

# Citizen to Citizen

## Contact!

I came across the article entitled Ringette: A Game Designed for Girls in the Prince George Citizen of November 12, 1980. Being interested in the subject of women in sports, I wondered what could possibly qualify this unusual-sounding sport as "a game for girls". Upon reading through the article several times, I could find very little in the description which would make it especially suitable for women and girls; the philosophy seemed pretty well to match that of any junior-league sport. Gamemanship, learning to sublimate personal desires for glory to the team spirit, and all those other health-sounding things which make up the standard Lexicon of amateur coaches everywhere.

There was one phrase, however, which I found extremely distasteful: "... the feminine aspects of a ... sport to be retained with no intentional body contact ... " I scratched my head in wonderment and read it again. No, my eyes had not deceived me, there it was in bold print!

I had a terrible vision of all these little Victorian misses going out on the ice in their crinolines with their sawed-off hockey sticks, skating carefully around each other so as not to commit the unpardonable sin of actually touching one another. Are women really still considered so fragile that body contact might crack their delicate veneers, or worse still, send them to the sidelines in a fit of vapors? Or is it simply a practical issue of not getting the kneepads and sweaters all mussed up?

As a youngster, I played a good deal of field hockey and soccer, and believe me, there was a good deal of body contact on those muddy old fields — not violence, which I, as anyone concerned with good sportsmanship would, deplore; but bumps, checks, bruised knees, muddy bottoms, a lot of yelling and laughing and what some could have considered unladylike conduct. None of us are any the worse for wear, and in fact the knocks and bumps tended to make us better able to withstand the lumps which everyone will inevitably have to take in later life.

In view of this, and of the fact that women today should have little excuse for thinking of themselves as "tender young things" who cannot stand a little body contact, I was most resentful of this article which touted ringette, which may be a damned good game, as exclusively female in orientation. If you want to have a game which bans body contact, why not make it open to male competitors as well? Or is it feared that men will consider any game which bans body contact, as sissy or insipid? If this is a legitimate fear, what makes it legitimate for men and not for women?

Needless to say, I was most angry and disappointed with your paper for printing such rubbish. Not surprised, however: was it not only a month and a half ago that you finally retired that cutesy weather girl with that anachronistically high hemline and the vacuous smile? I really think that as a community newspaper, you owe it to your readership to print articles which do not offend half of the human race. You may not have noticed it, but the times they are a'changing?

— Karen Irving-Jubb