strenuous arm and leg stretching exercises. Apparently they even wear gloves to keep their hands warm before a match.\textsuperscript{16}

On November 9, 1971, the Chinese team came to Saskatchewan. The Chinese players put on a series of exhibition matches against the Canadian top players at the WWC. The Chinese team consisted of Tang Hsien-hu and Hou Chia-chang, the best in China. The Canadian team was made up of Pal Chawla and Don Smith, rated tenth and eleventh respectively in Canada. Needless to say, Pal Chawla and Don Smith lost

\textsuperscript{13} The Canadian Badminton Association 5th Annual Tour of Foreign Players Featuring the People's Republic of China, November, 1971.

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
their matches. It was a further sign just how much the sport had passed from a sign of white western superiority to the place where other races were admired for their dominant play and refined skill.

In 1972, an event less evident in its immediate impact but significantly changed the structure of sport in the province. For many years, various sport-governing bodies, government representatives along with the Saskatchewan Branch of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada had discussed the need for an umbrella organization for sports. Finally on January 20, 1972, Sask Sport was officially formed and incorporated as a federation of governing bodies for various sport organizations in the province. Its main goal was to "elevate sport to its highest level in every corner of this province." In 1973, Sask Sport was given a license to operate a lottery and it was agreed that all the proceeds would go to sport, culture and recreation with sport receiving the largest share -- fifty per cent. The millions of dollars that were made each year through the lotteries, channeled to Sask Sport and distributed among sports associations had a tremendous impact. More sports began to organize themselves, as a result, in the province and joined the Sask Sport membership in order to be eligible for funding. An increasing number of sport programs were established providing incentives to athletes, coaches, teachers, volunteers and administrators alike. Various sport organizations could then afford to pay for traveling.


18 Ellis and Nixon, Saskatchewan's Recreation Legacy, p. 80.

19 Sask Sport - It's For You!, Sask Sport Pamphlet. 1972.
coaching and administrative expenses which they were unable to do before.

The SBA joined Sask Sport in 1972, becoming one of its earliest and most active members. It received a substantial amount of funding from it each year and was able to use it to not only promote interest in the game but raise the calibre of play within the province. The Association was able to provide coaching, clinics, organize tournaments, send athletes to in and out-of-province competitions and also help to organize volunteers for its various programs. Sask Sport was responsible for the SBA’s ability to send local players to major tournaments such as the Saskatchewan Winter Games, Jeux Canada Winter Games and Regional Games. Without Sask Sport’s funding, Saskatchewan badminton players’ experiences and exposure would have remained very limited. These years in the 1970s would prove to be building ones for Saskatchewan badminton players as there was no extraordinary player who emerged as a result of the Sask Sport’s financial initiatives. At the same time various badminton clubs throughout the province now had a central association to look toward for direction and financial assistance. More volunteers in the form of coaches, teachers and administrators came to the fore to support the sport, thus providing a healthy atmosphere for badminton to grow.

With the establishment of Sask Sport along with the SBA’s emphasis on junior development, many junior programs, clinics and tournaments were organized. Bob Burrage of the SBC felt that the "junior program was very important to building good badminton players for the future.
Instruction reaps the most benefit at a young age -- even at 10 years.\textsuperscript{20} The Parks and Recreation Departments and the School Boards of various cities and towns organized badminton clinics to teach students particularly those in grade 6, 7 and 8 in public schools. The clinics were five weeks long with two lessons taught each week. The lessons consisted of conditioning, fundamentals, forehand, backhand, service and the rules of badminton. Several of the participating schools in the Saskatoon area were: Greystone Heights, Queen Elizabeth, Boughton and Pleasant Hill.\textsuperscript{21}

The SBC had a junior development program which had a large following averaging about sixty junior members in the 1970s. They were divided into four age groups: under 18, under 16, under 14 and under 12. They played every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon, after school as well as all day Saturday. Ernie McCollough, Mike Hargreaves and Darlene Kudrick were in charge of the program. They were preparing a number of junior prospects that they hoped would do well in both the annual provincial tournaments and the Pepsi-Cola junior competition.

The WWC also had a strong junior development program, even stronger than that of the SBC. This was something amply evidenced in almost every annual provincial junior tournament which Regina almost always dominated. For example, in 1972 Regina juniors won twelve out of fifteen provincial titles in the bantam, juvenile and junior divisions at the Saskatchewan junior badminton championships, while in 1974 Regina

\textsuperscript{20} "It Is A Game For The Birds: Badminton Interest Soars". \textit{Saskatoon Star-Phoenix}, September 30, 1971.

\textsuperscript{21} D.E. Fleming, Correspondence to all Principals of Elementary Schools, 1971.
won ten out of fifteen. The main contributor to the Regina junior program was Art Booth, a long-time member at the WWC and an avid badminton coach. Some of his pupils, such as Bobby Black and Wendy Child, became provincial champions. Even though he was a volunteer coach, he took his duty seriously. Art always ensured that his pupils learned from his lessons and insisted that they practised on their own. All his pupils were required to pass a set of demanding skill tests which they had to master or else they could not "graduate" from his coaching.

Not only was Art Booth ensuring that his pupils learn the proper basic skills, but he also showed great interest in them and their progress. This was probably why so many juniors liked to be around him and learn from him. They respected him and were willing to train under his tutelage. His pupils consistently performed well especially in the annual provincial junior tournaments.

However, the Saskatchewan juniors did not do as well in the bigger tournaments, such as the one sponsored by the Pepsi-Cola and the Prairie Regional. They did not win any event. In 1973, the SBC held the Prairie Regional Junior Tournament. It turned out to be one of the biggest tournaments the SBC had ever staged. It drew entries from Manitoba, Alberta and Saskatchewan. Randy Hargreaves, the assistant tournament director, commented on the tournament:


Over 200 competitors entered the event which is far more than in past Prairie Regionals. It got to be a real headache at times trying to keep things running smoothly but at least we managed to produce some very good badminton. The big reason why the tournament turned out to be larger than we expected was the massive out-of-province entry. Both Calgary and Winnipeg sent large contingents which did a lot to increase the calibre of play.24

It was a great tournament, but Saskatchewan players did not do well at all. The players from Alberta and Manitoba proved far superior and captured all the titles. Yet, despite the poor performance by local players, Randy Hargreaves explained why it should not have been unexpected:

The other two prairie provinces are bound to win because they have larger populations which produce more badminton players than we have. They have larger and richer clubs than we have. Several clubs in both Calgary and Winnipeg can hire professionals while Regina pays Saskatchewan’s only badminton pro. This lack of professional instruction has to make a difference.25

These disadvantages of having a small population and lacking professional coaches would be overcome specifically in the following decade as Sask Sport introduced its Sask First program.

In 1978, coinciding with Regina’s Diamond Jubilee Celebration, Regina staged the Canadian Junior and Juvenile Badminton Championships. It was organized by the Wascana Tournament Committee and held at Regina’s Agridome and Armouries. The tournament was a five-day event

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25 Ibid.
Figure 35. Canadian Junior Badminton Championships, 1978

(SBA’s Collection).
(March 1 to March 5) and there were over two hundred and thirty players competing in ladies' singles, ladies' doubles, men's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles. "Unfortunately, no Saskatchewan players were able to advance into the medal-round play. However, even though Saskatchewan juniors did not fare well when competing against players from other provinces, this period would prove to be building years for them. They gained a great deal of exposure and experience from playing against higher caliber players which they would be able to pass on to other players in the province.

Another program in the province which benefited from government funding was the Prairie Athletic Conference (PAC). It was formed in 1970 and prospered during the 1970s. The purpose of the PAC was to provide a basis for various intercollegiate sports such as basketball, volleyball and hockey within provincial institutes. Badminton joined in the 1972-73 season and its membership was based mainly in Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon. Throughout the 1970s, many colleges and institutes, such as the Briercrest Bible Institute (BBI), Canadian Bible College, Saskatchewan Technical Institute (STI), Wascana Institute and Kelsoy Institute, joined the Conference. During this decade badminton enjoyed a high level of success both in terms of participation and competition:

In its first year PAC badminton was very successful. Three tournaments were staged, one in Saskatoon, one in Regina and one in Moose Jaw. It is unfortunate they all had to be held after


Christmas in February and March, but this limitation can be easily overcome next year with a little more advance planning. In spite of the late start, all three tournaments ran well with a minimum of organizational problems. Special thanks to Marnie Head and Dave Worby at USRC and Jim Schmalenberg at the Moose Jaw STI for directing two of the tournaments.28

There were four teams involved in the tournaments in 1972-73 season: Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Arts and Science (SIAAS), University of Saskatchewan (Regina Campus), Saskatchewan Technical Institute (STI - Moose Jaw), and University of Saskatchewan (Saskatoon). Most of the tournaments were well organized with round robin draw used for all the events. The overall team winner of the first badminton season was the U of S Regina Campus, accumulating a total of 70 points for the three tournaments.29

The competitions and participation at the PAC continued to thrive throughout the decade. Each team had a manager-coach and each received financial backing from its respective institute as well as from student fees. Each team consisted of ten members and a player was limited to playing no more than two events. The institutes covered all their traveling expenses.30 Some of the coaches involved during the period were J. Schmalenberg (STI), T. and C. Little (BBI), G. Korven (Wascana) and A. McKenzie (Kelsey). Tournaments’ records through the 1970s indicate that interest was keen and the participation was high. It consistently had at least five teams participating in all their

29 Ibid.
tournaments. Kelsey consistently dominated throughout, winning six times in the 1970s.

In 1972, the College of Physical Education at the University of Saskatchewan initiated the Participaction Movement. The success of this pilot project showed how much the government and television had managed to transform the world of sport. It also demonstrated the federal government’s attempt to resolve the contradiction between its support of elitism and yet its official sport policy being apparently meant for all Canadians. In 1970, the federal government established the National Sports and Recreation Centre in Ottawa.31 The Centre would provide all the necessary expertise in order to develop elite athletes. During the same period, the federal government also set up several other agencies namely National Sports and Recreation Centre, Hockey Canada and the Coaching Association of Canada. These agencies would receive federal funding but remained independent of federal control.32

The PARTICIPaction program fit in perfectly with the dichotomy that television had created between those who were good enough to perform on television and those who were meant to watch it. Furthermore, it was television that sold the PARTICIPaction Movement to the Canadians by comparing them unfavorably to the physically fit Swedes.33 Henceforth, while the mass population was given an agenda of participation, the real interest of the federal government still centered on the elite athletes.

31 Macintosh et al., Sport in Politics in Canada, p. 82.
33 Morrow et al., A Concise History of Sport in Canada, p. 333.
who had the potential to win gold medals that would lead to political gains.

The PARTICIPaction Movement also blended in well with the increasingly fitness and health conscious society of the 1970s. As fitness was the main goal and almost any kind of physical activity that promoted fitness was acceptable, badminton was able to establish itself on two levels without much difficulty. Since the nature of the sport could as easily lend itself to elitism as it could to enjoyment, those who were looking to excel in the sport could be just as attracted to it as those who were simply wanting to play it as a pastime.

This tension between the mass participation ideal behind PARTICIPaction and the elitism supported by the federal government came to a head in the Province of Saskatchewan in May 1977 as a result of the loss of the WWC to fire and then with its reconstruction by private enterprise. The Club had been central to an ideal of inclusion prior to its destruction. A reporter from the Regina Leader-Post described the fire:

Two brick chimneys rising out of charred, smoldering ruins were all that remained Thursday morning after a two alarm fire Wednesday night destroyed the Wascana Badminton Club, formerly the Wascana Winter Club, at Albert Street and 19th Avenue. Flames shooting more than 50 feet in the air from the wooden structure attracted crowds of curious onlookers and forced police to cordon off a section of Albert Street and Leopold Crescent. Showers of burning embers were sent flying across Albert Street into Wascana Park by easterly winds estimated by the Regina weather office at 32kmh. Battalion Chief Red Berenson said the alarm had been phoned in at 8:30 p.m. by a next door neighbour who said it was a garbage fire. "By the time our pumper arrived, the building was completely enveloped in flames
Figure 16. Wascana Winter Club went up in flames

Regina Leader-Post, 1977.
and by the time additional equipment could be rushed to the scene it was lost, all we could do was try to save the houses on each side," he said. Firefighters were limited in their access to the rear of the structure because of a soft muddy field which prevented them from bringing the heavy trucks in close. Fire hydrants as far away as the 2600 block Retallack Street were used as firefighters poured tons of water on the blazing structure for more than four hours.34

The cause of the fire was investigated but there is no record of the result. Although arson was suspected, it was never substantiated. One would think that after the fire, the Club would collect the insurance, regroup and start rebuilding, yet such was not the case. According to an unconfirmed source, in March 1974, when the roof of the curling and skating section of the Club collapsed as a result of heavy snow, someone was injured and the Club was sued. Consequently, the Club had to use all the fire insurance money to pay for compensation and legal fees. Since the fire, badminton players had had to "make do by shifting from one gym to another, using any available space they could get a hold of."35 As a matter of fact court space was scarce. Players managed to rent a few places such as the St. Chad gym, Queen's Building and Cochrane High School. There were discussions and plans for building another club house similar to the old Wascana Club but it would not be ready until late 1979. Harry Robbins, a badminton promoter for many years and acting chairman of the WBC, remarked:


We'd like to have it the way it was (Wascana Winter Club) and we're anticipating that at the new club. We've become accustomed over the years to the social aspect. Members dropped in every second night or so. It became a second home.36

In the meantime, almost everything remained in a state of limbo. There was no plan to develop the sport until the new building was ready. The WBC, because of scarcity of court space, did not advertise for new members, did not offer any youth or adult programs and had no plan for any major competitions except organizing several fun events.37 Finally, in October 1979, exactly twenty-nine months after the fire disaster, the proposed new club came into being. A whole new badminton facility was erected, including a squash, handball and racquetball sections, making it a four-sport recreational complex. The new building was built on Pasqua Street and it was named the Regina Court Club (RCC). Its badminton section had six courts which were considered one of the best facilities in western Canada. Gary Tyler, the SBA provincial coach at the time, agreed:

I've heard they'll be among the best courts in Canada. The floor is excellent, good hardwood. The lighting is set up well, and the colours of the walls make it easy to see the bird. And the ceiling is good and high, at least 30 feet to the beams. The distances between the courts and to the walls are all regulation. Everything seems to be just right.38


37 Ibid.

Ron Hrynchuk, who had been the president of the WWC for only one month when it vanished in flames, was extremely pleased to see the new facility. It was like a dream come true. He was mainly responsible for getting members for the new club. Hrynchuk commented:

After the Wascana Club burned, we solicited 100 prospective members. With some of them moved out of town, we should still have a base of about 80 people who'll become members at the Regina Court Club or at least use the facility regularly. There's also been a lot of interest among RCC members trying the sport, and some people should just come off the streets to give it a try."

In October 1979, the RCC had an official opening ceremony followed by the Regina Open Tournament. At the ceremony Hrynchuk presented the RCC with "one of the few surviving remnants of the old Wascana Club, a 'slightly sooty' wooden plaque which read, 'Wascana Badminton Club -- season Opens Oct. 1'". Several dignitaries also attended the ceremony, including City of Regina Alderman, Stan Oxelgren, and Provincial Minister of Culture and Youth, Ned Shillington. Shillington said that he was "impressed with the club's ability to build the badminton facility without the assistance of a government grant, action which he said seems to have gone the way of 40 horsepower tractors and 50 cent cigarette packs." The whole complex including the land cost about $400,000.41

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40 Ibid.
To commemorate the opening of the RCC as well as to have a major publicity campaign to attract membership to the new club and give badminton in general a boost, the RCC held the Regina Open Tournament on October 6 and 7. The tournament attracted several prominent players in the country. Among them were: Wendy Clarkson Carter, Canadian women’s champion and fourth-ranked in the world; Sherri Boyse Smyth, a five-time junior Canadian women’s champion; Pal Chawla and Archie Chawla of Winnipeg. Wendy Clarkson Carter was originally from Regina. Sherri Boyse Smyth and Pal Shawla used to be the pros at the old Wascana Club. At the conclusion of the tournament, Wendy Clarkson Carter, who "entered the Regina Open mainly for the sake of giving the new facility some publicity, won her three weekend titles with relative ease". Her husband, Greg Carter, ranked about eighth or ninth in the country, won the men’s singles title by beating Archie Chawla. Wendy was delighted to have returned home to Regina for a visit and was impressed with the new facility:

It's probably one of the best in Canada. The nicest things about it are the height of the ceiling and the dark walls. And there's no air currents to affect the bird. There aren't many cities with this kind of population who have facilities like this. It has six good courts. We have only five in Edmonton."

The opening of the new badminton facility was welcomed and appreciated by local badminton enthusiasts. It would undoubtedly provide opportunities and improve the standard of play in the city.


Nevertheless, it faced one major problem: Wascana Badminton Club members had paid only a $5.00 membership fee each, which included all the tournament entries, rental of the gymnasium and affiliation to the SBA. This, however, was before the new RCC building was erected. With the new RCC, the membership fee became about $300 per year excluding tournament and affiliation fees. It would seem as a result that only those who were rich or intensely keen on the sport would either be able to afford or be willing to join the club. Consequently the membership drive for the first season was not successful and the RCC did not make any profit on the badminton section in its first year of operation.\textsuperscript{44}

The new RCC attempted to bring back the "good old days" of the WWC. But, with low membership enrolment, the owner's emphasis on profit-making and the unexpected "cliquishness" within the already small club membership, the hope to restore the old image diminished quickly. Players were not as sociable and helpful as before, court etiquette was not adhered to and members seemed to remain only with their own group.\textsuperscript{45} The old WWC's communal or family atmosphere thus ceased to exist in the new RCC. Money had completely redefined it. Because it was expensive to join the membership, players generally wanted to get their money's worth by playing only with their chosen peers and those within their ability range. Consequently, they became very cliquey and tended to socialize only with those of their own group, thus creating

\textsuperscript{44} N. Salway, personal interview by author, July 2, 1993.

\textsuperscript{45} P. Schweiger (nee Hudec), personal interview by author, July 1, 1993.
an unspoken hierarchy among the club membership and destroying the once close and comfortable atmosphere of the old club.

In 1979, an event of an entirely different nature would have an equally powerful effect on badminton within the province as did the destruction of the Wascana Winter Club. It took place at the Canada Winter Games in Brandon and it was not simply that the men’s team performed poorly but that they behaved badly. It tarnished the image of the Saskatchewan athletes as a whole and also caused a furor in the SBA. On the other hand, Gary Tyler, the Saskatchewan provincial coach, commented that the members of the women’s team "played as well as could be expected and [that] they conducted themselves properly on the court as well as on the bench watching their team members play." He added that the women’s team members "showed good sportsmanship and good court manners. They handled themselves the way any team representing a province should and in a manner so the province would be willing to send them to another national event." However, the Saskatchewan men’s badminton team did not display any such behaviour and Caren O’Grady, the team manager, expressed her disappointment in a letter to the SBA’s president Al McKenzie. She outlined the following:

My greatest disappointment was in the sportsmanship and personal conduct of our male Saskatchewan team. The following is a list of actions that one or all of the male team members displayed:
- smashing racquet on floor
- squashing birdie when point lost


- foul language and yelling during game
- obscene gestures at umpire
- throwing racquets
- leaving in fit of anger before game completed
- hot dog shots
- when breaking rules and regulations they firmly believe they are in the right
- when being reasoned with they are abusive to coach, manager and umpire.

It is quite obvious that in the past years they have been poorly trained in on and off court behaviour and attitudes. I believe that this portrayed a very poor picture to the nation of Saskatchewan sportsmanship. We can be thankful that what episodes were recorded on film and tape were likely censored or destroyed.48

Gary Tyler expressed thoughts similar to those of Caren O'Grady. He even included a few more remarks regarding their behaviour:

Yelling and being rude to the manager when she mentioned sportsmanship. Being late for games, then thinking it was a big joke. Many of the above incidents happened more than once and by more than one player. Also, some of the men's team did not wear the provincial sweats that were provided for them.49

As a result of this incident, Gary Tyler decided to make several recommendations:

2. Some discipline action should be taken against the men's team, possibly suspension for the rest of the year.
3. A letter of apology should be sent to the Games Committee for the conduct and actions of the Saskatchewan Men's Team.

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4. A letter of apology be sent to the manager of the team for the abuse she took.

5. The actions of the men's team should be recorded and considered before any of them are sent out of the province to represent Saskatchewan again.

6. Sportsmanship and court conduct must be enforced at the provincial level.

7. The Saskatchewan Badminton Association must look at themselves and see if they really feel they are training people properly (sportsmanship) for out-of-province tournaments. The incident was discussed in the SBA executive meeting, but there is no record of what action the SBA took against the men's team and what measures it adopted to prevent similar occurrences again.

This type of behavior did not occur in subsequent years. Yet, explaining even this single occurrence is difficult. It seems to have resulted in part from elitism. This was one of the first occasions that travel expenses were covered by government funding. In addition, those chosen to go were privileged but without past experience in court behaviour at this level. The men's team members were arrogant because they saw their selection not as an opportunity to represent their province but as a sign that they were the best. As the best, they felt that they should be free of constraint. The real problem arose when their play did not match their self-image. Suddenly, the best were beaten and their only response was to blame others.

There were several signs of growth within the badminton community in the province during this same period. In 1977, for example, Wendy

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Clarkson, who was born in Regina, advanced to the All-England Championship. She had lived in Regina for eight years and had started her badminton pursuit at the WWC:

I started playing in Regina [WWC], but did not play for three years when our family moved to the Maritimes. I got back into the sport when we moved to Edmonton.\textsuperscript{51}

Her move to Alberta was motivated by her desire to train under the national coach Channarong Ratanasuangsuang. Wendy was inspired by the coach:

I moved to [Alberta] because there [was] more competition there, and to play under Channarong. He has helped my game a lot. Channarong had done well internationally and he has helped in my training. He is great on strokes and can teach you a lot especially in preparing for international competition.\textsuperscript{52}

There were numerous comments regarding her playing abilities as well:

Everybody expected her to do well from the time she was 12. She’s got more talent than any Canadian woman I’ve seen. She is extremely dedicated and tremendously fit. She has the strokes and the fitness. She listens and responds well. Wendy has more shots than anyone but she needs to put them together in an effective way.\textsuperscript{53}

Wendy was indeed very successful in her badminton pursuit. When she was only eighteen years old, she captured the Canadian juvenile title as well as reaching the finals in the national senior women’s doubles.\textsuperscript{54}

\textsuperscript{51} "Saskatchewan Has Clarkson To Look Up To In Badminton," Regina Leader-Post, February 27, 1978.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{53} "Flight To The Top," Newspaper Article. name unknown. 1976.

\textsuperscript{54} "Saskatchewan Has Clarkson To Look Up To In Badminton," Regina Leader-Post, February 27, 1978.
In 1976, she went on to win the Canadian singles championship and represented Canada in the Uber Cup Team.

In the following year, Wendy entered the All-England championships and managed to reach the semi-finals but no further. She was later ranked fourth in the world, yet was only nineteen years old. That was the best showing Saskatchewan had had since Dorothy Walton. Wendy continued to compete actively after her return from the All-England. She married Greg Carter, also one of the top badminton players in the nation, and they made their home in Alberta. She continued to train under the tutelage of Channarong.

A further sign of success for badminton within the province occurred in 1978, when the second Saskatchewan Winter Games included the badminton event. The eight zones in the province had representatives at the Games. It was a major boost to badminton in the province because it involved all the Saskatchewan Games zones and increased participation as well as the standard of play. The badminton event was held on February 16 and 17 at A.E. Peacock Technical High School gymnasium in Moose Jaw. It was an open-age competition with a minimum of one man and one woman under nineteen years of age. Events included were men's and women's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles. The impact of this inclusion was especially felt in the smaller communities as they needed both funding and experience to engender viable programs that could carry on once the games were completed. According to Rick

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Wickens, the Sport-Chairman of the Games, the inclusion of badminton would be a great experience for all the competitors involved:

It's the smaller communities who will benefit most from badminton's presence in the Winter Games. The large centers already provide their players with a lot of competition within their cities, but the small towns can only wait for regional meets and the provincial championships. By bringing them all together here, the players from the smaller communities will have the opportunity to sharpen their skills against the best players in the province.56

Also in 1978, the Provincial Seniors and Masters Tournament was held for the first time ever in Saskatchewan. The Rosetown Badminton Club hosted the competition. There were about twenty entries in the first tournament but no other record is found pertaining to this inaugural event in the province. The following year, Rosetown Badminton Club again staged the event. This time it had thirty-nine entries, almost double that of the previous year. The participants were from Regina, Moose Jaw, Weyburn, Swift Current, Roblin, Manitoba, Saskatoon as well as the local club.57 Though all the senior and master players keenly contested in all the events, the tournament was more of a social gathering for old-timers. Winning seemed to take second place. The most eagerly anticipated event was unquestionably the Saturday evening banquet:


Saturday evening brought all the competitors and members of the local club together for a banquet social and dance which proved to be most enjoyable for all. 58

At the conclusion of the tournament, a team was selected to represent the province at the Dominion Seniors and Masters in Toronto in April of 1979. Members of the team were C. Dennis, M.K. Chooi, L. Slough, M. Jacques and L. Morrison. 59 Although there is no documentation of their trip to Toronto, it can be safely speculated that their main purpose for the trip was more of a social get-together with great emphasis on having fun at the tournament. They would still play hard and show their competitive spirit, but it would never surpass their desire to socialize and enjoy themselves.

Hence, this nine-year period which was defined initially in 1970 by the federal document called "A Proposed Sports Policy For Canadians" and later redefined by the White Paper in 1979 entitled: "Partners in Pursuit of Excellence -- A National Policy on Amateur Sport," showed several signs of a very viable badminton community within Saskatchewan. It demonstrated that badminton had found and maintained a secure place in a sport world that was influenced and defined by television, corporate sponsors and government funding. At first, it might seem unusual for a sport that neither played well on television nor established itself prominently in the sport world of elitism. Nevertheless, because badminton had always remained symbiotic in its appeal, that is, providing fitness to the many unfit and elitism to the


59 Ibid.
exclusive few, it was able to secure itself a place in this technological welfare state.
BADMINTON, EXPANDING ITS PLAYER BASE:

Redefining its Image,

1979 - 1993
CHAPTER 4

The most prominent feature which characterized this final period of 1979-1993 was the profound impact of money on sport. The federal government decided to increase its financial support of sport so as to enable the development of its elite athletes for international competition. In 1981, it released the second White Paper entitled "A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80s". It recommended the formation of national training centres, but based federal support for them on their ability to produce elite athletes. Thus, this document paved the way for greater federal involvement in sport during the 1980s. Ottawa committed itself to a process of cultivating athletic excellence that could best represent Canada at the Olympics. Sport, as a result, became a means of unity as well as a symbol of national pride. Also, with its greater emphasis on elitism, the federal government inevitably widened the gap between elitism and mass participation. Nevertheless, as television made elitism an essential part of sport, Canadians in general recognized that money was necessary to produce the athletic excellence that could be competitive internationally.

1 Macintosh et al., Sport and Politics in Canada, p. 129.

2 "The Olympic fever reached a peak in Canada once again in February 1988 when Calgary hosted the most successful Winter Games in Olympic history and showed that Canada could not only produce an Olympic spectacle but make it financially viable." Morrow et al., A Concise History of Sport in Canada, p. 308.

1 The political success of the 1967 Games and Canada's athletic success in 1976 only underlined this reality.
During this period in Saskatchewan, badminton attempted to redefine its image. Throughout its history in the province, badminton had gradually moved from its elite British roots to a sport that crossed class and racial lines. However, even in the 1980s badminton had shown that it had never totally freed itself from its elitist origins. With the increased support from governments, badminton could only establish its place in the province by attempting to become more visible and accessible to a wider audience through a variety of program initiatives. At the same time, it also sought to develop those elite players who were capable of achieving national or international honours. Hence, even though the British form of elitism had been gradually replaced over the years by a meritocracy of many races, badminton by its very nature of being refined and requiring finesse, could never truly escape its exclusive status.

Funding had thus made meritocracy a fundamental feature of sport in general and badminton in particular. Badminton in Saskatchewan during this period had attempted to change its image from that of a snobbish, boring sport to an exciting and high profile sport enjoyed by many. But television had already redefined how sport was viewed and enjoyed, and

4 Particularly important here was the image of badminton in the high schools. Football and basketball had an image, enhanced by television, of being "manly," while badminton, since it offered no role models on television, seemed somehow reserved for the unathletic.

5 This ability to ascend included both race and gender. Praveen Vohra (East-Indian descent) and Brent Kwon (Chinese descent) rose to become provincial coaches in the 1980s. Lois Morrison became the manager of SBC and Marlene Nordyke, the executive director of the SBA in the mid-1980s.

6 This is part of the deception of the sport. One does not realize its difficulty as well as the physical demand necessary to play it well until one receives proper training in it.
since badminton was low-profile it received little if any coverage from television. Consequently badminton was demoted to the level of the banal. As one editor of the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix put it: "Who wants to read about badminton?" In response Bill Metcalf, a three-time provincial singles titlist, outlined clearly the problems that badminton faced in Saskatchewan:

Saskatchewan is one of the worst provinces in Canada for badminton. And, one of the major reasons for that is because of the sport's low visibility. In Ontario, where they have a strong publicity program, badminton is very popular. As a result, Ontario has the best players in Canada. [Further, there is a] lack of consistency in the club's annual programs owing to the want of a bonafide expert. Another problem is that there isn't a consistent follow through of programs such as would happen if you employed a club professional. Presently, a lot of work in the sport is done by volunteers, which means a high turnover of organizers, thereby further detracting from the consistency of the programs offered. [Yet if a professional were hired] the club would have to significantly raise its membership fees.8

Fred Studshoff, a former executive member of SBA, noted that badminton within the high schools was often the last resort for the unathletic. One would only choose badminton if unable to play football, basketball or volleyball -- sports that television had made both visible and desirable. Badminton, it seemed, in order to draw more to its ranks,

8 "Badminton Said Victim Of Deficient Publicity." Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, February 21, 1981.
had to improve the quality of its elite so that in winning awards the sport would gain respect.9

In view of these problems, the SBA in the 1980s attempted to remedy the situation by planning and implementing various programs in the province with the major emphasis on promotion of badminton and club organization especially in smaller communities. These programs were the funding initiatives of Sask Sport. It was not that the SBA had been without success in smaller communities such as Fox Valley, Swift Current and Prince Albert but it now wanted to expand upon this success.10 Player participation clinics were held across the province aiming to promote awareness, participation and skill levels.11 The clinics were free of charge and open to anyone interested or willing to learn the sport. The SBA used another program called Trust Initiatives Program (TIP) to provide assistance for volunteers in the junior department in smaller centres.12 The Membership Assistance Program (MAP) provided financial aid to any affiliated badminton club to stage tournaments or clinics. The assistance would cover the cost for facility rental, shuttlecocks, tournament fees and travelling.13


12 Minutes of Saskatoon Badminton Club Executive Meeting, November 6, 1985.

The SBA targeted the potential coaches in the province as well. It set up coaching clinics in the eight Saskatchewan Games Zones in 1981 so as to help develop prospective coaches.\(^\text{14}\) Another Coaching Professional Development Program was also implemented in 1986. The coordinator was Jon Geissler from Swift Current. Prospective coaches would be chosen annually to attend the program with all expenses paid. Its purpose was to facilitate "learning and work opportunity to coaches who are genuinely interested in upgrading themselves, their own programs, and ultimately the playing base in Saskatchewan". The coaches would be "shown up to date techniques, strategies, training methods and ideas. They [would then] go back to their own [locales] and enrich their areas with their knowledge."\(^\text{15}\) Although there is no detailed indication of their success, at least one can see that the purpose of the program was to heighten awareness of the sport by increasing the calibre of play of those who represent it.

Part of the Sask Sport grant that the SBA received each year was also channelled toward player development. It provided financial aid for travelling to tournaments outside the province. The aim was to widen the player's competition experience and improve his or her calibre of play.\(^\text{16}\) The Athlete Assistance Program was geared specifically to lessen the financial burden of the athletes involved so that they could

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\(^{16}\) "Badminton Said Victim Of Deficient Publicity," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, February 21, 1981.
concentrate more on training for the sport. Several of the players who benefited from the program were: Peggy Hudec, Rakesh Kapila, Eloise Deis, Kathy Lannan and Trevor Langen. To improve further the competitive edge of the players, the SBA implemented the Saskatchewan Game Plan which called for a new tournament format -- the "A - B" Tournaments. This meant that "A" players would no longer be allowed to compete in B, C or D categories, yet, any player not ranked could play in any category chosen, including the "A" category. By using the new format, the SBA hoped to draw more competitors to the tournament as well as provide more tournament experience for the "A" players. Further, it wanted to "offer "B" players in [the] area a chance to compete against the "A" players [as well as] expose the local aspiring player to watch and learn from the "A" class players." To follow through with this plan, an Elite Player Development Committee was duly set up by the SBA which was responsible to choose the prospective elite players, and ensure they followed the Game Plan. Both Bill Metcalfe and Ray Wight from Saskatoon were coordinators of the Plan.

This focus on the elite was understandable. First, the government's financial support for sport was not a free gift but required success. Therefore, in order to expect any significant improvement from Saskatchewan badminton representatives at the national level...

17 Correspondence Addressed To Chairman Of Sask Trust For Sport, Culture & Recreation, December 30, 1981, author unknown.


levels, the SBA had to place a much greater emphasis on its elite player
development programs. As such, the association needed to hire well
qualified professional coaches who could effectively run its closely
coordinated programs, instead of the volunteer coaches it used to rely
upon. Second, television sanctioned a different form of elitism. It
was no longer the privileged of British society sharing its sport with
the colonies. This new form of elitism was much more inclusive.
Regardless of one's skin color or social class, one could rise within
its ranks purely on a basis of skill. Third, by providing model
athletes to emulate, such as television provided stars, there was the
hope that badminton could transform itself into a sport that would be
appealing to future generations in Saskatchewan.

The elite players received yet another boost in the second half of
the 1980s when Sask Sport announced the Sask First program. It was
intended to "help the elite athletes in their quest for excellence."
The program would give further funding to the SBA to "(1) hire elite
coaches, (2) help offset administrative and team costs, and (3) improve
fitness-testing and training facilities." As a result of this
program, the SBA in 1986 was able to appoint Keith Anton as the
provincial high-performance coach to look after the top Saskatchewan
badminton players, and to hire Praveen Vohra as the provincial coach to
take care of the grassroots development. The Association also received
another $85,000 annually for player development and tournament
organization. All these were done with the hopes of building a highly

20 "Sask Sport: A Big Help To Amateur Sort," Regina Leader-Post.
February 6, 1986.
competitive Jeux Canada Games badminton team.\textsuperscript{21} The rationale was that since Ontario and Quebec had been traditionally considered the powerhouses in the Games due mainly to their large population base, that Saskatchewan with a much smaller population from which to choose its athletes from, needed to overcome this disadvantage by providing the financial assistance to its elite athletes through the Sask First program. The program came to be very much admired by other provinces:

What we [provincial sports associations] have is unique and we are very much envied. We go to meetings in other provinces and people are astounded with the financial help we get.\textsuperscript{22}

Here was a perfect example of how money could redefine both the structure and image of a sport. Money could eventually make success attainable and success would make the sport more desirable.

The Sask First program proved to be a big success. For example, in 1987 at the Jeux Canada Games in Cape Breton, Saskatchewan earned a fourth overall and best ever in the standings and the Saskatchewan badminton team also had its best performance ever with a fifth-place finish. This prompted Colin Maxwell, the provincial minister of parks and recreation, to announce in 1989 that the Sask First program would continue to be funded by the government and be extended for another four years. It would cost between $10 to $11 million.\textsuperscript{23}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{21} "Badminton Can Be Tough As You Make It." \textit{Saskatoon Star-Phoenix}, October 11, 1986.

\textsuperscript{22} "Sask Sport - A Big Help To Amateur Sport." \textit{Regina Leader-Post}, February 6, 1986.

\textsuperscript{23} "Sask Trust Program Extended Four Years." \textit{Saskatoon Star-Phoenix}, May 23, 1989.
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The Sask Sport grants also had a tremendous impact on the SBA's junior program. Badminton camps, clinics and tournaments were organized throughout the province and an increasing number of juniors were taking part. Clinics of short duration (three to six hours) were set up for them, but training and instructional camps of longer duration were particularly gaining popularity. Camps such as the Christmas Camp and the SBA Training/Instructional Camp normally lasted for either a weekend or an entire week. The juniors seemed to enjoy them very much. The participation was high and their eagerness to learn and improve the games was very much in evidence. Keith Anton, the provincial coach, was encouraged by what he saw:

I am greatly pleased to see this. It makes the instructional part of the job more exciting when you know that people are eager to learn and improve. This is a most encouraging sign [as it shows a desire] to work [as well as] a willingness to learn. People are coming to realize that there is much more to badminton than appears on the surface. People like seeing improvement in their game - clinics do not allow the court time that is needed for this to take place, but camps do.24

The camps were successful and the following would be typical of comments on them:

The significant increase in participants [at training camps] shows that badminton in Saskatchewan is on the rise as there is an evident increase in interest all around the province. Regina, Saskatoon and Swift Current players made up close to half of the camp in terms of members, with the rest of the players coming from all over Saskatchewan. It was very exciting to see this great response.

The general attitude towards badminton has now seemed to have changed in that players now accept hard work as a rule rather than the exception in badminton development. Thus, the general skill level seems to be of a higher level than has been noted in the past.25

The SBA also started the Carlton Junior series which proved to be a significant factor in junior development. It consisted of five tournaments held across Saskatchewan and the hosting cities were Saskatoon, Regina, Swift Current, Yorkton and North Battleford. Interestingly, the format of the tournament, included only singles and doubles events, with no mixed doubles. The explanation given was that it was only a one-day tournament and "the trouble of trying to billet one hundred people make it impractical to go to a two day format for the tournament and thus including mixed doubles."26 The Carlton Junior Series over the years had been well received and this amply reflected that junior interest in the province was on the rise. Keith Anton agreed:

The Carlton Junior Series was a big success, as there was rekindled interest shown in Junior badminton throughout our province. A hearty thanks goes out to all the venues that acted as hosts for the various tournaments. A special thank you must be addressed to Steve Stranks as he was the heart and soul of the series. The effects of this series and the Junior Program now under way in Saskatchewan will hopefully last for a long time. It is a program of proven

worth and therefore must be a regular part of the badminton season.27

In the early 1980s, Steve Strank was the club professional at the Regina Court Club. He was from England and used to be on the England’s B-Squad badminton team. Steve had a great interest in helping juniors and upon his arrival at the Club, he initiated a junior program which consisted of four levels - Beginner A, Beginner B, Intermediate and Advanced. The program was open to all juniors and there was no charge for his instruction. His complete dedication to working with the juniors coupled with his excellent communication skill enabled him to lead a very successful junior program in terms of participation and interest. He did a minimal amount of advertising of the program, yet it was well attended, with an estimated junior membership of about 110. Because of his successful program, he was appointed by SBA to be in charge of the provincial junior development program, particularly the Carlton Junior Series. It became very successful and Steve was even aiming at producing a national champion from the province,28 but for reasons unknown he later left for Toronto and never returned to Saskatchewan.

Despite Steve’s sudden departure, the junior development had some remarkable success with several of its juniors making their presence felt at the national level. For example, in January 1983 Saskatchewan


for the first time ever, had several juniors ranked in the top nationally:

Randy Brotzel and Keith Hartman have received recognition for the win in the Derrick Invitational, as they have been ranked sixth nationally in under 16 boy's doubles. Peggy Hudec has made the National Team Selection Pool, and it is expected that Peggy will be nationally ranked when the next rankings come out. The work that these players are putting in is obviously paying off, and there will be others to follow. Saskatchewan badminton is on the rise.29

Also in 1986, Pam Beatty of Regina and Paul Pittman of Saskatoon were both ranked number one junior mixed doubles in the country, and were among the top five juniors in the national singles ranking as well.30 Though the juniors did not perform well in the Canada Winter Games in Chicoutimi, Quebec in 1983, it had its best showing ever in 1987 Winter Games in Cape Breton in Nova Scotia by earning fifth place overall. In retrospect, one of the juniors, Paul Pittman, gained a great deal of confidence and incentive from the junior program, so much so, that his goal was to make the Olympic team for 1992 in which badminton would be a full medal sport for the first time. He had been training hard under Keith Anton; he was doing very well in tournaments and was ranked one of the top juniors in Canada. He commented: "If I train hard, good things will happen. That's what [Olympics '92] I'm hoping for anyway."31

According to Keith Anton, it seemed "there's nothing in his mind, that's going to stop him from being a top international player." He

added: "Last year [1986], in the under-14 division, he was No. 6 in the country, so in reality, he's actually climbed about 30 places in one year, and that's extremely unusual."\textsuperscript{32}

Anton was pleased by the progress of the Saskatchewan Juniors:

We're kind of getting a kick out of beating up on the big guys (other provinces). That's something that we haven't been able to do in the past. It's kind of fun.\textsuperscript{33}

By March 1987, Saskatchewan juniors further made their presence felt at the national level, with the national ranking of five of its juniors.

#1 ranked under 16 boy's doubles (Paul Pittman and Aslam Nomani), #2 ranked under 16 boy's singles (Paul Pittman), #6 ranked boy's singles (Aslam), #6 ranked girl's singles (Pam), #4 ranked girl's doubles (Pam and Signi). #5 ranked mixed doubles (Pam & Paul). As well Danielle and Celeste were close to the top 8 in under 19 doubles. Danielle was close in mixed as well.\textsuperscript{34}

The SBA was indeed pleased with all this success. The junior discipline problem that it used to have in the last decade was non-existent in the 1980s. They were all well disciplined whether at tournaments in or out of the province. Coach Anton's remarks on the junior players' behaviour:

The players were extremely well behaved both on and off the court. As well, they were very well received by the people. Their on court deeds did Saskatchewan proud. The billets were pleased in having our players stay with them. These are certainly impressions and


\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.

compliments of which the SBA can be proud. On court, their results were also impressive.35

The SBA and its juniors should be proud of their achievements in the 1980s. Their time, efforts and energy were well rewarded. This could not have happened if the Sask Sport grants were not available to them.

Unfortunately, funding would also adversely affect the play of badminton within the province during this same period. It would eventually lead to the demise of the Prairie Athletic Conference (PAC) in 1990 and it also prohibited the construction of a National Badminton Training Centre in Regina in the late 1980s. It seemed that the source of success had become completely dependent on the security of a firm financial foundation.

The PAC badminton season traditionally consisted of four tournaments in the 1970s, but in 1980s it added three more events: the PAC Pre-Seasonal Invitational, the Canadian College Athletic Association (CCAA) Playoffs and the CCAA National Championships. All together it had seven tournaments and the most important event each year was the CCAA National Championships. In March 1982, the PAC participated in the first CCAA National Badminton Championships at Georgian College in Barrie, Ontario. It was also the first and only national tournament in which the PAC performed well, winning two silver medals -- Peggy Hudec from Wascana Institute in the Women's singles, and Carol Slater with Cathy Read in

35 K. Anton. Newsletter From The Provincial Coach, January 31, 1986. This change can be attributed to players and trainers learning to play as a team and not as individuals. Further, it shows that the experience of 1979 had taught the SBA that such occurrence must never happen again.
the Women's doubles. Since then the PAC badminton players did not win a single medal in the national, and it withdrew from the CCAA in 1990.

The PAC always had at least five institutes participating. The most faithful were: Saskatchewan Technical Institute, Kelsey and Wascana. Other colleges were inconsistent. The University of Regina and Athol Murray (Notre Dame), for example, were once PAC members but had withdrawn and joined other more competitive leagues. The Canadian Bible College and Briercrest Bible College for their part, withdrew from the conference in early 1980s because the CCAA's major sponsor was a distilling firm (Seagrams). They later returned in 1984 after Seagrams became a minor sponsor. In June 1984 the Saskatoon Star-Phoenix reported:

The Canadian Bible College and Briercrest Bible College in Caronport have returned to the C.C.A.A. fold as the major sponsor is no longer a distilling firm. Seagrams will continue to be a sponsor, but to a lesser degree than the past when all awards carried the company logo and distillery advertising was prominent at the competition venues.

Both colleges also withdrew from the PAC in other years because of their inability to field a team. This phenomenon became very acute in the latter part of the 1989-90 PAC season, when the various institutes experienced a shortage of players, particularly women:


The badminton league experienced a shortage of women this year. Wascana was the only team that put forth a full team. They did this by recruiting some beginner players. Kelsey and Palliser did not have enough women to complete the team roster.19

Since the league was dependent upon financial support from the government and since it was left up to the discretion of each college if a given team would be supported, badminton fell prey to cutbacks. Eventually, the problem compounded. Without the same financial support, the badminton teams dwindled in membership until finally, like a self-fulfilling prophecy, their programs were cancelled due to a lack of membership.

Besides the shortage of players, the PAC also found itself unable to win another medal other than the two silvers won in 1982 in the CCAA National Championships. It tried to remedy the situation. All the PAC badminton players, for example, were encouraged and required to play in the SBA sanctioned tournaments, such as the Grand Prix "A" series events, so that they could be more prepared for the nationals. The experience at the SBA's Grand Prix "A" Series was an eye-opener for the PAC players. Ray Wight, coach for the Kelsey team, commented:

"Playing at tournaments [SBA's] has been pretty rough. After the first round, when beaten 15-0, 15-0, many were discouraged. Yet once in the B or C events, they've done alright."40

Beverley Oliver-Kozak, the PAC's badminton commissioner, thought it was an excellent learning experience for all the players:


I don't think that it discourages the players. It is the best way to go. They have the chance to play so many different players and observe a high-level of play.41

By the end of 1987-88 season, all the coaches in the PAC reported that the inclusion of SBA's Grand Prix "A" Circuit was not only beneficial but should continue. Nevertheless, despite the exposure to the SBA's high-level tournaments, the PAC players were unable to capture a medal at the nationals. Finally in the 1989-90 badminton season, the coaches agreed that playing in the SBA's sanctioned competitions would be optional. They gave several reasons for this:

It was felt that the players would not commit to the number of tournaments required to fill this obligation. The "A" tournaments became an optional event for those teams that wanted the extra participation and challenge. The increase in the entry fee from $20.00 to $30.00 per entrant was not considered by the coaches to be justified. They felt that the PAC players may be better served by the "B" level tournaments. The SBA "B" level tournaments are not played with feather birds but the coaches felt that the level of play and the cost per player may be more in line with the level of play of the average PAC player.42

Other factors also contributed to the decision:

Unfortunately for PAC, participation in the "A" tournaments has once again grown to the point where consolation play and the timing of the consolation event cannot be predicted accurately. Our players have expressed that it is not efficient use of their time to play only one match on Saturday and not know until late in the day that they will be required to play on Sunday. They feel that they could


make better use of their time studying. The players are willing to commit to a tournament only if they know they will be kept busy. The entry fee of $30.00 per person is too high for the schools to pay on a regular basis. This represents a cost of from $300.00 to $500.00 per team by 4 tournaments, or approximately $1200.00 to $2000.00. The schools also pay transportation and accommodation. Today's budgetary restraint demands will not allow the increase in the fees. 

In addition to the SBA's tournaments, the PAC also attempted to improve its players and coaches by engaging in the SBA training camps. They were regularly scheduled each year and according to Beverley Oliver-Kozak, they were very helpful. Keith Anton, the provincial coach and his assistant Peggy Hudec, were the instructors at the camps. They would put the players through a series of technical drills, fitness exercises and strategy sessions. All these sessions were beneficial to all those taking part, but the results at the nationals were still disappointing.

The budget cuts that were experienced by various institutes in the PAC gave another blow to its badminton program. In the 1982-83 season, for example, because of funding cuts, the PAC badminton players would no longer be able to travel on a chartered bus, but instead on regular public transport. Also, they would not be receiving money for their meals while travelling. As a result, from then on they had to participate in fund-raising activities in order to raise money to pay

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42 R. Wight, Personal Correspondence To Jon Geissler, February 5, 1990.

for their travelling expenses." Further, the federal government had always paid for the travelling costs to the annual CCAA National Championships since its inception in 1982, but in 1986, the federal ministry of Fitness and Amateur Sport decided that its travel grant to CCAA would be substantially reduced before its complete elimination in the 1988-89 season. This decision had serious ramifications for the PAC.

The students who played in the PAC each season were always hoping to earn a trip to the CCAA National Championships as it was the most important event. However, with the funding cut and its eventual elimination, the students would no longer have the incentive to participate in the PAC. Thus, in the late 1980s, the PAC badminton teams experienced a shortage of players. In 1987, the provincial government also reduced its fundings to the technical institutes. This caused a considerable decrease in the number of students enrolled in these institutes in the province which led to a corresponding decrease in number of students available to participate on the PAC athletic teams.

To compound further an already difficult situation, the attitude of the various technical institutes toward intercollegiate sports was counter-productive. Court Peddle, the Kelsey Institute's athletic director, best summed up this attitude and approach:

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Our sports program is at a 'super recreational' level of competition. Most of our teams practice only twice each week and are limited to intra-provincial tournaments or games. As such, intercollegiate sport was not given priority in either financial assistance or access to athletic facilities:

With no scholarship or tuition incentives, Kelsey students cannot be expected to sacrifice more of their time than the three or four hours needed for practices and the hours spent each weekend when their team is involved in PAC play. Limited facilities and a well-utilized intramural program already tax athletic facilities to the limit, allowing little, if any, additional practice time for intercollegiate sports.48

There was no attempt to recruit athletes. According to Court Peddle, the institute would generally "take the students who show up for classes and then encourage those with the desire and ability to participate on one of [the] teams."49 Under such conditions, the PAC would not be able to produce top-calibre athletes and thus be completely unable to compete effectively at the annual CCAA national championships. In addition, the short duration of studies at the technical institute hampered the building process of its athletic team. To build up a strong team, the institute needed players who could stay for a longer period than two years. Ray Wight, the badminton coach for SIAST Kelsey campus, agreed:

The only way that we will advance into the top placings will be if the club [Riverside's] players attend college or we have players for

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48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
4 years. Without a long term commitment to the sport better finishes will be hard to attain.\(^{50}\)

Budget restraints, declining student enrolment, low participation level and the institute's low-priority attitude toward intercollegiate sports eventually led all the technical institutes in the province to decide to abandon the PAC. As PAC went out of existence in 1990, competitive badminton in the technical institutes became extinct. Since then the students at their various campuses have been playing badminton on a recreational basis or in their intramural programs.

In Regina, the problem was of a different nature but no less difficult to resolve. The badminton membership in the RCC was not large and was not making money. This prompted the owner to use three of the six badminton courts for weight rooms and gymnastics. Later on in the early 1980s, the remaining badminton courts were also used for basketball. There were basketball court lines drawn on them as well as basketball hoops put up. Badminton was still played there, but it had lost its place of prominence, which in turn, and as a direct result led to the formation of the Regina Badminton Club (RBC). This new club played at the Regina Field House\(^{51}\) and for several years it had contemplated building a badminton centre that was similar to WWC. However, it was only with the formation of the RBC Facilities Committee, co-chaired by Margaret Hudec and Harry Robins, that specific plans began

\(^{50}\) R. Wight, "Comments On The Play Of The Saskatchewan Team." Prairie Athletic Conference 1987-88: Badminton.

to take shape. In April 1984, it submitted its proposal to the City of Regina. The following is its preamble:

The status of badminton in Regina was that of a healthy, growing sport until the destruction by fire of the Wascana Club in the spring of 1977. In 1979, after a 2-year absence, badminton returned to a major facility when the Regina Court Club, a private business venture, completed a 6-court badminton addition to its squash and racquetball court complex. The sport of badminton has not, however, returned to the state it had been in prior to 1977. In large measure, the inability to re-establish a healthy badminton environment is due to the private nature of the Regina Court Club. It is our experience that the business venture environment does not foster the voluntary endeavour that is a necessary part of any badminton club, nor does it provide for the necessary social aspect of the sport. A voluntary endeavour from club membership is vital in the building and maintenance of a healthy badminton club. Without such an endeavour, Regina badminton membership has been in the stage of recession over the past five years. In addition, the Regina Court Club has leased three courts to a gymnastics club on an ongoing basis, reducing the badminton court area to just 3 courts. The possibility of further reduction of court area for 1984-85 is a serious threat to the continuing badminton effort in this city. The above short preamble gives rise to the attached submission. In summary, our submission requests of the Canadian Badminton Association that funds of the CBA be made available to the Regina Badminton Centre, a non-profit society, for the construction of a badminton facility in Regina.\footnote{The Construction of a National Badminton Training Centre in Regina. A proposal submitted to Canadian Badminton Association by the Facilities Committee of Regina Badminton Centre, April 27-29, 1984.}

The document continued to outline the nature and scope of the financial request:
The funds requested would be in the nature of a grant, subject to negotiation and the level to which the proposed Regina facility were utilized by the Canadian Badminton Association. Through previous negotiations with the City of Regina, a commitment has been secured concerning in the form of a direct grant of the parcel of land for the facility -- a commitment in the form of a direct grant of the parcel of land (free of property taxes) in exchange for a financial consideration of $1.00 per year. 53

Further, it stressed the consistency of the request with goals of the CBA, underlining how the centre could be used in a wide variety of ways ranging from a national coaching school to a center that would televise badminton.

By 1986, the City's Parks and Recreation Department had approved donating 4.5 acres of land in the Lakeview area (Pasqua Street and Parliament Avenue) for the construction of the badminton centre. The lease would last for thirty years and it would cost $1.00 per year. All the RBC had to do was construct the building by 1990 and then to open it to the general public for recreational badminton as well. Furthermore, in the same year, the CBA had awarded a National Elite Player Feeder System Training Centre to the SBA, which meant the proposed badminton centre in Regina would receive an operating fund, an elite coach, and up to thirty elite players who would be at the Training Centre Program being monitored regularly and supervised year-round. 54


54 SBA's Program Outline. 1986.
Figure 16. The proposed building for the National Badminton Training Centre in Regina.

Regina Leader-Post, December 23, 1986.
The RBC now had the land and the CBA's operating budget; it only had to find a way of raising enough money for the facility itself. The new building would cost in the vicinity of $600,000. It would be furnished with spring floors, regulation 28-foot high ceiling on six courts, an attached club house, change rooms, bar and restaurant.\textsuperscript{55} Margaret Hudec had donated a trust fund established in remembrance of her late husband Dr. Albert Hudec who was an avid badminton supporter.\textsuperscript{56} Other monies would have to be raised by various means. The RBC approached the provincial government for assistance to finance the construction but it was turned down. Premier Grant Devine wrote in July 1987:

I regret to inform you that at this time we cannot provide additional funding for the capital construction of your facility. However, I understand that you are receiving support from the Sask First program which extends to facility rental for high performance.\textsuperscript{57}

Other sources of financing were explored but in the final analysis, the RBC was unable to raise the estimated $600,000 for the construction. There was also much in-fighting within the RBC as well as its rivalry with the RCC, but be that as it may, Regina's vision for a new badminton centre did not become reality and its hope suffered a serious setback.

In contrast to Regina's unsuccessful attempt to recapture the sense of the badminton community it once had, badminton at Fox Valley High School was the very paradigm of success. This was unusual, for in the

\textsuperscript{55} "Badminton Players Need Building To Complete Recovery," Regina Leader-Post, 1986.

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{57} G. Devine, personal correspondence to Margaret Hudec, July 9, 1987.
approximately 300 other high schools in the province with which the SBA had an affiliation, badminton did not have a prominent place. Yet, in the Fox Valley High School, the sport was not only extremely popular among the students, but its teachers were great promoters of the game. The school had a badminton tradition dating back to the 1960s. Both the school and the town were so proud of this tradition that they claimed to be the badminton capital of Saskatchewan.

Fox Valley High School had indeed been doing very well in badminton circles. Up until the end of the 1980s it had won a total of five high school provincial titles, four provincial team championships and a countless number of second and third-place finishes. Quite a number of the students had also represented the province at both the nationals and the Canada Winter Games. For a school which had only about 120 students from kindergarten to grade twelve, these were remarkable achievements. According to the school principal Jim Schmid, the school’s rich badminton tradition had an interesting beginning:

The schools’ affinity for the game (badminton) began shortly after the completion in the mid-60s of a new high school which featured a high gymnasium roof suitable for singles play. Students quickly began winning division and district play downs and that success fuelled interest. The building had a lot to do with why this school took up the game. So many high school gyms in these small towns do not have a high enough roof. But competitors soon found themselves big fish in a small pond and Fox Valley coaches recognized the need to go further afield for competition. Players from the relatively remote community began making appearances at those formerly exclusive clubs in the cities. This resulted in an introduction to

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59 B. Lannan, "Avoiding Elitism In One Badminton-Crazy Town." The Shuttle, Spring, 1989, p. 23.
new technique, stiffer competition and a surprising discovery -- players from Fox Valley could compete with and often beat the club players sporting the latest and priciest equipment. A girl's team which waltzed through team provincials in the late 1970s opened the floodgates, and interest has never flagged. Students never particularly interested in basketball took up badminton.

One of the biggest and earliest badminton promoters in Fox Valley High School was Del Ludvigsen. He related that the school badminton program was always started and maintained each year by one enthusiastic school teacher who was genuinely interested in the students and equally keen to promote badminton. The teacher would introduce the sport starting at grade four. He found the students not only liked it, but wanted in successive years to learn more about it. The students were also encouraged to bring their friends to try the game as well, and this in turn, helped the sport to grow. Dennis Franz, one of the several enthusiastic badminton coaches at the school, helped to train the students by getting them to do endurance exercises and technical drills. He also brought in some competitive players from the town of Fox Valley who used to play in the school, thus providing good practices and competition for his students. The students were so serious about badminton that the school gymnasium was booked for badminton alone from 3:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. four days a week. The Fox Valley students did not mind putting their time and effort into the game, since they

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59 B. Lannan, "Avoiding Elitism In One Badminton-Crazy Town." The Shuttle, Spring, 1989, p. 23.

60 D. Luvidgsen, personal interview by author, July 29, 1993.

realized that they had to work harder than other players especially those from Regina and Saskatoon in order to be successful. The success they achieved in turn enabled them to travel throughout the province as well as across Canada to attend the nationals.62

Parents' involvement and community support had been two major keys in contributing to the school's winning tradition. Jim Schmid agreed:

Like all extracurricular activities which demand frequent travel, the parents' commitment has to equal that of the students. While lotteries money does help defray some costs, weekend junkets across Saskatchewan usually are paid out of the pockets of indulgent parents. We are fortunate we have interested parents, although it certainly helps that those people now raising families were involved in the sports themselves. [Jim Schmid] estimates the program cost the local club and parents about $3,000.00 over the lottery allotments. The sport acts as a liaison between the community and school as well as a source of considerable pride for both. It is a "common language for many people" in the town and that might be the biggest success story of all.63

Indeed, badminton has been a success story in this little town of Fox Valley. And with the tremendous support from the school, the teachers, the students, the parents and the community, it would seem the successful tradition will continue.

In Saskatchewan the success experienced at Fox Valley is an ideal example of what the SBA had hoped to do in changing the image of badminton during this period. The sport was exceedingly popular among the students. It was able to find a balance between an elitism based on

63 Ibid.
success, yet remained equally open to those who simply wanted to play for fun. There was a willingness to commit to hard work and excellence, but no arrogance was displayed toward those who simply wanted to participate. There was an element of voluntarism as well as a sense of professionalism. Badminton had indeed found a prominent place in this Fox Valley High School.

As money came to influence every aspect of sport during this period, the federal government was able to increase its control over the elite athletes through its funding. This resulted in a meritocracy that permeated the Saskatchewan badminton community. Simultaneously, in order to ensure continuous funding, the SBA attempted to remedy its image problem by providing programs that would increase participation level as well as calibre of play. Though the impact of money had caused the demise of PAC and failure to build the RBC, the success at Fox Valley High School provided a perfect prototype that SBA could use to promote badminton in other parts of the province.
CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis has been to trace the growth of badminton within the province of Saskatchewan since the earliest record of play in 1919 until 1993. It had been the sport of British officers and it was also under these British officers that Canadian soldiers fought in World War I. As these Canadian soldiers returned to Saskatchewan in 1919, they brought with them the sport of the British officers they had obeyed during the war. For them, this was a way of maintaining the solidarity of their war experience because badminton not only symbolized their adoption of British culture but also their adherence to British elitism.

To understand the origins of badminton and its surrounding background, the thesis initially dealt with the effects of industrialization in Britain. Industry changed the entire landscape of Britain as factories became more important than agriculture and cities both grew and prospered. It raised the standard of living and provided more leisure time. Also, it gave rise to a wealthy upper middle class. Furthermore, industry affected the British empire as a whole as its factories were able to produce better weapons and better ships, thereby increasing British pride. It almost became a duty for the British to spread their culture since they believed that they were superior to other cultures as well as other races.

Sport as leisure came to play a significant role in Britain. Competitions in sport prepared those in exclusive schools for service in the army since performance on team sports would indicate how well one
could lead. Also, sport and particularly badminton could help these army officers spend their leisure time in the colonies as well as give them something that they could identify with as British. They could even share it with the elite of the colony. By playing the sport, this colonial elite would be embracing British culture.

The thesis traced the origins of badminton to the residence of the Duke of Beaufort. It was important to establish how much the British elite initially played the sport. It was British soldiers who brought it to England and British soldiers who took its modified form back to India. Badminton then became a pastime of the military and only gradually did the civilian elite come to dominate its play. In analyzing the place of badminton in Saskatchewan this thesis described four separate periods. In the first period (1919-1939), it showed the initial prominence of the military in the introduction, organization and play of the sport. It showed how this prominence would eventually disappear and it analyzed why this was so. Also, this period provided the background of why women were encouraged to play badminton. The sport not only allowed a woman to be lady-like and maternal, but at the same time, it could also appeal to the individualism of women who wanted to compete. This section also recounted the democratizing effect of the Depression on badminton. Here was the first blow to British elitism. Sport as leisure had become a way of life for the masses of unemployed and badminton seemed a simple and inexpensive game.

The second section (1939-1970) of the thesis focused initially on the impact of World War II on sport, and how sport became more important in the new world order that resulted after the war. Germany’s eventual
defeat was a triumph for democracy. The victorious Allied nations believed that the way to avoid another world war was to secure cooperation and unity wherever possible. Sport provided a means to achieve that. During this post-World War II period, the British no longer dominated badminton. Britain had lost its empire and many of its colonies gradually gained independence. These individual nations that arose began to use badminton as an expression of nationalism. As a result, an elitism of skill replaced an elitism of race. By the 1950s, Asian players dominated the sport that once belonged to Britain. Furthermore, the war had given a more prominent place to women. Increasingly, after World War II the traditional views of what was healthy, and lady-like began to change. More importantly, this period signalled the beginning of government intervention and its increased involvement in sport. The federal government would shift its initial emphasis on mass participation in the 1940s and 1950s to its eventual focus on elitism in the 1960s. This would further confirm elitism based on skill as federal funding was dependent upon success. Nevertheless, this did not destroy the appeal of badminton for those who simply wanted to play it for fun.

The thesis' third section (1970-1979) outlined how television had changed the world of sport. Sport suddenly became an event that could be marketable. Millions of viewers meant millions of dollars in advertising. Corporate sponsors and governments were undoubtedly eager to capitalize on potential profits. They also wanted to take advantage of the image that accompanied sport. A successful athlete could now be seen as an expert on what product to buy. Also, the Olympics provided
an opportunity for the federal government to be associated with the excellence, ideals and glory that its Olympic champions represented and received.

However, badminton had to adapt to a television market that it did not fit into. In Canada, and Saskatchewan in particular, there were no badminton stars that played on television or before large crowds of adoring fans. There was also no "Wimbledon" of badminton that at least once a year received media attention. As such, without the credibility and visibility that television seemed to give to other high-profile sports, badminton was left on the side-lines. To remedy this situation, badminton sought to secure its place in the province by expanding its programs. The PARTICIPAction Movement helped to promote the popularity of badminton. This movement was aimed at the masses who simply wanted exercise, and badminton was an easy choice as it could be played with a minimum amount of skill. Also, with funding from Sask Sport, badminton was able to further develop and expand its elite programs. As the SBA placed greater emphasis on skill development, its camps, coaching, clinics and junior programs could demonstrate that badminton was indeed an exciting sport even if it was not on television.

The final section of the thesis (1979-1993) detailed how money came to reshape every aspect of sport. As funding was essential to the viability of a given sport, the federal government came to exert more control on the bureaucracy that it had created to distribute that funding. This financial support resulted in making meritocracy a fundamental feature of sport and badminton was no exception. In Saskatchewan, badminton sought to redefine its image. In order to
ensure government funding it had to dispel the notion that it was a boring sport for snobs, reserved only for the unathletic. This process of stressing the skill of badminton was another example of elitism. However, as television had stars, it seemed that badminton could only attract a large following if it also produced star-players.

The success that badminton had enjoyed in Fox Valley High School fit perfectly with the new image that the SBA had envisioned. It seemed that all elements that made the sport a fundamental part of the cultural social fabric of Saskatchewan were present in Fox Valley. There was a community spirit based on voluntarism, but at the same time there were champions that emerged. There was an elitism but not an accompanying snobbery. Skills and fundamentals were emphasized, yet at the same time the fun and pleasure of the sport were not forgotten.

Badminton in Saskatchewan has survived because of its ability to adapt. It never really lost its elitist origins but it was able to still appeal to a wide variety of people in the province. For example, it could be the refined colonial sport of the 1920s that women were encouraged to play, but also the competitive sport of the 1930s that women enjoyed because of the skill required. Badminton also enabled other races in the post-World War II era to destroy the myth of white superiority as well as serve as a national symbol of pride and independence. In Saskatchewan, it moved from a sport of the military to a sport that was enjoyed by many. It had always struggled to keep a balance between elitism and mass participation. This conflict became especially pronounced with the emergence of television and government funding. Nevertheless, despite the conflict, the absence of stars to
serve as models, and the lack of television coverage and endorsements, badminton has been able to remain viable in Saskatchewan. Its elitism still remains, but so too does the voluntarism that has kept it viable and successful.
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