

by Donna Rae

There can be little doubt as to the success of **Sporting Traditions V**, held recently in Adelaide. First and foremost, the scope and variety of papers presented indicate positive developments in the field of Australian Sport History. The conference illustrated an integration of perspectives from such areas as economics, economic history, history, law and the history of education, as well as the valuable contributions of "part-time" historians. From an organisational viewpoint, congratulations must be extended to Wray Vamplew and committee for the efficient staging of the conference, and acquisition of the venue.

Sporting Traditions V was opened with the International Address by Charles Korr (University of Missouri), entitled "What's Wrong With Being Professional." This paper effectively highlighted one of the conference's dominant themes - that of incorporating economic and sociological issues within an historical context. It was also most appropriate with respect to the overall conference theme, that being "the changing significance of sport."

The ensuing programme covered areas such as Issues in Contemporary Sport, Sports History Methodology, Race and Gender, Sports Violence, Nationalism and Internationalism, the Economics of Sport, Sport and the Community, Work in Progress and Sport Studies on cricket, rugby, horse racing and Australian rules. As stated earlier, this variety is most encouraging as it indicated the expanding scope and depth of sport history in Australia. This comment is twofold in meaning. First, with the accumulation of a broader base of knowledge as has transpired in recent years, many historians have clearly moved to "higher order" studies. Second, it illustrated the acceptance of "specialist, interdisciplinary and mainstream" approaches to the study of sport history. The necessity for combining these perspectives in a complementary (as opposed to competing) manner emerged following Conference 82², and received further attention from Richard Cashman in the Sporting Traditions Journal.³

The Work in Progress section stands as a particularly positive aspect of the conference. Although only two papers were presented, it provided the students with the opportunity to interact with "established"

1. Of particular interest was Roy Kirkby's introduction of Korfball, as an alternative approach to sport which stresses co-operation rather than competition.
2. Refer to the editorial by James McKay in the Proceedings of the VII Commonwealth and International Conference on Sport, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. Volume 9. Socio-Historical Perspectives, Department of Human Movement Studies, University of Queensland, 1984.
3. Sporting Traditions. Volume 1:2, May, 1985, pp. 115-117.

historians, and receive valuable feedback on their current research. Writing this report as both a post-graduate student and participant the Work in Progress section, it was most certainly a worthwhile experience and one which should be continued in the future.

An additional highlight of the conference was the attendance of two overseas academics. As mentioned previously, Charles Korr of the University of Missouri delivered the International Address, and John Morton Osborne of Dickinson College presented a paper on "British Sporting Traditions and the First World War." Overseas speakers add to the dimension of any conference, in their representation of ongoing research in other countries.

It would be remiss not to mention the facilities made available for Sporting Traditions V, at the State Convention Centre. The lecture room and equipment were highly satisfactory and adjoining rooms allowed for organisational matters and displays. Included in the display room were a number of publications for purchase or order, a convenient service taken advantage of by many conference participants.

Perhaps the only aspect of the conference which could be improved upon would be the amount of time for questions/discussion following each presentation. While this seems inevitable at any conference, it was no doubt disappointing to both the audience and the presenters to not have sufficient time for even brief comments, as was often the case. Stricter adherence to the allocated times by both speakers and chairpersons might help in alleviating this problem.

The pinnacle of the Sporting Traditions social activities was undoubtedly the "Conference Quiz." Conducted after a pleasant repast at Football Park, West Lakes, rival "tables/teams" entered into the spirit of "competition in a co-operative manner." Roy Kirkby's Influence became evident as the expression "It's not Korfbal" resounded around the room at regular intervals. For "unknown reasons" several protests were lodged against Bill Murray's table(s). Conference participants are still awaiting the tribunal decision regarding the matter.

The tour of the Adelaide Cricket Ground was greatly appreciated as part of the social activities, as the customary conclusion to the Sporting Traditions Conference, the Australian versus "others" soccer match. Due to rapidly diminishing daylight, the match was conducted indoors, with "modified" equipment. For those participants still nursing bruised shins and/or toes, sympathy is extended.

As stated initially, **Sporting Traditions V** may be viewed in highly successful terms. This is due to a combination of factors, namely the overall quality of papers presented and the diversity of a various disciplines and sub-disciplines. While it may be argued that a "multi-faceted" perspective could act to dis-unify and weaken the field **Sporting Traditions V** illustrated the ability to focus differing methodologies and academic backgrounds on the attainment of valuable reference materials. Finally it was through the diligent work of Wray Vamplew, Chris Harte, Bob Paddick, Bernard Whimpress, Leonie Randall and Leslie Deane that the conference was able to proceed in an organised and efficient manner.