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Harry Crowe buck-pioneer of physical education in India

Gauri Shanker Sahu and Pardeep Kumar Panghal

Abstract

Great personality in the field of physical education and sports Harry Crowe Buck was a Physical Education Instructor in the United States of America and in India. Systematic education in the field of physical education came in India when he founded YMCA College of physical education in Chennai in 1920. This college played a key role in the promotion of sports activities across the India. The one year teacher training course including theory, skills and practical training were introduced in primary faces. This college becomes a trend setter in the area of Physical Education and Sports. For this whole credit goes to Harry Crowe Buck. He established the Olympic movement in India. He is also called The Father of Physical Education in India. The main objectives of this paper are to explain the life, introduction and role of Harry Crowe Buck in the field of physical education in Indian sports era.

Keywords: Harry crowe buck, YMCA, physical education, father, Indian olympic association

1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to look primarily efforts of the physical educator Harry Crowe Buck in the field of physical education and sports in India. He was involved in developing and implementing physical education programs for young Indian men in schools and colleges across India and in building gymnasiums and sports facilities in his capacity as advisor to the colonial government. Harry Crowe Buck (1884-1943) was a Physical Education Teacher and Coach in USA. He also gave coaching of different ball games like Football (1914-15) Basketball (1914-16) and Baseball (1915-16). At that time YMCA New York gave him the opportunity to work in the field of physical education and sports in India. There after he came in India in 1919 and established the YMCA college of Physical Education in Madras now Chennai the capital of Tamil Nadu (India).

2. Early life and education

He was born on November 25, 1884 in Liverpool (United State of America). He completed his degree B.S. in Physical Education from Springfield College Massachusetts in 1910. While at Fairmount (Lower North Philadelphia), Harry Crowe Buck met the 20 year old student, Mary Marie Dixon of Derby (in Kansas). Marie's parents, Dr. William and Catherine Dixon, were early pioneers of Derby. Marie was an Athletics and Physical Trainer. She had strong Interest in sports and physical activities. Both Harry and Marie had strong personalities. They got married in October, 1915.

2.1 Professional career in USA

In 1913 Harry Crowe Buck became Physical Education Teacher at the Wichita High School. His photo in that year's yearbook showed a dashing figure, accompanied by a nice dedication from the student Editors of the yearbook. Harry Crowe Buck had come to Wichita in 1912, and was gone by 1918, heading for a larger role in life. While here in Wichita, he moved from the High School level to teaching and coaching at Fairmount College.

2.2 Coaching career in USA

HC Buck became football head coach of Wichita State Shockers club during the period 1914-15. This club represents Wichita State University in Wichita, Kansas, USA. During this period

he coached 16 games. In this 16 game Overall wins was 6, overall losses 8, overall ties was 2 and overall winning percentage was 0.438. He become head coach of Wichita State Shockers Man's Basketball team during the period 1914-16. During this period he coached 14 to 15 games and overall winning percentage of team was 0.483. HC Buck become baseball head coach of Wichita State Shockers club during the period 1915-16. During this period he coached 13 games. In this 13 game Overall wins was 3, overall losses 9, overall ties was 1 and overall winning percentage was 0.250.

3. A key role to promoting sports & physical education in India

In 1919, while teaching and coaching basketball at Galesburg High School in Illinois, he was invited by the International Committee of the YMCA to serve as the Physical Director of the Central YMCA in Madras (now Chennai), India. He reached India with his family in 1919 in Madras (now Chennai). He began the YMCA training school of physical education in the Esplanade building in 1920 with strength of only 5 students. It was an attempt to promote and systematize physical education in the India. With a donation of 65 acre land from Indian government this training school became YMCA college of physical education in Saidapet (Madras now Chennai). This college became co-educational institution in 1940. The main objectives of this college was to prepare teaching personals who could serve the people in the area of health, physical education and sports and specific training in the area of sports & physical education in scientific way. He continued to promote the college until his death in 1943.



Picture of the home of Harry Crowe Buck in Chennai

HC Buck Introduced basketball game in Madras (now Chennai). He was also the first secretary of the Madras Olympic Association that was formed in 1924 and served as its secretary until his death in 1943. In 1922 He was appointed advisor to Madras (now Chennai) Government on physical education. In 1924 he was selected as Manager of Indian contingent in 1924 Perris summer Olympics and also trained the athletes for this Olympics. In 1923-24, a provisional All India Olympic Committee was introduced to organized the All India Olympic games (that later become the National Games of India) in February 1924. In 1927 Indian Olympic Association was formed. Sir Dorabji Tata its founding president and Dr. AG Noehren was Secretary. In a few months Harry Crowe Buck and Dr. AG Noehren travelled across India and helped many States to establish their Olympic association, as members unit of the Indian Olympic Association. He started journal "Vyayam" in 1928 for research in physical education and sport. He wrote many books related to physical education and sports.

4. Legacy

As a founder and principal of YMCA College of Physical Education, Chennai (Tamil Nadu) India, Mr. Buck guided the college and Indian physical education field for 23 years. Buck died from leukemia and was buried within the Saida pet campus. His work ended at his death on July 24, 1943, but he left a rich legacy for others to follow. One Indian sports official summed it all up as follows: "The early supporters of physical education gathered round the personality of a good man, who filled with the love of God, stood for righteousness, justice and liberty. The person who so effectively attracted others with magnetic power was H.C. Buck." Under Buck's leadership, physical education gained recognition as an educational activity in less than two decades.

According to Perry County "He is Father of Physical Education in India."

The college which he started has grown in recent years under Indian leadership to be the leading physical education college in India and the orient striving toward a better, healthier people.

Rudyard Kipling told about efforts of HC Buck in the sports field "Nations have passed away and left no traces; and history gives the naked cause of it one single, simple reason in all cases; they fell because their peoples were not fit."

5. Conclusions

Mr. Buck played an important role to promoting the physical education and sports & Olympic movement in India. He was a visionary physical educationist. After the establishment of YMCA at Madras (now Chennai) we can say that physical education gets its popularity in a specific field and in a scientific way. YMCA Madras (now Chennai) plays a vital role for growth and development of physical education in India. Presently this college is affiliated to Tamil Nadu Physical Education and Sports University and accredited by NAAC (National Assessment Accreditation Council) with A Grade. It is recognized by National Council for Teacher Education and Government of Tamil Nadu. It is the first Physical Education College in South East Asia also. This is a Christian Minority Institution. The motto of the College is 'The Abundant Life'. The institution has two shifts. The morning shift provides regular college programme. The evening shift offers evening college programmes. The regular college programme includes Ph.D. in physical education M.Phil. in physical education, MPED (Master of Physical Education), B.P.Ed., D.P.Ed. Evening college programme includes M.Sc in Fitness, Exercise Rehabilitation and Nutritional Care (FERNC), P.G. Diploma in Sports Coaching –Tennis, Cricket, Swimming, Basketball, Handball, Hockey, Football, Track & Field and PG Diploma in Yoga, PG Diploma in Guidance & counseling, PG Diploma in Event management. This institute is celebrating its centenary in 2020. Thus, we can say that his whole career was a milestone in Indian physical education and sports history. He is therefore considered as the father of physical education in India.

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