

previous eras, could be seen as the logical outcome of the game's transformation from working-class inter-suburban rivalry to the multi-million dollar corporatised identity that it is today.

While this book has many commendable aspects, there are also a number serious drawbacks. It continues the unfortunate trend in much rugby league literature of over-looking the game's history, focusing almost exclusively on the modern six-tackle era. While recognising the contributions of Arthur Hennessy in the preface, the book would have been richer if it had included him and other past visionaries such as Chris McKivat, Frank Burge and Duncan Thompson among the coaches covered in detail. Inclusion of coaches from outside of Australia would also have made for a more far-reaching analysis. These criticisms lead on to perhaps the greatest shortcoming of the book, its failure to place each coach within the broader framework of the development of the code and the way in which it is played. Over the last thirty years rugby league, as a sport, has changed dramatically in the way that it is played, and the innovations of the coaches examined here have been at the fore-front of those changes. Given that it was subtitled 'Coaches who shaped Rugby League', *Masters of the Game* gave hope that it would investigate this process, but unfortunately at the end it is unclear exactly how most of the coaches actually shaped and changed the game, and that is ultimately a disappointment.

Despite these criticisms this book remains a good read that will appeal to most fans of rugby league. Well-written and entertaining, it throws new light on some of rugby league's most high-profile personalities. For those who study the code it provides a wealth of new source material and indirectly raises many significant questions about the development of the sport that are worthy of further investigation. However, if the reader is looking for an in-depth analysis of the rise of the 'cult of the coach' or the development of the way the game is played, they may come away disappointed and feeling that this book did not live up to its potential.

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P. Freeman, *Ian Roberts: Finding out*. New South Wales, Random House, 1997, 325 pp. A\$19.95.

The biography based on Ian Roberts' life entitled *Ian Roberts: Finding Our* could have been a groundbreaking piece of literature about the way in which a Rugby League 'icon' came to terms with his sexuality and masculinity in the

highly masculinised domain of football, however, as a contribution to the academic debate surrounding sexualities and masculinities the book fails to adequately address these underpinning notions. Despite the academic shortcomings it is a worthwhile biographical account of the life of a gay footballer growing up in the southern suburbs of Sydney. In parts it is quite entertaining and would appeal to most Rugby League enthusiasts.

The logical sequencing of Ian Roberts' life is documented in the first chapter. Initially, his parents are described and how they came to migrate from England. It describes their struggle to purchase a home and emphasises the traditional nuclear family where his father maintained the primary 'breadwinner' role and his mother the role of rearing the children and attending to domestic chores. It then goes *on* to highlight Roberts' mischievous nature as a child and his tenacity as a budding sportsman providing numerous whimsical accounts. Chapter two begins to address the footballer's challenge with his own sexual and masculine identity, however, the issues brought up by the author in this section remain unresolved. With an individual like 'Ian Roberts' as the focal point, a book such as this has the capacity to address notions of masculinity, homophobia, homosexuality and sexual identity and present it to a wide audience. Further, by drawing on academic literature in an attempt to explain these issues the reader might be challenged to think beyond the journalistic intent. Indeed, using a powerful tool like 'Roberts' to explore these concepts from a sporting perspective one might contend that it is possible to begin deconstructing some of the problems faced by gay men involved in masculinised sports.

Finding Out does have a number of positive aspects and paints a very favourable picture of Roberts. It provides a portrait of a man who is simplistic in nature and seeks to find the positive aspects in other people. The irony of this is highlighted in chapter eight which outlines the footballer's naivety with respect to 'big time' financial broking and the losses incurred by placing his money in the hands of an unproven financial agent.

Roberts' good natured manner is exemplified in chapter eleven where he befriends a young boy dying from an AIDS-related illness. It also emphasises his generosity and on-going commitment to the many other ill and dying children for whom he provides hope. This commitment is highlighted by the managing director of Ronald McDonald House relating to his numerous hospital visits and the motives for doing so:

He never wanted any attention. Some people, before they visit here, say, 'Oh, is there going to be a camera there? Or television?' I always try to say no, because these sorts of visits need to be private. It would never occur to Ian to ask about press coverage, I am sure, at any time. It would be his preference to visit privately (p. 206).

In chapter twelve the author begins to detail some of the significant and tumultuous personal issues confronting Roberts as a gay rugby league footballer. As a narrative emphasising the hardships he faced, the author has provided an enlightening account, however, it is arguable that this requires more than mere narrative. The chapter passes without evoking the emotion of the reader by addressing the many challenges or thought provoking issues and concepts. Similarly the final chapter fails to create an impact and simply takes the reader through a sequential transition through Roberts' life. It does, however, provide some analytical discussion regarding the notion of homosexuality and homophobia from both a general and sporting perspective.

Finding Out will appeal to a broad audience of rugby league supporters and other sporting enthusiasts. It will also appeal to individuals who are struggling to come to terms with their own sexual identity including those who have struggled through it. From an academic perspective it is contentious whether the book was ever intended for literary debate. However, it does provide insight into the life of a well known Australian sporting hero and emphasises some of the issues he was forced to confront before identifying himself publicly as a gay man in the masculinised domain of rugby league football.

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Simon Kelner, *To Jerusalem and Back*. London: Macmillan, 1996. 171pp. £14.99.

The consequences of the struggle between Rupert Murdoch and Kerry Packer over Australian Pay-TV dominance were considerable. Indeed, they were transferred into a clash over rugby league, and ultimately spawned the Australian Super League leading to a split in Australian rugby league and in 1998 to a compromise set-up that favoured many of the Super League objectives. Borne of the Australian struggle was the 'European Super League', a calculated gamble by Murdoch to secure global dominance over the professional game. Simon Kelner's book is the first account dealing with the impacts of the implementation of the European branch of the Super league operation. While not marked by the same bitter internal divisions as its Australian counterpart, the European competition represented equally as large an upheaval for British Rugby League. Since 1895, the game in Britain was a symbol of northern English resilience and working class identity. It was transformed from a cultural bastion shrouded in insularity, to a pawn in a broader global struggle. The momentous nature of these changes