

Recreational Sports in High School

by

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Previous to the past few years the team type of games and contest has received most of our attention and interest. Recently, however, a change has been apparent and individual sports have gained in popularity. This change has been due to several factors: 1. Organization of local and national groups to foster interest in individual sports, 2. Interest in the carry-over value of activities, 3. Problem of leisure time caused by change in our social order.

These factors have definitely brought about a change in our activity programs of schools and colleges. Curriculums have had to be changed to include both team sports, for our more athletic type, and recreative sports which will satisfy the needs of the individual interested in activities demanding a lesser degree of skill. You can see how the latter would appeal to the girl with a physical handicap.

Recreational sports are not limited by the factors of proper playing space, equipment, and enough players to make two teams. A backyard, basement, stretch of level lawn, school grounds, driveway will provide adequate space. A net or cord stretched between two trees can be used for badminton, deck tennis, or paddle tennis. An official is not necessary, and except for badminton, the equipment is relatively inexpensive. The cost of equipment in even badminton can be cut to a minimum as I shall explain later.

The aims of a recreational program are: 1. To equip students with skills in recreative sports, 2. To stimulate sufficient interest to insure continued participation, 3. To develop desirable attitudes toward sports.

I have tried to give you so far information that I believe will be useful to you in trying to convince your school board that money spent on new recreative equipment is not poorly invested. Your school in order to be considered progressive must realize that there is a definite trend today toward the inclusion and participation in recreative sports as an important part of the physical education program.

In our school we introduced recreational sports in the following manner: class instruction was given in each sport; mimeographed rules were given each student, and they were read and discussed. Not until the following year did we make these sports a part of our intramural program, and in shuffle board alone three hundred and twenty-one girls out of approximately 450 participated.

Now let us discuss individually some of the sports that you might like to include in your program.

While it takes you years to become an expert at badminton, it takes only a few minutes to become an enthusiast in paddle badminton. The game is active and calls for courtesy, understanding, and honesty. The element of danger is at a minimum, as both paddles and birds are very light in weight. A perfect playing surface is not necessary, as no bounce plays are permitted. The low cost of installation and maintenance should aid in making badminton an ideal carry-over sport.

Instead of buying racquets, we had wooden paddles made by the manual training department for approximately ten cents each. Instead of using badminton rules, we use five on a team and follow the rules of volleyball. Thus the game develops individual skill and yet instills cooperation.

Rather than buy a bird, you can trim down an ordinary sponge to about the size of one's closed hand, or you can place a small sponge rubber ball in the center of a 7-inch square of cloth. Twist the cloth and tie close to the ball and then cut into tail-like strips. Such a substitution answers the purpose nicely.

Paddle tennis is a year round sport and is played with regular lawn tennis rules, singles or doubles. The court is one-fourth the size of a tennis court, and the equipment consists of a wooden paddle, a sponge rubber ball, net, and standards. Except for the bird your paddle badminton equipment may be used.

A shuffle board court can be laid out on any hard surface. The length of the court is twenty-eight feet and the width three feet. Eight six-inch discs, four red and four blue, are used to play this game. The cue is used to propel the discs.