

BOOK REVIEWS

The Future of the Olympic Games. by John Lucas. (Published in Champaign, Illinois, USA by Human Kinetics Press. English.) Reviewed by Bob Barney.

Few people could have written this book from the perspective from which it was cast. As most are aware, John Lucas has devoted his entire professional career, currently some forty years, to a study of the Modern Olympic Movement. In this area of scholarly historical inquiry, he has few equals anywhere in the world. Commencing with his doctoral dissertation, completed at the University of Maryland in 1962¹, Lucas has since contributed three books, over a hundred seriously researched articles, and has rendered so many scholarly lectures and presentations on Olympic matters that one's mind is boggled by it all. Archival, library and personal collections research is one matter, interviewing oral sources is quite another. In his now almost half-century quest to learn more about the world's most glamorous and extravagant sports festival, Lucas has met and conversed with three IOC Presidents, many of the exclusive club's princes and princesses, heads of state, diplomats, "the connected" and "almost connected," as well as leaders of many of the world's National Olympic Committees and National and International Sports Federations, indeed those who power the Olympic Games from one festival to the next. No, Lucas is not one who suffers from ignorance when it comes to knowing about matters Olympic, both historically and in a contemporary sense.

Lucas, however, is also a romanticist, writing this particular book from the perspective of being an Olympic family member himself,² one involved in the spread of Olympism with missionary zeal for as long as most of us can remember, a worshipper in his own way of the Modern Movement's Father Zeus (Juan Antonio Samaranch), his objectivity impaired by his love of and belief in Coubertin and the Baron's parameters of Olympism, many of which are presently under severe erosion by numerous forces, internal and external alike.

The problem areas of the Modern Olympic Movement are almost exclusively the result of the Games themselves, the by-products of commitment to show and pageantry, heightened competition, greater representation with regard to gender equality, countries, individual sports, television and sponsorship as the keys to the accumulation of wealth and advertisement of "The Great Symbol" and all it connotes. Lucas has something to say about all these and more, telling us over and over again that the Olympic family membership must get along better, must be less selfish about their own interests, more "team" oriented. His clarion call, indeed his only advice for Olympic individuals and groups with their own agendas and self-aggrandizement missions, is for a commitment to "excellence and integrity" (p. 6), and to "balance, control, and historic perspective" (p. 80).

In general, Lucas' message will not soothe critics of the Modern Olympic Movement. Indeed, their counter arguments to Lucas' themes for change will inevitably be ones based on

¹Lucas, John Apostol. "Baron Pierre de Coubertin and the Formative Years of the Modern International Olympic Movement, 1883-1896." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, 1962.

²For a critical and interesting theoretical "familial analysis" of Lucas' approach, see Jay Coakley's review of *Future of the Olympic Games* in *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies*, Volume II, 1993.

the premise that more than simply the goodwill of people will have to prevail in order for ailments to be cured and Olympic affairs to move into the next century with renewed vigor and health.

I have a final comment. Should a historian write about the future? Young scholars are trained to avoid this pitfall. Leave that task to the sociologists and philosophers, counsel their mentors. Invariably, however, some historians, especially those of high rank, seemingly cannot resist the temptation to diverge. As much as I respect John Lucas, and as much as I found this book interesting from a historical and rather dramatic “tidbit” sense, I wish the good professor had remained in his familiar realm, that of inquiry and explanation, not prediction and recipe-constructing. To Dr. Lucas, I offer my own advice. Continue to do that which you do as well as anyone in the world - report and interpret Olympic history. Leave prediction of the future and counsel for cure to doctors of a different ilk.

Having said that, I offer the viewpoint that a book of this nature cannot possibly be given full justice simply from the efforts of one person writing from one disciplinary perspective. Advice for change, based on thorough inquiry, analysis, and prediction, will come only through a major collaborative effort by historians, sociologists, and philosophers (including those of “futurist” bent). John Lucas, bless him, is my candidate to be the historian in such an enterprise.

British Olympians: A Hundred Years of Gold Medallists. by Ian Buchanan. (Published in Enfield, Middlesex, England by Guinness, 1991. English) Reviewed by David Wallechinsky.

Ian Buchanan, co-author, with Dr. Bill Mallon, of *Quest for Gold: The Encyclopaedia of American Olympians*, has now turned his attention to the Olympic history of his own nation. *British Olympians* features career profiles of all 406 Britons who won gold medals between 1896 and 1988, a first ever listing of every British Olympic competitor from 1896 through 1988, and over 100 photographs, 32 of them in color.

The author has enlivened his work by including a smattering of oddities and forgotten facts. For example, when F. Battell, a servant at the British Embassy in Athens, entered the 1896 cycling road race, a number of British citizens attempted to bar him from the competition on the grounds that he was not a gentleman. However, Battell did take part and, in fact, placed third.

Buchanan points out that the only person to be awarded the Victoria Cross and to have won an Olympic gold medal is Lt. Col. Philip Neame, whose Olympic triumph came in the 1924 Running Deer Double Shot Team Event.

Among Buchanan’s research coups is the discovery of a previously unacknowledged Olympic champion: 1900 yachtsman Algernon Maudslay. He has also added to the record innumerable birth and death dates for British competitors, as well as given names which in previous record books were listed only as initials. These details are still missing for many competitors from 1908, 1920, and 1948 despite Buchanan’s exhaustive searches. Hopefully, readers of *British Olympians* will be able to help Buchanan with his continuing quest.

The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games. by Allen Guttman. (Published in Urbana and Chicago, Illinois, USA, by University of Illinois Press, 1992. English.) Reviewed by Bill Mallon.

The Olympics: A History of the Modern Games is the first volume in the series, Illinois History of Sports, which is being edited by Benjamin G. Rader of the University of Nebraska and Randy Roberts of Purdue University. Forthcoming books are planned on baseball, college basketball, soccer (football), hockey (ice), golf, and boxing. Allen Guttman is eminently qualified to write this book. He serves as professor of American Studies at Amherst College and has written several other works on the Olympics, notably a recent biography of Avery Brundage, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*.

I truly enjoyed this book and I think most students of the Olympics will also. It is short at about 180 pages and could possibly serve as an introductory text in an undergraduate course on the Olympics. It is not footnoted but a bibliographic essay is included at the end which lists many of the sources used. The book is quite well written, interesting without being pedantic. It begins with a study of de Coubertin's dream, and then studies the games prior to World War II. An entire chapter is devoted to 1936, entitled "The Most Controversial Olympics." It ends with the two self-explanatory chapters, "The Era of the Boycott" and "1988 and After."

I have only one major complaint about the book and one which is more nitpicking. My major complaint would be that the title does not exactly reflect the book's contents. It is really a political and social history of the Olympics or of the International Olympic Committee. Little attention is paid to the Games, the events, or the athletes themselves. However, this is probably as would be expected as most historical Olympic works by academicians do emphasize the political and social history. I have no problem with this, still, the title is slightly misleading.

The more nitpicking complaint also addresses the lack of emphasis on the athletes and certainly reflects my own statistical bent. The political/sociologists often decry the statistician's myopic view with our lack of regard for their facts. But I've never been able to see how they justify the inaccuracies which they often disregard in discussing the sports or the athletes. How else do you explain the description that Ard Schenk (in 1972 at Sapporo) won "all three cross-country races." In fact, Schenk, a speed skater, won three of the four speed skating gold medals. Guttman's most egregious "statistical" error occurs near the end of the book in discussing the 1988 figure skating competition for women. He describes the expected battle between Katarina Witt and Debbi Thomas, but points out that Midori Ito interrupted it, with the final finish being Witt first, Ito second, and Thomas third. This neglects the stunning free skating performance by Elizabeth Manley of Canada, who, skating stirringly before a home crowd, moved up to win the silver medal, with Thomas third, and Ito finishing fifth, also trailing the United States' Jill Trenary.

I would hope no one takes the last two paragraphs as major indictments of an otherwise fine book. I enjoyed it a great deal and learned a lot from reading it. In what he attempts to do, analyze the politics and sociology which has surrounded the Olympic Games, Guttman has done an excellent job.

Olympic Fact Book. by Stan Greenberg. (Published in London, by Guinness, 1991. English.) Reviewed by Ian Buchanan.

The third book in Stan Greenberg's excellent series was published shortly before the Barcelona Games and is one of the best basic reference sources available. The book is conveniently divided into main sections with the first part covering each separate Games and the second devoted to the separate Olympic sports. The two parts blend well together and provide a wealth of useful and interesting information. Items such as the youngest and oldest medalists and competitors and the most prolific medalists are featured and the results of the first three competitors or teams in ever Olympic competition are shown. An added attraction for Olympic historians is that dates of birth and death are given for the individuals listed in the comprehensive index. It is also convenient to have, in one volume, such useful information as the names of those who took the Olympic Oath or officially opened the Games.

The multitude of well prepared facts is commendably free of error but I noticed a few anomalies. In one part the tennis player Dorothea Chambers (29y316d), is given as the oldest female gold medalist at the 1908 Games whereas later in the book the distinction is correctly accorded to the 53-year-old archer, Queenie Newall. There is also a rather strange reference to a racquets team event in 1908.

The photo of the women's 80 metre hurdles at Los Angeles in 1932 is actually of Babe Didrikson winning her heat and not the final, but this incorrect caption has appeared in many previous books. However, the interesting aspect of this photo is that it shows that the hurdle for Nakanishi (Japan) is actually higher than those of the other competitors! As the shortest competitor in the race had to negotiate the highest barrier it is little wonder that she did not finish.

These minor errors in no way detract from the value of Stan Greenberg's invaluable book and the publishers, Guinness, are also to be commended on producing an attractive and well illustrated volume at the reasonable price of £12.99. We now look forward to the next edition which will include the Barcelona, Albertville, and Lillehammer results and which will, we hope, be published before the 1996 Games in Atlanta.

Winter Olympia Kompakf. by Volker Kluge. (Published in Berlin, Germany by Sportverlag, 1993. German.) Reviewed by Erich Kamper.

Sportverlag Berlin has scored a great hit with this book which will certainly provoke attention in the Olympic World. Volker Kluge, well known as one of the best international Olympic experts, has surpassed himself with this volume of facts about the Olympic Winter Games from 1924 through 1992. Never before have the Olympic Winter Games been described so completely, including dates, facts, and background material. Kluge has not only made full use of all the Official Reports but he has discovered many errors in those reports. He supplements the results with 1,218 footnotes with additional comments, adding special detail and background information. All competitors who started at the Olympic Winter Games are mentioned in the complete results lists of all events. Such information has never before been presented in one book. Each event contains information about the number of competitors, participating countries, and the exact dates of the events. It is also noteworthy that the results section for each Olympic Winter Games is preceded by a section containing

details about the historical situation and the organization of the Games, including information about the speakers of the Olympic Oath, the number of spectators, the budget with incomes and expenses, and also special tables about the medal standings and the most successful competitors. Overall, this book is a rich source of information for each Olympic fan, and indispensable reference book for all officials in winter sports and sports journalists, but it should also be an important book for all the sportsmen and sportswomen who have competed in the Olympic Winter Games. The book is a handsome size of 13 x 21 cm. and should be a “must” for every public and sports club library.