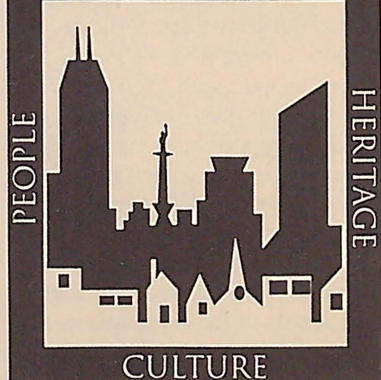


ENCYCLOPEDIA OF INDIANAPOLIS



Presented by the
POLIS Research Center
at
**Indiana University-
Purdue University
at Indianapolis**

Summer 1994 Volume 3 • Number 4

The Making of the Amateur Sports Capital

From the late 19th century through the 20th century sports reflected the aspirations of the residents of Indianapolis and mirrored the economic and social change in the city. Leading Indianapolis residents formed exclusive clubs that promoted their social, political, and economic concerns; sports clubs added to this complex web of elite associations. The Indianapolis Country Club, for example, combined sports with a full program of dances, dinners, and other social activities. During the 1890s it added golf to the sports activities, opening its course in 1897. Working class and immigrant residents of the city also possessed their own athletic outlets.

Several sports transcended class concerns. Baseball attracted participants and spectators from every economic station. It was played in the city at least as early as the mid-1860s and enjoyed great popularity in the late 19th century on both the amateur and professional levels. Indianapolis professional teams played in the International League, the National League, the Western League, the American League, and the Negro National and American Leagues. For most of the 20th century the city has been home to one of major league baseball's most successful organizations in the American Association.

The bicycle craze of the 1890s also attracted enthusiasts from all classes. The greatest cyclist of the period came from Indianapolis. Marshall W. "Major" Taylor began his racing career in the mid-1890s and by the turn of the century he was hailed as the "Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World," setting national and world records. Taylor's successes are all the more remarkable because as an African-American he faced open discrimination and hostility throughout the

United States.

Automobiles dominated the 20th century and Indianapolis was the home of many of the early automobile manufacturers. To test and showcase the automobiles, entrepreneur Carl G. Fisher formed the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Company and arranged for the construction of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Completed in 1909, the 2.5-mile track began to host automobile and motorcycle races as well as serve as the testing ground for Indianapolis' automotive products. On May 30, 1911, the Speedway hosted the first Indianapolis 500-Mile Race, won by Ray Harroun in a black and yellow Marmon "Wasp" in 6 hours and 42 minutes at an average speed of 74.9 miles per hour. By the 1920s the race had become an American institution, linking Indianapolis with speed and daring in the minds of people throughout the world.

If the Indianapolis 500 was the major sporting event each year, many other activities filled out the sporting calendar. High school and college sports attracted considerable attention. The Butler University football and basketball teams, coached by the legendary Paul D. "Tony" Hinkle, provided decades of solid entertainment. The final games of the state high school basketball tournament held in the Butler fieldhouse (the nation's largest before World War II) became the focus of the state's winter.

When Indianapolis began a slow economic decline in the 1960s, the city turned to sports to upgrade its image. Mayor Richard Lugar approved a plan to build a modern basketball arena in the heart of the downtown and to use it as the anchor for a planned urban revival. Upon completion in 1974, Market Square Arena attracted the Indiana Pacers, a local

Continued inside

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Director's Notes

The easy part is almost over. Within a few months the *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* will be available for purchase and use. Indiana University Press lists the title in its fall catalogue and is completing its marketing plan. The book will be quite a bargain: \$39.95 for a 1,000-page, illustrated reference volume. Soon we will be mailing information on how you can reserve copies at a special pre-publication discount.

With the book now in production, what remains to be done? Everything, if this project is to achieve its full value for Indianapolis. The last thing we desire is for the *Encyclopedia* to become merely a focus for civic pride. The city has a rich heritage, yes, but its history has significance only when it informs our consideration of current issues and aids our understanding of current problems. We want the *Encyclopedia* to be used, not to sit unopened on coffee tables or bookshelves.

How will we do this? In large part, by using the *Encyclopedia*—and its model of community partnerships—as the foundation or starting point for further work on matters of concern to Indianapolis. We want to ensure that information from the *Encyclopedia* becomes part of the educational experience for school children

throughout Greater Indianapolis. We will continue to expand our knowledge of the city and seek new ways to present what we learn. Our staff will extend its work with a variety of community partners on projects of mutual interest.

Two excellent opportunities are already before us. We are planning a companion volume to include a complete decade-by-decade timeline and far more illustrations than were feasible for the current project. And we are exploring the option of an expanded (and continually updated) version of the *Encyclopedia*—as well as a variety of POLIS databases on Indianapolis—on the electronic network created for the new IUPUI library. Both projects will enhance the value of the *Encyclopedia* immeasurably.

We will need your support, financially and otherwise, for these things to occur. Together we have created a model reference work. With your help, we will continue to develop an innovative and important resource center for the contemporary city.

P.S. We still seek donations for the *Encyclopedia*, and we will be pleased to list your name as a supporter under one of our categories if we have your contribution no later than June 30, 1994. ■

Amateur Sports — from page 1

ABA franchise which merged into the National Basketball Association in 1975. This move made Indianapolis a big league town.

Sports and urban revival became even more closely intertwined during the administration of Mayor William Hudnut. Between 1979 and 1989 the city, supported by large contributions from the Lilly Endowment and several other foundations, spent \$126.4 million to build a sports infrastructure. Most of the money (\$121.9 million) was used for athletic facilities in the downtown area, where the city built the Indianapolis Sports Center (1979, \$7 million), the Indiana University Natatorium (1982, \$21.5 million), the Indiana University Track and Field Stadium (1982, \$5.9 million), the

Hoosier Dome (1984, \$77.5 million), the Indiana/World Skating Academy (1987, \$7 million), and renovated the Indianapolis Sports Center (1988, \$3 million). The construction of the Hoosier Dome was essential to the city acquiring the Colts of the National Football League in 1984. Outside the downtown the city constructed the Major Taylor Velodrome (1982), the William Kuntz Soccer Complex, and the Rowing Course at Eagle Creek Park (1987).

The investment paid handsome dividends. The facilities attracted numerous amateur sports events to Indianapolis, including the National Sports Festival (1982), the National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball finals (1980, 1991), and the Pan American Games (1987), as well as other regional, national, and international competitions. It also succeeded in convincing several amateur sports organizations to establish national headquarters in Indianapolis, giving rise to the image of the city as the “amateur sports capital of the world.”

In April, 1994, city officials announced plans to construct a new downtown ballpark adjacent to the Hoosier Dome for the Indianapolis Indians. Just as sports has influenced the city’s development over the past century, urban planners and boosters hope sports will continue to shape Indianapolis’ future. ■

Sports Entries

Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)	Indianapolis Indians
Amateur Sports Governing Bodies	Indianapolis Motor Speedway
Baseball	Indianapolis Raceway Park
Basketball	Indianapolis/Scarborough Peace Games
Basketball, NCAA Finals	Johnson, Thomas L. “Sarge”
Basketball, Professional All-Star Games	Klein, Charles Herbert “Chuck”
Bowling	Midwestern Collegiate Conference
Boxing	National Institute for Fitness and Sport (NIFS)
Brush, John Tomlinson	National Sports Festival IV
Bush, Owen Joseph	Niesson, Angus J.
Butler Relays	Normal College of the American Gymnastic Union
Charleston, Oscar	Olympic Exhibitions
Football	Pan American Games
Golf	Police Athletic League
Hinkle, Paul Daniel “Tony”	Shaw, (Warren) Wilbur
Hockey	Soap Box Derby
Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA)	Soccer
Indiana Pacers	Taylor, Charles I. “C.I.”
Indiana Sports Corporation (ISC)	Taylor, Marshall W. “Major”
Indiana/World Skating Academy and Research Center	Tennis
Indianapolis Colts	United States Auto Club
Indianapolis 500-Mile Race	White River Park State Games

Meet the Overview Author—Sports

Randy Roberts, Professor of History at Purdue University, wrote the overview essay for the Sports section of the *Encyclopedia*. He received a Ph.D. in history from Louisiana State University in 1978 and taught at the University of Houston and Sam Houston State University before joining the faculty of Purdue University in 1988. Roberts is a noted author of American sports history and has written several books in that field including *Papa Jack: Jack Johnson and The Era of White Hopes* and *Winning is the Only*

Thing: Sports in America since 1945. His latest book, written with attorney Greg Garrison, is *Heavy Justice: The State of Indiana v. Michael G. Tyson*. Roberts’ essay for the *Encyclopedia* looks at the social and economic significance of sports in Indianapolis, as well as the city’s development as an amateur sports capital. With over 40 general entries in this section, topics covered range from team histories to biographies of significant sports figures to various athletic organizations, facilities, and events. ■

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Sports

1867 Two amateur clubs from Indianapolis play the earliest recorded baseball game within the city limits on July 19.

1876 Indianapolis fields a professional baseball team called the Indianapolis Blues.

1884 Butler and DePauw play the state's first collegiate football game at the old 7th Street Baseball Grounds. Butler wins, four goals to one.

1894 First basketball game played in the city at the Illinois Street YMCA.

1897 First nine-hole golf course (private) in city built adjacent to Indianapolis Country Club at 38th Street and Northwestern Avenue.

1898 Marshall W. "Major" Taylor establishes bicycle racing records and reigns as American Champion before touring Europe in the early 1900s, winning 42 of 57 races.

1900 Indianapolis' first municipal golf course (the fourth in the nation) established at Riverside Park.

1902 The Indianapolis Indians baseball team becomes a charter member of the American Association and captures its first AA title.

1906 Indianapolis Men's Bowling Association founded.

1909 After forming the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Company in 1906, Carl G. Fisher opens a 2 1/2 mile rectangular track northwest of Indianapolis to test automobiles.

1911 The first Indianapolis 500-Mile Race held on May 30. Race won by Ray Harroun driving a Marmon "Wasp" in 6 hours, 42 minutes.

1914 Indianapolis fields an African-American baseball team called the Indianapolis ABC's, named for its sponsor the American Brewing Company. In 1920 the team joins the newly formed Negro National League.

1921 Paul D. "Tony" Hinkle joins the Butler University coaching staff as an assistant; he succeeds his mentor as head coach in 1926 and remains at Butler until his retirement in 1970.

1924 Johnny Weismuller, future Hollywood Tarzan, sets world record in the 50-yd. freestyle (25.2 sec.) at the Olympic swimming trials at the Broad Ripple Pool.

1928 Butler University dedicates its new basketball arena, the nation's largest gymnasium until after World War II; it is renamed Hinkle Fieldhouse in 1965.

1933 Butler University establishes the Butler Relays, a prestigious national indoor track meet showcasing collegiate athletes until 1942.

1935 Highland Country Club hosts the Veterans of Foreign Wars Indianapolis Open, the city's first national golf tournament.

1939 Indianapolis' first professional hockey team, the Capitols, debuts as member of the International American Hockey League and plays at the Indiana State Fair Coliseum.

1941 Sport Bowl becomes the city's first center to install new pinsetting machinery.

1951 Future major league home run king Hank Aaron makes his Negro League debut as a teenage shortstop with the Indianapolis Clowns.

1955 United States Auto Club (USAC) founded to sanction automobile racing events, including the Indianapolis 500-Mile Race.

1958 Indianapolis bowler Richard A. "Dick" Weber becomes one of 33 charter members of the Professional Bowlers Association (PBA).

1960 First drag race at the newly developed Indianapolis Raceway Park.

1967 Local businessmen purchase a franchise in the proposed American Basketball Association (ABA). Known as the Pacers, the club wins three league titles (1970, 1972, 1973).

Victory Field is formally rechristened "Bush Stadium" on August 30 in memory of Owen J. Bush, long-time Indians club owner and franchise president.

1970 Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), established in 1888 to promote and develop amateur sports, moves headquarters to Indianapolis.

1973 Indianapolis and Scarborough, Ontario, Canada, inaugurate an annual multi-sport, international athletic competition in August, named the Indianapolis-Scarborough Peace Games in honor of the Vietnam Peace Treaty.

1974 Market Square Arena constructed.

1978 Local boxer Marvin Johnson wins the light heavyweight crown in Marsala, Italy, the first of his three titles.

1979 Indiana Sports Corporation, a private, not-for-profit organization, founded in December to implement city's objective of becoming a national sports capital.

1982 Indianapolis hosts the National Sports Festival (now known as the U.S. Olympic Sports Festival) from July 23 to 31.

1983 In July Indiana holds the first annual White River Park State Games, a statewide amateur athletic competition.

1984 The Baltimore Colts move to Indianapolis on March 28 to play in the newly built Hoosier Dome.

Indianapolis hosts five different Olympic team trials, more than any other city in the U.S. Olympic basketball team exhibition game at the Hoosier Dome sets world record for the largest crowd to attend an indoor basketball game—67,596 fans.

1987 Indianapolis hosts the Pan American Games, the second largest multisport event in the world, from August 7 to 23.

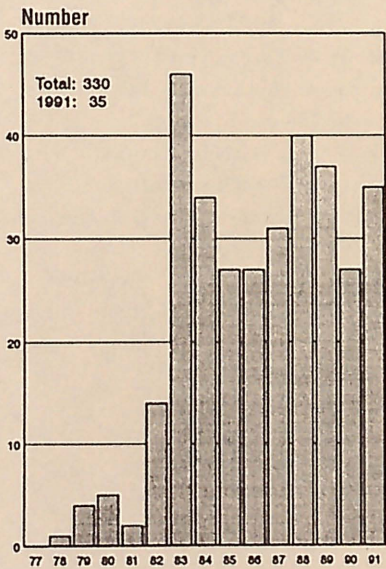
1988 Indianapolis Ice, member of the Central Hockey League and affiliate of the Chicago Black Hawks, begins play at the Coliseum.

1991 PGA (Professional Golfers' Association) Championship played at Crooked Stick in Carmel. Two years later Crooked Stick hosts the U.S. Women's Open golf tournament.

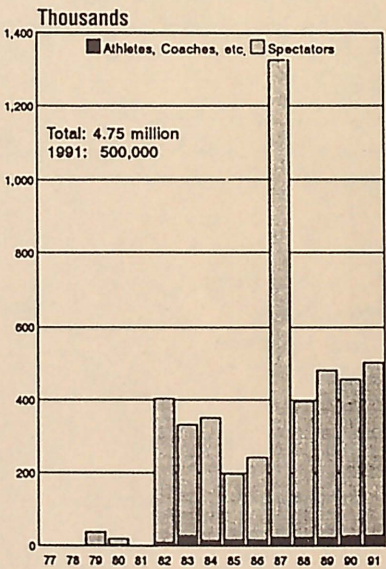
1994 Indiana Pacers post the best NBA season and postseason record in franchise history.

Indianapolis Amateur Sports

Amateur Sports Events
By Year, 1977-1991



Attendance at Events



Source: *The Economic Impact of Amateur Sports in Indianapolis, 1977-91* (William A. Schaffer and Associates, 1991-92)

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