

Porter, David L., ed. *Biographical Dictionary of American Sports: Football*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1987. Pp. xvii, 757. \$75.00.

This is the second volume in David L. Porter's projected four-volume series on sport biography. It deals exclusively with football, and the criteria used to select subjects follow the same lines as in the baseball volume: individuals earned a place in the book by being American born or bred, having an exceptional football career as a player, coach, or executive, or having an important "impact" on the sport, although what is meant by impact is never made clear.

About ninety contributors prepared entries on 520 subjects, and each entry contains an informative and generally coherent biographical sketch and a short bibliography. While the sketches appear quite good, some of the bibliographies reveal lazy or inadequate research, or contain citations of no use to the student or researcher desiring to pursue the subject further. Bibliographies in reference works such as these should be exclusively meant as a guide to further sources of information; it may be a nice statement of academic integrity to cite a letter, phone conversation, or interview with the subject, but these citations will not be useful to readers of the book.

Other bibliographies are simply inadequate. It is important to have corroborating information on sport heroes, since so much of what is written about them in the press, in team media guides, or in ghostwritten autobiographies may be nothing more than puffery. For example, it is hard to believe that there is only one source—a *Sports Illustrated* article—available to document the career of Franco Harris, the celebrated Steelers running back. And it seems almost ludicrous that the only source cited for Sid Luckman, the great Bears quarterback of the 1940s, is a book by Robert Slater, *Great Jews in Sports* (1983). Finally, bibliographic listings such as "Washington *Post*, 1977-1986," or "Des Moines *Register*, 1982-1986," are not very helpful. The *Post*, at least, is indexed for those years, and the contributor ought to have done the reader the service of citing one or two specific feature articles. Fortunately, the great majority of entries are reasonably well documented with a variety of balanced and accessible sources.

As with the baseball volume, there are a number of appendixes following the main body of entries. The first three of these list individuals by (1) what they mostly did (play, coach, administer); (2) the position they played (where one may note that there are four times as many quarterbacks as centers); and (3) their place of birth (although it would have been more helpful to list both city and state rather than just the state). A fourth appendix lists entries who played or are playing professional football, a fact which could easily have been worked into the first appendix. Two more appendixes list the members of the college and professional football halls of fame, and a final one provides the names of college football conferences, professional football leagues, and various football-related associations. A good index concludes the volume.

On the whole, this is a good and useful book. The entries are fairly well balanced chronologically (about 22 percent were born before 1900, and about 29 percent were born after 1938). The editor has wielded a heavy hand, so that the entries sound very much alike, but they are clear and informative. Some will, of course, find their own heroes omitted, and others will wish for more bibliographical information, but these are small (and inevitable) problems in the context of the entire work.

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