

HISTORICAL RESOURCES AT THE AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT

BY GREG BLOOD

Up until 1989, the National Library of Australia held the only substantial sports history collection in Canberra. The National Library's collections contains a vast quantity of primary resource material ranging from sporting newspapers (i.e. Bell's Sporting Life) to the papers of famous sporting individuals and associations such as Sir Hubert Opperman and the Australian Olympic Federation.¹ The dominance of the National Library in this area has decreased with the development of collections at the CCAE and AIS. In 1961, the Canberra College of Advance! Education established a sports studies course and as a result its Library has built up a collection of sports history material, particularly monographs and periodicals. Finally, in 1962 the Australian Institute of Sport established an Information Centre. This paper will focus on the material held in AIS Information Centre relevant to sports historians.

AIS Information Centre

The information Centre's main role is to provide information services to AIS coaches, athletes and support staff (physiologists, psychologists, biomechanists, physicians and administrators). The information services cover the collection of monographs and periodicals, reference and current awareness services and audio-visual services. At present the Information Centre's acquisition policy is directed towards acquiring material in 13 sports (swimming, track and field, gymnastics, tennis, basketball, soccer, netball, weightlifting, rowing, squash, diving, water polo and field hockey), coaching/training and sports science/medicine areas. The ultimate aim of the Information Centre is to acquire material on all sports, and to disseminate that material to interested members of the public.

The Information Centre does not subscribe to the major sports history journals such as 'Journal of Sport History' or 'Canadian Journal of Sports History', or purchase general sports history textbooks. This material is usually acquired by CCAE or NLA. The Information Centre where possible tries to avoid duplicating other collections. In an era of limited library budgets resource sharing is essential.

The resource sharing principle is further enhanced because the AIS, CCAE and NLA are members of the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN). ABN is a database of records of monographs, periodicals and audio-visual material and their locations in Australia. Staff of the Information Centre can within 30 seconds discover whether the NLA or CCAE hold a particular book or journal.

Whilst the acquisition of historical material by the Information Centre is of secondary importance at the moment, it has acquired two major collections - Arthur Hodson's and Arthur Miller's personal libraries.

Arthur Hodsdon (1902-1982) devoted his life to amateur athletes.² He was instrumental in the formation of the Amateur Athletics Union of Australia and spent 27 years as its Secretary/Treasurer. In addition, he was AAU: delegate to Australian Olympic Federation (1936-1974), Australian British Empire and Commonwealth Games Association (1936-1948) and the International Amateur Athletic Federation (1957-1974). Arthur Hodsdon's library contains material published from the late 19th century to 1980s on track and field and the Olympic Games.

(1) Track and Field

The collection is probably the most comprehensive collection on track and field in the Southern Hemisphere. It contains a great deal of the material listed in Guide to British Track and Field Literature 1275-1968.³ The collection includes:

- all major track and field coaching/training monographs published Since 1900.
- all major track and field periodicals including complete sets of Track and Field News and Athletics Weekly.
- handbooks of major track and field associations such as Amateur Athletic Union.
- comprehensive collection of biographies and auto-biographies of notable athletes such as Emile Zatopek, Ron Clarke, Peter Snell, Jack Lovelock and others.

To date this area of the collection has been used by AAU statisticians, and individuals seeking material on topics such as four-minute mile and Jack Lovelock. In processing this part of the collection I have come across fascinating facts such as the 20,000 people who would turn up to see John Landy run at a twilight meeting in the 1950s. I have also found that there has been very little research done in the history of Australian track and field.

(ii) Olympic Games

Arthur Hodsdon's close association with the Australian Olympic Federation resulted in the acquisition of a great deal of material on the Olympic Games. This material includes:

- a large collection of reports on individual Olympic Games dating from 1908, including the German Olympic Committees report of the 1936 Berlin Games.
- all issues of the International Olympic Committees journal now titled Olympic Review.
- all 'The Age' newspapers published during the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.
- commercially published previews and reviews of the Olympic Games since 1952.
- Olympic Games medallions.

This part of the collection has enabled us to answer questions such as the field hockey results at every Olympic Games and the nationality of several athletes.

(iii) General

- complete collections of Sport Magazine and Sports Novels, sports journals published in Australia during the 1950s and 1960s.
- many issues of the 'Amateur Athlete (1930-1968), published by the New York Athletic Club and covering sport in the United States.
- sports periodicals from other countries such as 'Sport in China' and 'Sport in Romania'.

Arthur J. Miller Collection

Arthur J. Miller is an Emeritus Professor of Education at Boston University and was Dr John Cheffers' immediate predecessor as Chair of the Human Movement Program in the School of Education at the Boston University. For the past 35 years he has been a Consulting Editor to Prentice-Hall, Allyn-Bacon and the Stephen Green Press. Dr Miller donated his library to the Information Centre in 1984. Whilst the collection is smaller than the Hodsdon Collection, it contains some very valuable material.

- the collection contains nearly every issue of Sports Illustrated, including the first issue (August 16, 1954). Whilst Sports Illustrated concentrates on the major American sports (basketball, baseball and gridiron), it does include material on other sports. A recent issue of Sports Illustrated included an extensive preview of the America's Cup challenge in Perth. In sorting out the issues I noticed that only 5 front covers featured Australian sportstars.
- the collection includes many old issues of Research Quarterly and Journal of Physical Education.
- comprehensive collections of monographs on physical education published since 1940.

Other Collections

The Information Centre occasionally acquires small collections from interested members of the public. These have included:

- scrapbooks on Australian swimming during the period 1950-1970.
- German newspaper cuttings on the 1930 Berlin Olympic Games

A press clipping book is maintained on material published in Australian newspapers on the AIS. This item would be valuable for researchers interested in the history of Australian sport, and in particular the AIS.

The Information Centre is moving to Larger premises in August this year. The Arthur Hodsdon and Arthur Miller collections will be moved from special storage areas and integrated with the Information Centre's collection. The Olympic Games material will probably be housed in a special collections area as much of this material is valuable and irreplaceable.

Researchers are welcome to utilise the Information Centre's historical material. Researchers can ask their local Library to search ABN to discover whether the AIS holds items they are interested in. Material can be borrowed via the inter-library loan process or by registered borrowers. Or next time you are in Canberra doing research at NLA, you are welcome to visit the AIS Information Centre.

The Information Centre gladly accepts donations and is interested in collections for sale.

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References:

- 1 Australian National Social Sciences Library Materials and Services on Sport provided by National Library of Australia, 1980. Canberra, NLA, 1980.
- 2 Arthur J. Hodsdon (obituary). AAU News, no 32, June 21, 1982,
- 3 Lovesey, P. and McNab, T. The Guide to British Track and Field Literature 1275-1968. London. Athletics Arena, 1969.

Postscript

The Mitchell Library also holds material collected by Arthur Hodsdon:

- (i) * 125 boxes of newspaper cuttings on amateur athletes
(boxes 1-59 Sydney Morning Herald (1924-80),
* boxes 60-81 Sporting Globe (1931-1955)
* boxes 82-98 Referee (1934-1939)
* boxes 99-102 Australasian (1892-1910),
* box 103 Sydney Mail (1900-1909),
* boxes 104-111 News of the World (1932, 1934-1951),
* boxes 112-125 Miscellaneous
- (ii) * 7 boxes of programmes, leaflets etc. on amateur athletics