

MOST REMARKABLE MEET IN HISTORY OF ATHLETICS

Inter-City Completion Between Baltimore and Philadelphia Gymnasts, All of Whom Were Totally Blind

The remarkable spectacle of totally sightless athletes competing on the cinder path, throwing the hammer, putting the shot, jumping and sprinting, was witnessed in Philadelphia at the first inter-city athletic meet of the blind. The meet took place at the grounds of the Overbrook Institution for the Blind. But for certain mechanical contrivances necessary in some of the events, there was little to distinguish this remarkable gathering from any athletic sports of an ordinary college. One of the noticeable differences was in the sprint races. In these the blind boys grasped a spool that was made to slide on a taut wire. When the word was given the contestants were off like the wind, their grasp on the spool keeping them to the track as the reel ran along the wire. At the finish were lines of dangling cords similar to those that warn trainmen that a bridge is in close proximity. When the boys felt these cords touch their faces they knew they had reached the finish line.

In the jumps the boys were taken to the pole and allowed to touch it with their hands. As they jumped they carried the pole with them, the height of the jump being measured by the referee's eye. In the broad jump the same official took the distance from the takeoff to the finish, it being impossible, of course, for the contestants to jump from a stationary take-off. The hammer throw was arranged by the sound of the voice of one of the officials. The boys threw with amazing accuracy in the direction of the sound from whence the call came; and although this event made the spectators feel far from comfortable, there was not the slightest approach to an accident.

In some of the photographs shown in these columns it will be noticed that the sightless boys seem to be looking at the spot where the contestant will alight in his jump. So natural was the expression on the faces of some of these boys that one of the officials was asked whether or not they could in some mysterious way see the distance of the jump. "Of course they cannot see," was the answer. "But their sense of hearing is so acute that they can accurately judge the distance of a jump by the sound of the feet leaving the ground and descending at the end of the jump."

The contestants represented the cities of Philadelphia and Baltimore, and it is planned to make this remarkable event an annual affair among the blind athletes of America.

The closer one views the seemingly impossible tasks that the blind boys have set themselves, the easier it becomes to understand how blind boys are able to run like the wind, jump long distances, play football, and do almost anything in the athletic line that is apparently impossible without sight.

The boy who was practicing at throwing the weight when the writer visited the institution, was using a shot with a rope attached to it. When he had balanced himself and thrown the shot, it would be impossible for one who did not know the fact to tell that the boy was blind.

The confidence, the poise, and the cast were all as natural as though done by one with perfect sight. Only when the boy began to haul in the line could it be seen that the shot-putter was afflicted with blindness. As he hauled in, he measured by the length of line, the length of his throw, and, as he poised again for a second attempt, it was evidently with the determination to cause a greater length of line to trail after the weight. Very simple, after all, for a boy to become a shot-putter, although unable to see where his shot fell.

The long jump, standing, presents little difficulty. The boy is placed at the mark and jumps as far as he can. His jump is measured and marked, and it is the turn of the next contestant. The high jump, standing, is more difficult, but with the wonderful sense of distance that the blind possesses by touch, it is necessary only for one of the sightless athletes to be placed opposite the marks and allowed to feel the height of the crossbar, and he is ready for the signal. It is asserted, upon the authority of Edward E. Allen, well known as an instructor of the blind, that, when a blind boy runs at full speed, he is doing the most daring feat of which a blind person is capable. At the Philadelphia institution, and at many others throughout the country, where boys are trained for the athletic meet of the blind, many sightless athletes can be seen daily in fine weather, and in the indoor gymnasiums during dull days, practicing both the run and the jump, with all the confidence and abandon of persons with perfect sight.

As for doing stunts on the trapeze, the flying rings, or on the vaulting horse, any blind athlete would think the person joking who professed to think there was anything out of the ordinary in this. If you suggest to one of the instructors that it is still more wonderful how the boys find the apparatus without being led up to it, the instructor will probably agree that this is one of the really remarkable things about the blind. A person born blind has no sense of distance as revealed by sight. He merely goes by the count of footsteps. Let him once locate the flying rings or the trapeze in the gymnasium, and he will thereafter go from one point to another so many steps, from that point to another so many more, and so in time will reach his objective without seeming to do anything but walk direct to it, as though really able to see where it stands on the floor, or is suspended from the ceiling.

Another interesting feat of blind athletes is a game of football. The ball is located by sound. As played by the blind boys, the game is more of a kicking game than the ordinary college game. The players strain every nerve to hear the sound of the ball as it strikes the ground. The boy who hears it first runs in the direction of the sound, grabs the ball and kicks it towards the opposite territory. There is no tackling. When the ball is kicked behind the opposing players' goal line, the side kicking it wins. There is just as much fun to the blind boys in their game of football as to the college youth in the tackling game.

There is more Catarrh in this section of the country than all other diseases put together, and until the last few years was supposed to be incurable. For a great many years doctors pronounced it a local disease and prescribed local remedies, and by constantly failing to cure with local treatment, pronounced it incurable. Science has proven catarrh to be a constitutional disease and therefore requires constitutional treatment. Hall's Catarrh Cure, manufactured by F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio, is the only constitutional cure on the market. It is taken internally in doses from 10 drops to a teaspoonful. It acts directly on the blood and mucous surfaces of the system. They offer one hundred dollars for any case it fails to cure. Send for circulars and testimonials.

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Typewriter That Works Automatically and Warranted Not to Flirt

In Columbus, Ohio, a man has produced a mechanical typewriter that promises to eliminate the present day pretty stenographer, that has become such a familiar fixture in the modern office. This machine will actually write letters at the rate of 1,000 words a minute, continuously, and do the work correctly and automatically. This wonderful machine will be on exhibition at the National Business Show to be held in New York and Chicago this fall. The machine may be operated in two ways. If it is desired to make a number of copies of the same letter with different names and addresses, it will perform this work, producing in each case an original letter in one, two or three colors, fill in the name and address, and add the signature. A business man desiring to dictate may use this automatic typewriter by talking his letters into a device like the phonograph, transfer the record to the machine, turn on the electric current and go home. The next morning the letters will all be done, and the machine will automatically stop when all the letters are written. It will write forwards or backwards and if desired the lines may be justified like type, which at the present time is impossible on ordinary typewriter. With the general introduction of this machine, wives of business men will breathe easier, for the machine is warranted not to flirt. The National Business Shows where the machine will be shown to the public for the first time will be held in Madison Square in New York, October 12 to 19, and in the Coliseum, Chicago, November 9 to 16.



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X-RAYS

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