

theoretical jargon, especially when compared to the prose of other contributors. This may, indeed, be a strength or weakness depending on one's predilection, but it is clear that the relative brevity of the chapter hinders the explication of many of the ideas put forward by Andrews. In terms of material excluded from the book, the editors quite candidly identify the geographical and thematic gaps in their study. When one considers the range of rugby research now being conducted by scholars such as Richard Light, Geoff Vincent, Alison Carle, Brent Macdonald, Brett Hutchins, Tom Hickie and Malcolm MacLean, then it is obvious that not only will these gaps be explored and debated in forthcoming publications (such as the second collection on rugby union by Chandler and Nauright, *The Rugby World* due to appear later this year), conferences and website discussion groups, but that the future of football studies in general is in a very healthy state. If the scope of such research can be broadened to include a greater range of methodologies, such as the ethnographical approach to the history of the All Blacks recently completed by Robin McConnell, along with information that gives voice to the experience of the male and female rugby fan, then this excellent anthology by Nauright and Chandler will rightly be considered as the book that started the ball rolling.

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Chris Taylor, *The Beautiful Game: A Journey Through Latin American Football*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1998. £16.99 (hardback)

The people of the world all consume food, but they consume it in different ways. Factors such as history, culture, the availability of natural resources and the emergence of imaginative chefs, or arbiters of taste, have combined to produce different, and ever changing, cuisines. The same can be said of football, that game known in Australia and elsewhere as soccer, which is played virtually in all countries and is popularly known as the 'world game'.

Soccer was originally codified by the English in the latter part of the nineteenth century and was more or less quickly adopted in other parts of the globe. Expatriate Britishers played an important role in introducing soccer to various parts of Latin America – though Spanish and German influences should not be discounted. Soccer quickly attracted the popular imagination and passionate support in Latin America. Latin America has produced a steady stream of leading players, club and national teams. Brazil has won the World Cup on four occasions (1958, 1962, 1970 and 1994), and both Uruguay and Argentina twice (1930 and 1950, and 1978 and 1986 respectively).

In *The Beautiful Game* Chris Taylor, a foreign news editor with the *Guardian*, brings together information associated with the playing of soccer in this stronghold of the world game. Taylor's major theme is that 'Football is part of the warp and waft of Latin American life, more of a common language the length and breadth of the continent than Spanish or Portuguese' (pp. 13-14). It is difficult to know, however, how 'common' this 'language' was in mid 1969 when the El Salvador air force bombed four cities in Honduras following the playing of soccer games between their national sides (pp. 203-4).

Taylor provides a readable, journalistic account of major issues, events and developments associated with soccer in Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Columbia, Nicaragua and Mexico. His narratives of these countries draw on previously published work, interviews with players, administrators and commentators, and information gleaned from covering games in various matches between Latin American sides prior to the World Cup in France 1998.

Taylor draws attention to major on and off-field incidents that have dominated soccer in these nations and highlights the schizophrenic, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde, nature of Latin American soccer. Taylor contrasts the brilliant deeds of champion clubs and players, the humour associated and generated by the game, the 'genuine' passion of fans and the role-models and selflessness demonstrated by players of 'good' and 'noble' character with examples of how politicians have sought to use soccer for their own, often 'evil' ends, fans being crushed to death at grounds, mafia like supporters groups attacking and killing rival supporters and extorting funds from 'their' clubs, inept if not corrupt administrators, increasing commercialisation and domination by sponsors and television companies, and match fixing involving the bribery, corruption and killing of referees and players. It should be pointed out that these problems are not unique to soccer in Latin America and certainly occur in other sports and in other nations. The chapters on Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil, where Taylor has had more secondary sources to draw upon, and Columbia, with his chilling account of how drug lords took over and corrupted the domestic competition, are the most interesting. A theme that runs through *The Beautiful Game* is that losses in both domestic and international competitions are explained away in terms of either scapegoating one's own particular, especially/mainly black players, and/or by cheating or fixing by powerful external sources.

Taylor's *The Beautiful Game* will not satisfy those who desire a more rigorous, scholarly examination of soccer in Latin America. He has provided, however, a more than accessible account of the hunger for, and consumption of, soccer in that part of the world.

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