

Higgs, Robert J. *Sports: A Reference Guide*. Westport, Connecticut; Greenwood Press, 1982. Pp. xi, 317. Notes, bibliographies, appendices, index. \$35.00

No point in wasting time. This book is an excellent piece of work. Read it. Use it. Divided into fourteen chapters, the book covers such areas as: history of sports; sports and the traditional arts; sports and education; sports and popular culture; sports and aggression; sports and war; sports, race, and sex. Professor Higgs read widely and intelligently in preparing his book and it shows. Unlike many so-called "guides," this one contains both a significant bibliographical store and a well-written text. Each chapter provides factual material and critical commentary for a reader to weigh and assimilate. For example, Higgs analyzes and then questions some of the ideas raised in James Michener's widely read *Sports in America*. Even if some of Michener's ideas are mundane, others such as his notions about scholastic sports are not so harmless and Professor Higgs correctly calls our attention to them. Also, while it would be foolish to minimize Paul Weiss's contributions to serious discussions of sport, his *Sport: A Philosophic Inquiry* is neither the first nor the only major work on the subject. Says Higgs: "Weiss obviously saw himself as a pioneer in the philosophy of sport, yet he echoed ideas that in American literature alone had been worn absolutely threadbare, and while proclaiming that the ancient philosophers had neglected sports, he did not mention even in his bibliography the classic work by Rachel S. Robinson, *Sources for the History of Greek Athletics*." (p. 215)

One of life's great pleasures is seeing pompous pronouncements punctured. Running's metaphysician Dr. George Sheehan writes interestingly, but sometimes takes his subject—himself—a bit too seriously. Higgs notes that "while it is not objectionable that Dr. Sheehan finds a hero in himself, it is troublesome that the same conclusion might be drawn by less wise and gifted men after some new feat of running or other expenditure of energy. . . . Jefferson, Emerson, Thoreau, Whitman, and Lincoln, for instance, can tell us more about truth and goodness than the same number of outlaws or even runners." (p. 207)

Both the book's appendices are quite valuable. Jack W. Berryman's forty page "Important Events in the History of American Sports: A Chronology" runs from 1618 to mid-1981 and offers a good overview of records, events, and shifts in American tastes and values. While Berryman notes that more detailed sports histories should also be consulted, his contribution to the book should not be underestimated for it offers a graphic view of the continuity of American sport. Actually, the only major event Berryman seems to have missed was my premature retirement from track and field following a prodigious, but errant discus throw that nearly decapitated a coach.

The second appendix is a godsend to researchers. Listed are art centers, halls of fame, museums, libraries, archives, and institutions with descriptions of the holdings. The International Sports and Games Research Collection at the University of Notre Dame contains an estimated 500,000 items covering about 500 sports and games. One would expect this huge repository to be noted, but in the same section one can find the Greyhound Hall of Fame—a serious, but small and fairly obscure facility located in Abilene, Kansas. Too, it is helpful to know of the impressive Sports Art Center at SUNY Cortland and that the Goldfarb Library at Brandeis University possesses two full sets of the huge Merriwell series (245 volumes).

Of course in a book of such scope, some things are bound to be omitted. Tristram P. Coffin's *The Old Ball Game*, which discusses baseball, folklore, and literature is not mentioned nor is William Harper's work with play and games. Harper attempted to put theory into practice with a construct called The Play Factory, the subject of a *Sports Illustrated* feature a few years back. Not in the second appendix are the Pro Rodeo Hall of Champions in Colorado Springs and the Canadian Rodeo Historical Society in Calgary.

However, it is difficult to find fault with Professor Higgs. I disagree with some statements about Ring Lardner, but then I disagree with just about everybody on that topic anyhow. The book is valuable for nearly anyone working with sport. For the novice, it opens completely new vistas. For the experienced, it broadens and extends by treating areas complementary to a specialty. I would be proud to have my name on the title page. *Sports: A Reference Guide* is a useful, lucid, intelligent contribution to sports scholarship.

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