

Twin, Stephanie, Ed., *Out of the Bleachers: Writings on Women and Sport*. Old Westbury, New York: The Feminist Press, 1979, xli + 229 pp. Photos, notes, index. \$6.95 (paper).

This book is one of twelve from The Feminist Press project devoted to the

topics Women's Lives/Women's Works. *Out of the Bleachers* is the only book of the twelve devoted to sports and as Dr. Twin states, it is a milestone to have such a book from this publishing house as "the burgeoning field of Women's Studies has largely ignored" this topic (p. xiii).

The title *Out of the Bleachers* with the subheading "Writings on Women and Sport" is a more creative title than the usual "Women in Sport." "Readings on Women in Sport" and so forth. The publisher is certainly unaware of other areas of study and research as illustrated by the statement that Dr. Twin, who has a Ph.D. in American history from Rutgers, "is one of the few people doing scholarly work in the field of women and sports (p. 219). This misinformation reinforces the statement that Women's Studies has neglected the study of women in sport issues.

The introduction is very well done. It is 24 pages containing a succinct description of the progress made by women in sport from "The Beginnings" to "The Seventies and Beyond." It is well researched and has two good pages of footnotes.

Besides the introduction there are 20 articles which are arranged under three main topics: Physiology and Social Attitudes—Separating Fact from Fiction; Sportswomen—Reflections on Their Lives; and The Structure of Women's Sport—Looking to the Future. In contrast to some Feminist Press publications where all the articles are by women, six of the essays are authored by men. The first reaction is to applaud Twin for her attempt at impartiality by having articles written by both men and women. But it appears that her choice of male interpreters seem to be those taking extreme positions in regard to women in sport. Instead of being a gain for the purposes of the Feminist Press it is a negative approach. For example, the information that precedes Paul Weiss' article on "Women Athletes" states that "although he is one of America's most respected philosophers, when writing about women and sport he is surprisingly unprecise" (p. 63). One wonders why with all the positive articles another source was not selected. One questions, also, why the articles were not in sequential chronological order to indicate changes in attitudes toward women competing in sports. There seems to be no logical order; they skip around from a 1969 article after a 1912 story and so forth.

The brief information on the author and the concise overview of the article that precede each entry is well done. Furthermore, the book is liberally interspersed with pictures although identification by numbers on the side is a slight deterrent and detracts somewhat from the excellent choice of historic pictures.

As in any anthology the quality of articles is varied and ranges from extremely interesting to a few that seem questionable on their inclusion. In particular two articles appeared to have been selected more because they were old (the first was written in 1899 and the other in 1895) than because of their content. In the section on sportswomen the articles on Willye White, Gertrude Ederle, and Louise Bernikow were by far superior to the other stories.

The last section is disappointing in that the subtitle is "Looking to the Future" and although published in 1979 not a single article was written after

1976 with the majority of information being from the 1972-1974 period. Since tremendous strides were made in the decade of the 1970s, it is a definite shortcoming not to have later articles.

We who are involved in sport and physical education are certainly aware that "Women in Sport" is a topic to be studied whereas as Hart states in her article it is "well established that sport is male territory; therefore participation of female newcomers is studied as a peripheral, non-central aspect of sport" (pp. 24 & 25). It is unfortunate for a positive outlook for the future that Twin did not have access to these words from Jay Coakley: "Sport is a human activity. It is no more ideally suited for the members of one sex or for the other. However, throughout history sport participation has been greater for men than for women. Not only have fewer women than men participated but they generally participate less often and in fewer sport activities. These differences raise questions deserving special attention in the sociology of sport. When the differences disappear, there will no longer be a need for a special chapter on women" (Coakley, *Sport in Society*, p. 214).

The need for books and research on women in sport is illustrated by the following statement of Willye White on the ramifications of being a female athlete. She claims—and many females will probably agree—that "a female athlete is always two different people. A male athlete can be the same all the time" (p. 78).

In the final analysis *Out of the Bleachers* is a source book as it states on "Writings on Women and Sport." The articles can also be found in their original publications, such as, *Ms Magazine*, *Intellectual Digest* and so forth. Let us hope other authors like Twin are able to persuade publishers who neglect sport and the study of men and women in sport that the topic is timely and merits emphasis.

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