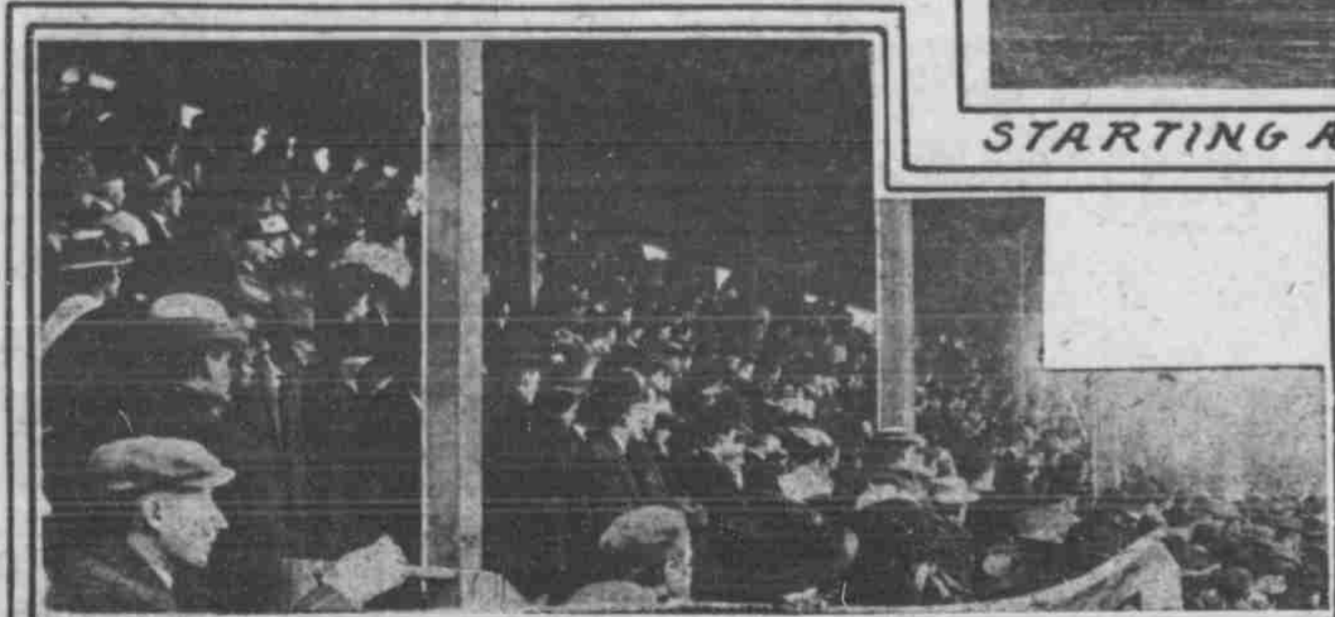


FOOT BALL AS A POPULAR SPECTACLE AND AS A GAME

Crowds Who Gather in the Stands to Watch a Match Are Quite as Interesting in their Way as the Players in the Field and Furnish Quite as Much Amusement



STARTING A PLAY NEBRASKA'S BALL



GLIMPSE AT THE GRAND STAND



THE CORNHUSKER'S LINE

OMAHA has again proven itself the real sporting center of the west by the magnificent assemblage it turned out to greet the Gophers and Cornhuskers in their annual battle at Vinton park last Saturday. Such a splendid crowd would be a credit to any city, even for a Thanksgiving day game, and yet the battle was played with the foot ball season but two weeks' old and on neutral grounds.

For years Omaha has been recognized as the best base ball town in the west and the support which it has given the base ball team has been unstinted. It is now demonstrated that there are thousands of lovers of pure college sports who will support athletics which are known to be right.

The crowd was several hundred stronger than that which greeted Nebraska and Ames a year ago at Dietz park, and the increase all came from Omaha, showing that Omaha people are beginning to be educated to high-class foot ball. Last year Ames brought over 500 students and this year but a small handful accompanied the Gophers. These 500 had to be made up from Omaha. Last year Lincoln sent up a larger delegation than this year, for a harder contest was expected against the agriculturists, while it was thought to be a foregone conclusion this year that the Gophers would win. So Omaha came to the front and not only made up for the 500 students whom Ames did not send over, but also for a considerable increase in the attendance.

Reserved seats were early all sold out, and this fact kept many away from the game, as the impression soon spread that there was limited room. As it was there was room to spare.

Football is an entirely different game from what it was three or four years ago, or since the ten-yard requirements were put in force. During the winter of 1905-06 it was completely overhauled, cut to pieces and rebuilt into an entirely changed game, and although it is played this fall practically as last fall, it is far more suitable to the tastes of the thousands who witness the annual gridiron battles. Under the old rules the ball was lost from sight in the scrimmages and the ordinary spectator had little chance to see what was going on. Now all is changed. The new rules make it necessary for the ball to change hands frequently and it moves with great rapidity and frequency from one end of the field to the other. Teams can no longer hold the ball by gaining the required distance and every two minutes or so are compelled to kick. This throws both teams into open plays, which are in full view of all spectators, no matter in what section of the field they may be sitting or standing.

From the spectator's point of view the most sensational features of the game last Saturday were the running and dodging stunts of Captain McGovern of the Gophers. This style of play would not have been used one-quarter as much under the old rules and the spectators would have been deprived of the pleasure of seeing the doughty little quarterback run and dodge and squirm his way down the field, shaking off the red and white tacklers right and left.

Three seasons of trial have now been given to the forward pass, the extra requirements on downs, the inside kick, the neutral zone and other features of revised foot ball. It took two seasons to try out the new game, but last year most of the teams put the new stunts into execution and the results were so satisfactory that the committee assigned to the task of making the rules decided to let well enough alone and make no fundamental changes, the only changes practically being of a minor nature. The college lads who received their coaching under the old rules have now practically all left their colleges and universities and all now engaged in the great college sport have been trained and coached exclusively under the new rules.

Many changes were recommended at the last meeting of the rules committee, but the committee wisely decided that as the game had become most popular in 1908 it would be far better to let it go with few, if any, changes until all coaches and players were familiar with the requirements of the new game. Many wanted the qualifications and requirements for the forward pass changed, but this part was not changed.

Those who were at Vinton Street park last Saturday were unable to notice any changes in the rules except when McGovern kicked his field goal and the scorer gave him credit for but three points instead of four, as last year. The rules of foot ball are not very complex and a casual observer attending his first game will soon get onto the general run of play. The only complications are the inside requirements, especially in the rules governing a forward pass.

The most important changes which the rule makers saw fit were in changing the value of the three varieties of goals from the field. Many years ago these were worth five points. They were then changed to four points and now drop kick goals from the field, goals from placement after fair catches and those kicked from placement behind the line of scrimmage count for but three points.

Change or no change, the old collegian who witnessed the game last Saturday was able to enthuse just as much as in the bygone days when he attended college. There is now more chance for individual spectacular play to draw forth applause from the gathered thousands, for as the rules make the game more open an individual more times receives the ball and is thrown upon his own resources as to what to do.

There is no doubt but what foot ball is a most strenuous game, but that is what it is intended to be. A youth who has practiced on the foot ball field all afternoon is not in a humor to go forth in the evening to do some deviltry in violation of the village laws. It gives hundreds of students a good chance to work off their animal spirits and keep them out of mischief. Foot ball is not a game to be played Saturday afternoon by some clerk in an office who is not in training.

or who takes practically no exercise. It is a rough game, and to go through an afternoon of two grueling halves a man must be trained to the highest pitch. The man who tries to play foot ball without good preliminary training is leading himself up to almost certain injury.

In the game Saturday Johnston had his leg broken. He was the only player of the twenty-four who took part in the game who was in any way injured, although all fought to their utmost for seventy minutes of actual play. Johnston was the victim of circumstances and it is the idea of physicians that his leg gave way as the result of the hard work to which he had been put in the first half. In the fore part of the game it was Johnston who received the ball after every kick which either Belzer or Franck made, and he it was who was forced to take all the punishment from the hard throws to which he was subjected. Johnston, the records show, was forced to make most of the runs with the ball from scrimmages, and Johnston was a tired man when that second half started. As a consequence when he sailed through the air and the Nebraska player seized him by the ankle there was not strength enough left in his muscles to protect his bones and the bone snapped. This was a favorite theory of former President Jesse of the University of Missouri. It too often happens that the man who is injured is the one who has been called upon to do the brunt of the work.

Foot ball comes nearer to fulfilling the requirements of a college sport than any other game. Colleges are now working along advanced lines and most colleges require that a certain amount of athletic exercise be indulged in each day by the students. No one game has yet been found which will suit all. At Cornell the student is permitted to select his own game. He may row or play foot ball, base ball, tennis, golf, field sports or walk. In most universities all classes now have their foot ball teams and intercollegiate matches are arranged by schedule. Thus at the larger universities hundreds of students don the moleskins in the fall.

There is no longer any doubt but that a student needs a certain amount of exercise and those who go through a season of training for the foot ball teams, the base ball teams, the crews or the track teams are better physical men at the end. A brilliant mind is of little value if a man has a broken constitution. A student who has worked on one of the many teams is not the one who becomes sick from close confinement to his room; neither is he the one who falls in his studies, for statistics show that some of the best athletes of the various universities have stood at the head of their classes; nor is the average below that of the average student, but rather far above. It takes a bright fellow to play foot ball as it could be played. What person who saw McGovern handling his team with such a clear brain, and knew just what to do all the time, thought for a minute that he was not the brightest kind of a chap? He necessarily had to think as fast as a flash. He did not have time to wait and think over what he was going to do after he caught one of Belzer's long punts. He had to think on the instant. In fact, he had almost to make up his mind in advance as to which way he was to run.

Creighton university and the Omaha High school teams witnessed the game Saturday and they both had a chance to see a game run as it should be run. There were so many features apparent that were different from the games run by these schools that the enumeration of a few might assist in teaching a lesson in the great college game. In the first place, spectators on all parts of the field could see every play because there was not a man except the four officials and the linesmen allowed to stand on the field. The substitutes were all seated along the side lines and were most careful about getting between the spectators and the field of play.

Another feature of most games was also noticeable by its absence.



ALONG THE EAST SIDE



MINNESOTA'S RESERVE FORCE



BETWEEN THE HALVES



ALONG THE WEST SIDE

There was no wrangling with the officials. When these officials had once made a ruling there was no dispute and all took it for granted that the decision of the official was right. But once was there any question. Captain Belzer once questioned an interpretation of a rule and protested. The rule book was soon forthcoming, the captain was shown that he was wrong and nothing more was said about it. To be sure, Manager Eager had provided excellent officials, men of recognized ability. He had four men as officials, all of whom drew the same pay, the head linesman getting just as much as the referee. These four men cost the management over \$400 in their pay and expenses, but they were worth it to the game, for that is what helps to make the big university games so high class.

When a person pays a high price for a seat at a foot ball game he does not want his view of the game obstructed by a bunch of substitutes running up and down the side line. Neither does he want the game interrupted by useless wrangling. Competent officials should be secured, and when they make a ruling there should be no wrangling. If the captain wants to make a protest against a ruling he may, but the rules distinctly say that he is the one person to do so. What an exhilarating sight it is to see a typical college crowd at one of these great foot ball games! How different is the crowd which turns out for ordinary sports! Here the band plays and leads the collegians in their songs. The yell masters, with their megaphones, lead in the yelling, and so time their efforts that the entire section of the stands joins in one united college yell. Colors and pennants fly on all sides and huge chrysantheums show the proper colors. The college lad in the exuberance of youth cannot see anything but his team and is the most partisan man on earth. This assertion may not be exactly right, for cheer after cheer were given Johnston when he was hurt last Saturday, and the good runs of McGovern were cheered, but the lad was soon rooting for Belzer to boot the ball or for Bentley to circle the ends.

Staid Omaha business men were to be seen in the stands, forgetting their business troubles as they watched the game, or what was just as interesting—the college lads whoop and yell.

Omaha welcomes the University of Nebraska and the citizens of this city hope that the athletic managers will see their way clear to give Omaha one or more of these great annual games each year. Omaha promises to do its part in the way of crowds and all that it wants is a chance to show that it has true sporting blood and will support pure sports. Kansas City has made a great reputation for itself by the way it supports the annual game between Kansas and Missouri on Thanksgiving day, and yet it has only been within the last few years that Kansas City has turned out any larger crowds than greeted the Gophers and Cornhuskers last Saturday. If the

Cornhusker-Gopher game had been played in Omaha on Thanksgiving day there would surely have been a record-breaking crowd. Lincoln made the mistake by sending out bear stories about its team. There is no reason why Minnesota would always win from Nebraska. The Cornhuskers have just as good a coach as have the Gophers and Nebraska brain and brawn is just as good as that from Minnesota. Nebraska was apparently lacking in substitutes Saturday, for the regulars played just as well as did the Gophers in the first half. It is a mistake to be afraid to change men during a game. When a man is injured and all in he should be taken from the game. Those substitutes along the side lines were aching to get into the fray. They were full of ginger and any one of them might have been able, while fresh, to get away with the spirit which would have changed the tide of battle. Yale showed the value of substitutes on the same day, when twenty-three men were used to beat West Point.

Omaha will have more games to watch this fall, for Nebraska may return for a game Thanksgiving day. At any rate, Creighton and the Omaha High school will have games and the lovers of the great sport in Omaha will have many more chances to turn out and exercise their lungs.

Foot ball is a great game, not only because of the physical and mental development produced in the individual player, but because it supplies the lack of rigid discipline for which the youths of this country lack in comparison with other countries. The rigid training of a foot ball season not only establishes self-control for those who play, but it also holds up a standard of discipline for those who watch the players on the gridiron. The game involves personal contact physically with an opponent, and thus always will be a most strenuous sport, appealing at all times to strong, healthy boys and young men. The sport must serve some good purpose to survive all the adverse legislation to which it has been subjected for centuries. For this reason instead of talking abandonment of the game, those who have the welfare of the sport at heart strive to provide rules which will make it meet with popular favor without taking away its sterling qualities.

Omaha has several more good games promised for this year and the promise of the management of the University of Nebraska for one of its big games next fall. The patronage of the game insures the best to be had in the future.