

THE GIRLS' BRANCH  
OF THE  
Public Schools Athletic League  
OF  
NEW YORK CITY



# THE GIRLS' BRANCH

## OF THE

### PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETIC LEAGUE

The problems involved in athletics for girls are far more difficult than are those that are involved in athletics for boys, because in connection with the latter there is a long history of experimentation which has demonstrated conclusively many important facts. Athletics for girls rest upon a relatively new and as yet to a large extent experimental basis.

The emphasis in the girls' athletic exercises is now placed chiefly upon those events in which classes or groups as a whole compete. The exploitation of the individual is generally avoided, both in the dancing and in the athletics. Throwing the basket ball for distance is the only event in which the individual appears as such. It is believed by the ladies who are directing the work of the Girls' Branch that one of the most important lessons which the girls need to learn—and one for which but small opportunity is afforded them for learning—relates to the nature and advantage of co-operation, of team work.

During practically all of woman's history she has been primarily identified with the home, rather than with the community. Her identification with the community has been through her husband and her children. Hence it has been both necessary and inevitable that those qualities which depend upon such individualistic action should have been most developed. But in the new era which is already upon us, the same demands with reference to the larger movements of the community are being made upon woman as have been made upon men; yet the same opportunities are not being given to women for learning these lessons of co-operation. Boys have their team games, their gangs, whereby in a rough although effective way they learn the laws of united action in ways which hitherto have been closed to girls. As exhibited in this program, these simple games, depending upon the co-operative endeavors of a group of individuals, are thus indicative of the newer movement that belongs to our century. The necessity for this work does not merely or mainly rest upon a demand for physical vigor, health, quickness, and skill which are developed by the exercises, but it rests fully as much upon the moral qualities involved in the team play. The social aim is thus quite as prominent as is the physical one.

These contests are arranged between classes in schools. They are not performed in public, but are carried on either in private or before an audience of the school, consisting of the parents and friends of the contestants. In the development of athletics for boys public competition has been a large factor. Whether or not it will ultimately become equally a factor in athletics for girls it is as yet too early to say, but the conviction is very strong among the Board of Directors of the Girls' Branch that the time has not yet arrived for the general



example of this is the Virginia Reel, known also as Sir Roger de Coverly, a dance interesting in itself, excellent from the social standpoint, but lacking from the standpoint of physical exercise. Therefore, one of the first principles of selection was the picking out of those dances in which most of the individuals are active most of the time.

Then, again, some folk dances require for their performance more space than is commonly available in the gymnasium, the school basement, or the schoolyard. Thus space, as well as time considerations, are involved in the selection of each dance. Those dances are chosen which can be done by the largest number in the most limited space.

As far as possible dances have been selected which involve large movements of the body, arms and limbs. This at once removes from the possibility of use such a large group of dances as that represented predominantly by the dances from Java, in which much of the work and symbolism is done by the forearm and wrist.

Another consideration is that the postures involved in the dances shall be graceful and such as do not tend in any way to the forming of habits of movement or posture which are disadvantageous from the standpoint of health. As an illustration of the dances that have been avoided on this score may be cited those Indian dances in which for a considerable portion of the time the body is bent forward, the individual dancing with bent knees and in a crouching position. While it has not been possible to avoid these positions altogether, no dances have been selected in which these postures are predominant.

Another most important consideration is that the dances shall be sufficiently simple, so that the children can learn them without an undue amount of training.

It has also been found necessary to avoid using a large number of folk dances because of their unsuitability from the emotional standpoint. For example, the love dances of the East, however, beneficial they may be from the standpoint of the bodily movements involved, are entirely unsuited from the standpoint of their emotional content and their relation to the morals of our civilization.

It will thus be seen that the range of available folk dances meeting these various conditions is comparatively small. While the Girls' Branch does teach folk dancing, it is not by any means an indiscriminate teaching of all the folk dances of all the peoples. The work consists only in the teaching of those folk dances which meet these physiological, moral and social conditions.

In considering these various questions, the dangers of dancing, it is believed, have been largely met. It is recognized that there are many people who are not only fearful of dancing, but who see in it genuine evil. That to which these persons object is also objected to by those who have the management of the Girls' Branch. The experience of the last four years indicates clearly that the joyous freedom of these dances which are suitable from the various standpoints mentioned tends to minimize rather than to increase the dangers that were



public display of competitive athletic sports. Exception is made in such a case as the exhibition for the Playground Congress, because in no other way does it seem possible to adequately propagate the idea which is back of the movement. But even here it will be noted that school is not pitted against school. The intense rivalries and jealousies which are so often aroused by such competitions, the exceeding exaltation of victory and the bitterness of public defeat, are avoided.

In the athletic sports exhibited, as well as in the folk dances which are characteristic of all the work done by the Girls' Branch, there are certain fundamental principals of selection. These are:

- (1) All the individuals shall take part;
- (2) No one individual shall be placed in such an important position as to render the others relatively subordinate;
- (3) The exercises shall be of a measurably all-round character, involving not merely all parts of the body, but they shall develop the qualities of skill, quickness of perception, readiness to meet emergencies, and the like.

During the early days of the Girls' Branch experimental work was carried on along three lines—athletics, gymnastics, folk dancing; and a careful record was kept as to their utility. It soon became evident that of these three, the folk dancing was the most interesting; that by a judicious selection of dances a larger number of children could secure exercise in limited space and time than in either of the other forms of exercise; and that the folk dances afforded opportunity for co-operation with other activities of school and home in a way not afforded by either of the other activities.

Gymnastics as compared with athletics showed similar differences, except when in the hands of teachers having exceptional skill and enthusiasm; the athletics proved to be the more interesting. The daily gymnastics of the children in the school-room seemed to be measurably adequate for the accomplishment of the ends for which school gymnastics primarily exist, which are: to combat the effects of the sedentary life of the child and the effects upon posture of the school desk. Athletics, while they do not have in them those exercises that tend to correct the effects of the school desk, do primarily affect the vital functions of respiration, circulation, and digestion in a way that is most beneficial. Accordingly the work of the Girls' Branch has centered upon athletics and folk dancing.

## FOLK DANCING

A STUDY of the various dances used by the peoples in different parts of the world quickly revealed the fact that a large number of these dances were not suited to the objects sought by the directors of the Girls' Branch. In some of the dances, for example, but few individuals are dancing at a time, the rest remaining still, thus involving a waste of time. An excellent



The first discussion as to the importance of learning those lessons of subordination of the individual and co-operation of the group was formulated by Miss Grace H. Dodge at the initial meeting of the organization.

The Girls' Branch, like the Public Schools Athletic League itself, was at first entirely a volunteer body, having no official relation to the Department of Education. It still exists in this position; but in the course of study as adopted by the Board of Education during the past winter many of the steps involved in the folk dances taught by the Girls' Branch are taught also in the grades. So the children come to the classes for folk dancing measurably prepared to take up the work systematically, without having to do the detailed introductory work which formerly was necessary. The steps of the folk dances which have been adopted as part of the course of study are optional, so that in any school where the principal or teachers prefer on any grounds to devote the entire time to formal gymnastics, they are at liberty to do so. In this way it has been possible to avoid antagonizing those who have conscientious scruples against work of this kind.

The work has been carried on in the main through the grade teachers. It is obviously impossible for a private organization to furnish instructors for any large fraction of the 300,000 girls in the public schools of New York City. Accordingly the policy was adopted of offering to the grade teachers instruction in these dances one hour per week, provided they in turn would teach the girls of their own classes or schools for an equal period of time. During the first year, which was largely experimental, about 200 girls were thus brought under instruction; during the second year something over 3,000 and during the year that has just closed over 7,000. This latter figure does not include the very much larger number of those who received instruction of a more or less similar nature in connection with their regular physical training courses.

It is also important to note that instruction in these folk dances has been adopted as a part of the physical training work in the high schools for girls of New York City.

Thus it will not be many years before a large part of the young people of the city will have had through the schools that instruction in folk dancing which has been the birthright of the children of practically all peoples of the earth, and which we in America alone have so far failed to include as a part of the heritage of the children.

The Girls' Branch was fortunate to secure the services of Miss Elizabeth Burchenal, whose skill in the selection of dances and whose enthusiasm as a teacher have been a large factor in the success of the movement. The co-operation of the Board of Education in this work is indicated not only by the adoption in the course of study of many of the steps which are a part of these folk dances, but also by the appointment of an Assistant Inspector of Athletics, who gives her whole time to the organization of this work.

The careful consideration which was given to this large group of problems is indicated by the following statement from the Girls' Branch and by the



letters from the President of the Board of Education, the City Superintendent of Schools and the President of the Public Schools Athletic League.

## EXHIBITIONS OF FOLK DANCING AND ATHLETIC COMPETITIONS

### RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GIRLS' BRANCH OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETIC LEAGUE

In the development of the good which we see in the physical exercise for girls, including folk dancing and athletics, we recognize that there are certain real dangers, and our problem is to secure the good results without fostering the evil possibilities. We believe that the danger may be avoided at least in a great measure by the following steps:

1. By having the folk dancing for school and social purposes only. It does not seem to us wise to cultivate in the girls the idea that they can make money by exhibiting their dancing. We do think that the exhibition of the folk dancing at the schools at the parents' meetings, at meetings where the friends of the girls are invited at school functions, to be not only desirable but useful; but we feel so strongly that when such exhibitions form part of pay entertainments, the idea of the stage is introduced and becomes sufficiently prominent to make us see that it would be better to eliminate these dances entirely, rather than cultivate this idea.

2. By having the work of such nature that it can be done by large classes, for the exhibition of one or even a few girls in special work, leans in the same way toward the stage. We feel strongly that this idea should not be the trend of our work.

3. In the folk dances the use of the national costumes of the country from which the dance is taken adds to its beauty, but we believe it would be better that such costumes should not be used. If paid for by the girls themselves they would introduce a social class distinction between those who could afford to buy them and those who could not, which would be unfortunate; if paid for by the teachers they would make a further demand on their resources, which we think would be equally unfortunate and which is far from our wish. The chief artistic element in the costume is that of unity, giving to all the members of a class that impression of homogeneity which is one of the basal principles of art. This can be accomplished by the use of some simple decoration, such as a uniform colored ribbon in the hair, a sash, a scarf or the like, which might be of cheesecloth or some other inexpensive material, so as not to be a burden of expense to any girl.

The use of the costumes also tends to make the folk dancing more of an exhibition than what it really is—a form of physical exercise. Whenever possible it is desirable that the girls wear bloomers and suitable shoes which allow greater freedom in exercising.

4. From the first we have clearly realized and tried to guard against that notoriety which is one of the serious dangers of athletics. We believe firmly in wholesome exercise and in a reasonable degree of competition, but wish to avoid that notoriety which would be inevitably attendant upon inter-school games. We believe that all the exercise of spirit of competition that are desirable can be secured by games between teams within the classes and between the classes within the same school. Therefore, we deplore all competition of

basket ball and other games of a similar nature between teams from separate schools, but this, of course, would not interfere in any way with the meeting together for social purposes and in the participation in friendly sport of pupils from different schools when under the auspices of their own teachers or parents.

*Signed:*

Committee on Recommendations.

( Catharine S. Leverich, Pres.  
Grace H. Dodge.  
Martha Lincoln Draper.  
Laura Drake Gill.  
Annie W. S. Low.  
Kathryn Mackay.  
Fannie Griscom Parsons.  
Caroline S. Spencer.  
Ellin P. Speyer.  
Edith M. Phelps-Stokes.  
Emmeline Winthrop.  
Jessie H. Bancroft.  
Julia Richman.

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BOARD OF EDUCATION.  
Park Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street.

NEW YORK, May 9, 1907.

MISS CATHARINE S. LEVERICH,

President, Girls' Branch, Public Schools Athletic League.

*Dear Madam:—*

While I have been greatly interested in the work of the Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League, I have been afraid that there might be danger in some cases of the instructions in folk dancing resulting in directing the attention of the children to performing in public and to stage dancing.

The recommendations of the Girls' Branch, which I have just read, seems to me therefore most judicious, and I trust will be generally followed.

Very truly yours,

EGERTON L. WINTHROP, JR.,  
President Board of Education.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE CITY OF NEW YORK.  
OFFICE OF THE CITY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.  
500 Park Avenue.

MAY 20, 1907.

MISS CATHARINE S. LEVERICH,

President, Girls' Branch, Public Schools Athletic League.

*Dear Madam:—*

I have read with care the suggestion it is proposed to send under the auspices of the Public Schools Athletic League to Principals of schools with regard to exhibitions in folk dancing.

I most heartily endorse every recommendation made in this communication. The communication is returned.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM H. MAXWELL,  
City Superintendent.



anticipated from the start. The attractiveness of the dance hall has been lessened for those who can have in school the beautiful old world folk dances.

Another and an entirely different aspect of the case is also important. The parents of the children as they come to school and see their children taking part in these dances of the various races have come to feel that there are ties between themselves and their own children and the historic past of their own peoples, which formerly had been lacking. The children, on the other hand, who are doing the dances which their parents before them have done as children and as young people, coming to understand something of the meaning of these dances, have had interpreted to them in a way which it is hardly possible to accomplish by any other means their ancestral history. These dances constitute a real tie between the old and the new.

The conservative treatment that has been given to these folk dances has resulted in an almost entire absence of that criticism which is so commonly made against dancing. It was expected when the folk dancing was undertaken by the Girls' Branch that there would be a considerable body of conscientious people who would seriously object to it. But when the basis of selection of the dances was seen and the fact was realized that the dancing was tied up with the school and the home life, that the dances were selected with reference to their suitability from the moral and social, as well as the physiological standpoint, the critics have not merely refrained from criticising, but they have joined those who were in support of the movement.

Dancing, like every other form of art, has its grave possibilities of danger. The guidance of this movement in its early stages in New York in so markedly successful a way has been due not only to the wisdom of the Board of Directors of the Girls' Branch, but also to the fact that these Directors were ladies of such standing in the community as to warrant confidence that what they would advocate would be thoroughly judicious and conservative. The ladies constituting the first Board of Management are as follows:

Mrs. Richard Aldrich  
Mrs. Archibald Alexander  
Mrs. Francis M. Bacon, Jr.  
Miss Jessie H. Bancroft  
Miss Josephine Beiderhase  
Mrs. Wm. C. Demorest  
Mrs. George Dickson  
Mrs. Cleveland H. Dodge  
Miss Martha L. Draper  
Mrs. Charles Fairchild  
Mrs. Charles Farnsworth  
Mrs. Daniel Guggenheim  
Mrs. S. R. Guggenheim  
Mrs. Edward G. Janeway  
Miss Catharine S. Leverich

Mrs. John Bradley Lord  
Mrs. Clarence H. Mackay  
Mrs. Charles F. Naething  
Mrs. Henry Parsons  
Mrs. Henry Phipps  
Miss Julia Richman  
Mrs. Earl Sheffield  
Mrs. Lorrilard Spencer  
Mrs. James Speyer  
Miss Margaret Stimson  
Mrs. I. N. Phelps Stokes  
Mrs. Felix Warburg  
Miss Evangeline Whitney  
Mrs. Egerton L. Winthrop



PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETIC LEAGUE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.  
20 Nassau Street.

NEW YORK, May 15, 1907.

MISS CATHARINE S. LEVERICH,  
500 Park Avenue, New York City.

*My Dear Miss Leverich:—*

I have carefully considered the recommendations of the Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League which you forwarded to me in your letter of the 14th inst.

In a matter of this kind I should allow my judgment to be controlled by that of ladies such as those which compose your Executive Committee, as I think they are more competent than any man can be to determine what is best for the girls. The suggestion of your committee that costumes should not be used, except some simple decoration to secure uniformity; that exhibition should not be given in large classes, and that the exhibition should be made as a form of physical exercise, rather than an exhibition of dancing, has my decided approval.

Very truly yours,

GEORGE W. WINGATE,  
President Public Schools Athletic League.

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The rules governing the elementary school inter-class athletic competitions are as follows:

RULES GOVERNING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL INTER-CLASS ATHLETIC COMPETITIONS FOR TROPHIES OFFERED BY THE GIRLS' BRANCH  
OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ATHLETIC LEAGUE

ELIGIBILITY.

For admission to after-school athletic practice every girl must be satisfactory to her Principal in effort, deportment and proficiency.

In order to take part in an inter-class competition every girl must have attended school for one month, and must have received a mark of at least "B" for the month previous in proficiency, and "A" in effort and deportment.

EVENTS.

Competitions shall include the following events: Dancing, Shuttle Relay, Pass Ball Relay, All-Up Relay and Throwing the Basket Ball for Distance.

Each event shall be a class event. There will be no individual events.

DANCING.

Each competing class shall have beside its own particular dance another which all classes have in common. After each class has given its own dance, all classes shall give the common dance together so that the merit of their dancing may be compared. It is not necessary to have an even number of



girls in each class for the dancing. Each dance shall be judged on three points:

1. Memory .....Possible 10 points
2. Form and Grace.....Possible 10 points
3. Spirit .....Possible 10 points

This makes a maximum of 60 points which it is possible for a class to win on its two dances. Instead of awarding the usual number of points for first, second and third places, the total number of points won by each class in dancing is credited to them.

No special costume other than a gymnasium suit shall be used. The element of unity may be supplied by uniform colored ribbon in the hair, a sash, a chest band or the like of some inexpensive material, so as not to be a burden of expense to any girl.

### RELAYS.

In all relays an even number in the competing team is necessary. The start is given by three signals:

1. "On your mark" (one foot forward on the starting line).
2. "Get ready" (poise forward).
3. "Go."

It is desirable that each entire class should run as one team. In the Shuttle and All-Up Relays, if the number exceeds sixteen (16), each class may run a trial heat to pick its quickest half to represent the class in the final race. In these two events, the "touching off" is done with the hands, and each girl must *stand* till touched. If any girl crosses the starting line before being touched, her team has made a foul, and is counted out of the race unless the other competing teams have made an equal number of fouls, in which case first, second and third places are awarded as if no fouls had been made.

At the discretion of the senior judges a race may be run a second time.

### SHUTTLE RELAY.

In the Shuttle Relay each competing team is divided in two parts, which line up in single file facing each other back of the starting lines, drawn at opposite ends of the running space.

When the competing teams are arranged in this way, the start is made at the usual signal by No. 1 of each team, who runs forward, touches off No. 2 at the opposite end. No. 2 runs forward to touch off No. 3, and so on until all have been touched off, when the last girl dashes forward over the finish line. Each girl after touching off the next one, has finished her part of the race, should quickly leave the running space and remain out of the way of the remaining runners.

### PASS BALL RELAY.

The competing teams line up side by side back of the finish line, each team in a single file. At the signal "On your mark," No. 1 of each team toes the line with both feet, and the rest of the team close up forward as far as possible without touching, at the same time straightening her line. At the

signal "Get ready," No. 1 raises the ball overhead and all hands are raised. The ball shall not be touched by any other girl until the word "Go," when it shall be passed back from hand to hand overhead as rapidly as possible. If the ball is dropped before it reaches the end of the line, the girl immediately back of the last girl who touched the ball shall leave the line, pick up the ball, return to and start it back from the point where it left the line. When it reaches the last girl it is carried forward by her around a given mark at the opposite end of the running space and handed, not thrown, to the girl at the end of the team, who passes it back as before. The girl who has just run places herself at the head of the team, toeing the mark. This is continued until the girl who was originally No. 1 is at the end of the team. When the ball reaches her, she runs forward around the given mark, as did the others and finishes in a dash over the finish line.

### ALL-UP RELAY.

The team shall line up as in Pass Ball. Opposite each team at the end of the running space shall be two circles, three feet in diameter, side by side and tangent to each other. In one of these stand three Indian clubs. The start is made by No. 1 of each team, who runs forward and using one hand only, places the clubs, one at a time so that they stand in the other circle. When this is done, she calls "All-Up," and running back, touches off the girl who is then standing first in the line. If any of the clubs fall after she has left them, she must return and set them up again before she may touch off the next runner. The girl who has just run has completed her part of the race and should leave the running space. This is repeated by each girl in the team until all have been touched off, when the last girl after changing the clubs as did the others finishes in a dash over the finish line. The use of more than one hand in changing the clubs constitutes a foul.

### BASKET BALL THROW.

In this event it is not necessary to have an even number of girls in the competing teams as the class average may be taken.

The girls of each team shall throw in rapid succession, each girl having but one trial, unless the ball should strike some obstacle before touching the ground, when another trial is allowed.

A six-foot circle with a heavy line across its center shall be drawn at one end of the throwing space. The thrower toes this line and in completing her throw she shall not fall or step forward over the line of the circle in front of her. If this is done, her throw shall not be recorded, and the number of girls in her team shall be counted as one less.

The throwing space shall be divided by three cross lines measuring from the front of the circle as follows:

- 12 feet, 18 feet, 27 feet (for girls below the 7th year).
- 15 feet, 21 feet, 31 feet (for 7th and 8th-year girls).

For each throw to the 15 feet (12 feet) or any point between it and the next line, a class scores 1 point; to the 21 feet (18 feet), or between it and the next, 3 points; to the 31 feet (27 feet), or beyond, 5 points.



The class averaging (if the numbers are not even) or adding the largest score shall win first place in the event. It is well to have at least two classes throwing at once so that time may be saved.

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## RULES GOVERNING HIGH SCHOOL INTERCLASS ATHLETIC CHAMPIONSHIPS.

### ELIGIBILITY.

Every girl taking part in any event of this League must be in good standing both in deportment and in scholarship, including work in physical training.

No entry shall be accepted unless approved of by the Principal.

No entry shall be accepted without a physician's certificate of physical fitness.

No girl who plays basket ball or takes part in athletic competitions outside of school unless under the auspices of the Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League, shall be eligible to represent her class.

No girl who has represented any outside organization or taken part in any interschool competition shall be eligible to compete in any event of this League, until twenty school weeks have elapsed from the time of such competition.

Girls taking part in any unsanctioned events render themselves liable to suspension.

### BASKET BALL.

High School Basket Ball Championships will be decided in the several schools by series of games, whereby each class will play every other class entered in the School Championships.

Spalding's Official Rules for Women will govern contests.

All games shall be under the direction of an instructor (preferably physical training instructor) appointed by the principal.

This instructor shall also represent the school in the High School Basket Ball Committee of the Girls' Branch.

Each class will give its list of players with two substitutes, signed by the Principal to the instructor in charge of the games, who will arrange the schedule.

The games will be played in the school building, except in case there is no suitable space. In this case another space may be secured, only on the consent and approval of the Principal.

Officials for the games shall be members of the Basket Ball Committee, or persons approved of by the Committee and the Principal.

The ball to be used in all match games shall be Spalding's Official Basket Ball.

The Basket Ball Committee shall be composed of one instructor from each of the several high schools of the League, appointed by their Principals.

All questions should be referred to the Basket Ball Committee of the Girls' Branch of the Public Schools Athletic League, 500 Park Avenue.





