

Allison, Lincoln (ed). *The Changing Politics of Sport*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993. Pp. ix, 232. Index. \$69.95, \$24.95 paperback.

As Lincoln Allison points out in the introductory chapter to *The Changing Politics of Sport* although it was only six years between the publication of the predecessor volume (*The Politics of Sport*) and the writing of the present work, much indeed has happened to reshape the contours of world politics. In particular, he cites the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, the dismantling of apartheid and the rapid commercialization of international sports events. For most writers who sought to explain the role and significance of sport in international (and domestic) politics, the Cold War and the sporting isolation of South Africa were fixed reference points for debate and analysis. As regards the commercialization of sport, it is true that the process has been underway for some time but there was still, in the early and mid

1980s, a concern that the financial reward reaped by the International Olympic Committee from the success of the Los Angeles Olympic Games, for example, was a departure from the norm exemplified by Montreal's debt-ridden experience of hosting the Games in 1976. The publication of this book is timely as it provides an initial review of the impact on sport of these recent developments as well as stimulating a consideration of the longer term consequences for sport at the domestic and international level.

The essays by Hoberman and Riordan focus on the aftermath of the collapse of communist sport. Hoberman considers the relationship between "sportive nationalism" and Cold War ideological rivalry and suggests that, while the latter manipulated and intensified the former, it was "sportive nationalism" that was the more deeply ingrained and which has consequently outlived the demise of communism. By way of explanation, he suggests that "the competitive impulse is a basic human drive that is more durable than the political regimes that channel and exploit it" (p. 17). However, rather than seeing the post Cold War future being shaped by the emergence of new patterns of national rivalries, he suggests that a significant tension will be along the dividing line between the pro- and anti-doping factions within elite sport. In support of this argument, he points, *inter alia*, to the ambiguity and general halfheartedness within German sport in handling the Krabbe and Meuller doping incidents. While his argument is stimulating and much is persuasive, there is a need to explore more thoroughly the link between "sportive nationalism" and the tension over the use of drugs to enhance performance. In particular, the value of sport to governments is not exclusively dependent upon the availability of a set of elite performers. Mexico, South Korea and Spain saw the demonstration of the political and administrative capacity to host the Olympic Games as equally valuable achievements. In addition, there also needs to be a consideration of the effects of the rapid commercialization of elite sport on the capacity of regimes to exploit "sportive nationalism." Although commercial interests undoubtedly considered Cold War tensions useful in giving major events an additional frisson of excitement, the intrusion of overt political conflict (boycotts and demonstrations) undermines the marketing effort.

Riordan's essay examines the consequences for sport in the ex-communist states of eastern Europe of the long period of Soviet-inspired and state-organized corruption of sport. He catalogues the systematic manipulation of particular sports, events and individual athletes for ideological purposes through the maintenance of the fiction of the amateur athlete, the distorted distribution of limited resources to meet the needs of the sporting elite rather than the mass of the population, and the systematic abuse of drugs to enhance performance. Much of the value of Riordan's contribution is in pulling together the fragments of information about the realities of communist sport that have been emerging since 1989. While on the one hand Riordan provides a damning indictment of the Soviet sports system, he also laments the ten-

dency in many ex-communist states to reject completely the Soviet system rather than seek to retain the positive aspects, many of which had already been copied by western states anxious, during the 1970s, to match Soviet and eastern European achievements. Unfortunately, as the author points out, most of the newly independent states face such problems of economic survival that sport has moved lower down the political agenda. More importantly, one might question whether it is possible to unpick the Soviet system.

One aspect of the changes in Europe that neither Hoberman nor Riordan consider in any detail is the impact of the ending of the Cold War for the poorer countries of the world. The collapse of communism has also meant the collapse of a substantial flow of sports aid. Leaving aside the highly dubious motives that prompted foreign aid policies, one of the most serious consequences of the narrowing ideological gap between east and west is the widening economic gap between the northern and southern hemispheres.

Turning to a consideration of the recent history of South Africa, Guelke provides an extremely interesting analysis of the significance of sport in the ending of apartheid. Whether sport fulfilled a purely symbolic role in the politics of apartheid or whether it was a more substantial political resource has been the subject of much debate. Guelke shows clearly that sport played an important role in the reform process. The ANC accepted the rapid relaxation in South Africa's sporting isolation, even though (or because) most of the immediate beneficiaries were white, as a way of encouraging white South Africans to recognize the benefits of reintegration into the global sporting community and, by implication, the global economy. While few would suggest that the sporting isolation of South Africa was central to the collapse of apartheid it is clear that it was and is more than a mere symbol and could at times prove an important tool for advancing broader ANC policy.

Among the other contributions to this volume are two essays dealing with sport and nationalism. Jarvie raises a number of important points in his general examination of the significance of sport for cultural identity and his particular concern to compare the relationship between sport and nationalism in Scotland and Ireland. Perhaps the most interesting part of his essay is when he considers questions of global culture. He notes the apparent paradox of the development of a global culture, from which few states are immune, at the same time as the reassertion of militant ethnic nationalism in central and eastern Europe. What is at the heart of this debate is the extent to which sport as an element of global culture is essentially ephemeral and consequently impinges very little on the core attitudes and values that define a nation or ethnic group. Thus, rather than the spread of soccer throughout the world resulting in a greater degree of cultural homogeneity, it might be the case that the effect is to provide a common reference point which enables different communities to distinguish themselves from their neighbors more effectively.

Jarvie's essay is complemented by that of Sugden and Bairner who not only update their earlier contribution to the 1986 volume but also extend the

scope of their analysis to consider the entanglement between national identity and politics, and a series of sports including cycling, cricket and (field) hockey. The discussion of hockey provides a fascinating insight into the ambiguities of national identity. Unlike rugby union where a player from Northern Ireland may play only for Ireland, hockey players may choose to play for Ireland, Great Britain or indeed both.

Of the remaining chapters, Monington contrasts the use of sport in domestic politics in the U.S.A. and Britain. He demonstrates very clearly the extent to which sport has been used, by Reagan in particular, as a source of metaphors with great cultural resonance, but how in Britain there is little attempt by politicians to use sport as a supporting context or metaphor for policy or the projection of their own political personality. In Britain sport is seen as a policy resource (as in the attempted boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games) or as policy problem (as with spectator violence or drug abuse). However, while the differences between the two countries are clearly established, it would have been valuable to have had a more thorough discussion concerning possible explanations of the differences.

In addition to the introductory chapter, Allison also contributes an essay examining the relationship between sport and the environment. He makes a strong case that policy choice is guided by an assumption of qualitative homogeneity of various sporting activities. The British Sports Council's statements of the benefits of sport are so wide-ranging that few if any sports are ruled out in terms of government support and it is extremely difficult to make a judgement about the relative merits of motorcycle scrambling as opposed to rambling. Allison has not only touched on an issue which will continue to be a complex area for policy development but he has also highlighted the weakness of the British Sports Council in the sports policy community. The Sports Council has spent so much time trying not to offend government or other interests that it has lost whatever sense of direction it might have had.

In general, this is a valuable collection of essays and will repay careful reading. More significantly it will play an important part in setting the research agenda for the post-apartheid and post-Soviet period.

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