

AMATEUR SPORT

This Department went to press Friday, October 30.

UNDER DATE OF OCTOBER 24 this Department criticised the University of Pennsylvania Athletic Committee for continuing, after other universities had abandoned it as of unwholesome influence, preliminary football practice; on the "evidence thus given of viewing the game and the preparation for it rather as a business than as a sport"; and for the thereby suggested assimilation to a professional spirit which regards victory of first importance.

We have received a letter from this committee, which, as requested, is herewith published—not that there are two sides to the preliminary-practice question, but because the work of this committee in other directions in the general effort making for healthful college sport suggests the possibility of an honest difference of opinion, and entitles them to our consideration:

PHILADELPHIA, October 22, 1896.

SIR,—The paragraphs in this week's issue of HARPER'S WEEKLY in which you refer to us contain views which we believe are unsound, and criticisms that are unjust to Pennsylvania. With your statement that Pennsylvania is revealing a professional spirit in football we take distinct issue. It is true that the candidates for our team spent three weeks (not a month) in preliminary training at a hotel, not "hired especially for the occasion," but along with many September guests. This practice was taken openly, not covertly, as in the case, as you know, of some of the other prominent universities. Consistently with amateur sport, similar preliminary training has always been recognized and indulged in—e. g., the annual preliminary training of the Yale and Harvard crews at New London; of our own and the Columbia, Cornell, and Harvard crews, who were quartered for several weeks at the hotels near Poughkeepsie last summer; of the Yale crew who recently spent six weeks in preliminary training at Henley, as did Cornell the year before; of the Yale track team preparatory to their games with Oxford in '95; of the Cambridge track team here last summer; and of the All



AN INDIAN MASS PLAY ON YALE TACKLE FOR FIVE YARDS GAIN.

the same proposition to Yale and Princeton had we expected to play football with them.

With respect to our rules of eligibility, you well know they are very strict, and have been rigidly enforced for several years, including the rule to which you call attention in this same issue as having been recently passed by another university, namely, the "one year's residence rule."

There may be ground, in spite of the above facts, for some honest difference of opinion as to the permission we have granted for three

especially for the occasion," or whether the period of free board and lodging extends over six weeks or is ended at three.

The comparison in the Committee's letter of this preliminary football practice with the final work of the college crews at New London and Poughkeepsie has no point whatsoever. They are by no means parallel cases, either in spirit or in fact. Besides, the crew-work at Poughkeepsie and New London is not preliminary (except inasmuch as all training is indeed preliminary up to the very day of contest); it is the finishing work just before the race, and the men are practically all assigned to their positions. Both the Yale and the Cornell crews, and the Yale and the Cambridge track teams, had been in training several months before they went into final preparation near the scene of their approaching international struggle.

BUT ALL THIS IS BESIDE THE QUESTION of the preliminary practice with which we have been confronted in football. Of course the life of men during preliminary football practice is "simple and wholesome"; men in training are not usually permitted indulgence in dissipations. It is not the point how much expenditure of "physical exertion" is needed by football; it is not the point that the man likely to neglect his studies for football should be taught "a part of his football lesson before his actual scholastic work



YALE VS. CARLISLE INDIANS, MANHATTAN FIELD, OCTOBER 24, 1896.  
Cayon, Indian Back, awaiting his Signal.

American amateur track team preparatory to their contest with the representative amateur team of England in 1895.

If "the example and experience of older and more conservative institutions" (we may say, *en passant*, that Pennsylvania, second only to Harvard in point of age, was founded by Franklin in 1740) are necessary, you will at once recall the above and other instances of a similar kind.

From our faculty's stand-point a limited period thus spent in preliminary training is eminently proper and beneficial. The mode of life of the young men during these three weeks was simple and wholesome; their fare was of the plainest; their work was carefully supervised with relation to their general health as much as to their football capacity. The men who were thought to be slow in their studies were encouraged to spend a part of each day with their books.

Football is a game requiring a maximum expenditure of physical exertion, and a condition of mental alertness and activity which makes great demands on both the body and the mind of the player. We believe that it is unwise to allow young men to engage in it without at least so much careful preliminary attention to their bodily condition as will ensure them against unnecessary strain and injury; and we think, with all respect, that this is a matter about which you are less qualified to form an intelligent opinion than some members of our own body. We believe also that the football season makes less demand on the time and thought of an undergraduate if he has learned at least a part of his football lesson before his actual scholastic work begins. Otherwise the students are apt to be so physically fatigued as to be unfit for study, and therefore unable to maintain their class standing—a prerequisite to participation in athletics at Pennsylvania.

Our medical advisers, as well as our faculty committee, believe that the men are both safer physically and better students, as well as better football-players, for limiting rather than abolishing this preliminary period.

We think, moreover, that the game itself as developed in this country has a value to the whole student body, as encouraging and fostering many attributes, which justifies this slight extension of the football season as a means of promoting the scientific character of the game.

We have been in favor of a limitation of this preliminary training, which, like much else in American athletics, has tended to extremes. On February 12, 1896, we wrote to Harvard that we thought "it would be wise to limit the preliminary season for football training, and would be quite willing to act simultaneously with Harvard in the passage of a rule which should forbid the candidates for the team from assembling for this purpose, either as a body or in separate squads, for a period longer than three weeks prior to the date of the opening of the university." We added: "The climate in Philadelphia and vicinity is so insufferably hot, however, in September, that we would not deem it prudent, as far as Pennsylvania is concerned, to require the candidates to assemble at the university. If you will draft such a rule and send it on, our committee will join with you in enacting it." To this proposition we had a cordial assent, saying that there had been opposition to such action, but that if we would act jointly with them there would be no more trouble about it. Although, on account of preoccupation, the mutual agreement was not formally entered into, our committee proceeded to make the rule as above suggested to govern Pennsylvania. We would, of course, have made

weeks' preliminary practice, but talk of such action as "revealing a professional spirit" is so intemperate as in itself to do more harm to the cause of amateur sport than would an even longer period of preliminary training.

Yours truly,  
J. WILLIAM WHITE,  
H. LAUSSAT GEYELIN,  
JNO. C. BELL,  
GEORGE WHARTON PEPPER.

EVIDENTLY THESE GENTLEMEN do not completely understand precisely what is meant by preliminary practice. The custom upon which this Department has always directed its criticism, and will continue always to do so, is that of getting together for football drilling, several weeks before the college term opens, all candidates for the eleven and boarding and lodging them free of cost. I fail to see what difference it makes in the spirit of the proceeding whether part of a hotel or the entire caravansary is "hired



INDIANS SCORE A TOUCH-DOWN.  
Captain B. Pierce about to kick Goal.

begins"; it is the point that any university should lay such stress upon the winning of their football eleven as to go beyond the usual time of preparation and breed professional instincts by lodging and boarding men for no other purpose than that they might secure that much more drilling and advantage over their rivals, and have thereby an extra chance or two of success.

THIS IS THE POINT in this specific case,—that Pennsylvania should persist in maintaining this preliminary prac-



THE INDIAN CENTRE.  
Lone Wolf, Centre; B. Pierce, Right Guard; Wheelock, Left Guard; Hudson, Quarter-back.

