Journal of Sport History, Vol. 23, No.1 (Spring 1996)

British Sports ffistory: A Post-Modern Future?

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It is now over ten years since William 1. Baker announced, in the pages of this journal, the academic arrival of British sports history.[1] There had, of course, been a long tradition of writing about sport in Britain, but until the 1970s little of what emerged from it could lay claim to "serious" history. Then, quite suddenly it seemed, this state of affairs was changed by a rush of activity in the sports field. Baker clearly saw the 1970s as a turning point. Were we to attempt here to explain the impetus for the change, a number of influences would doubtless suggest themselves. Prominent among them would be the post-war social and educational reforms which brought into the universities and polytechnics a younger breed of scholars, much more responsive than their elders to the problems of popular culture and "history from below." Added to, and resulting from, these structural factors would also be the impact of singular acts of historical imagination and scholarship-in particular, Tony Mason's profoundly influential *Association Football and English Society,* 1863-1915, published in 1980.[2] But however we might identify the causes of this new development in sports history in Britain, there would be little doubt raised over their effect. Baker was quite definite on this and felt able to deliver a confident (and subsequently much-quoted) verdict:

> An integral part of social history, British sport history now thrives as a self-conscious discipline attuned to economic causation, to class distinctions and conflicts, to the masses as well as the elites, to cultural continuity and change, and to sociological and anthropological insights as well as traditional modes of research and analysis.[3]

A distinctive branch of social history had unequivocally been created. There were, to be sure, some *lacunae.* Baker noted, among other things, "only a trickle of scholarly concern" on medieval sport, and a lack of consideration of such important issues as sport and literature, the place of women in sport, the 'Celtic fringe,' and the global diffusion of British sports, especially in South America. But overall, the condition was a sound one: "we must applaud the massive amount of work done in British sports history during the past ten years."[4]

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[1] William 1. Baker, "The State of British Sport History," *Journal of Sport History,* 10:1 (Spring 1983): 53-66.

[2] Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society,* 1863-1915 (Brighton: Harvester, 1980).

[3] Baker, *op. cit.:* 54. At about the same time the British historian James Walvin was warning would-be practitioners of sports history against the dangers of introversion, encouraging them to maintain contact with "a broader, defining and determining historical context"; their greatest task, he noted, was "to overcome that deep and abiding intellectual suspicion which is so commonly manifested towards the very concept of sports history or sports sociology." James Walvin, "Sport, Social History and the Historian," *British Journal of Sports History,* 1:1 (May 1984): 5-13.

Where, then, have we been in the dozen years since Baker wrote, and where might we be heading in the next ten? The main purpose of the present essay is to examine some of the principal features that have emerged in sports historiography over the past decade or so. The emphasis is not so much on topics and issues, in the sense of the gaps identified by Baker, as on the conceptual and methodological lines of enquiry adopted, especially around themes of social class. Further, there is an attempt to suggest still-to-be-confronted problems, the tackling of which would serve not only to enrich our empirical understanding of sport but also to align sports history with those major theoretical influences that are likely to demand the attention of the discipline in a "post-modern" world.

In the decade since Baker wrote an even greater leap forward than that which occurred in the 1970s has been evident in output. Productivity levels of the 1980s are meticulously recorded in the bibliographical compilations of Richard Cox. They reveal extensive activity among both professional and amateur historians at all levels-local, regional, and national.[5] Many, though not all, of Baker's gaps are now being filled. Commenting on all this activity in a recent paper, Tony Mason found a broad field to survey but pointedly asked: "... is the filling of gaps, like patriotism, merely the last refuge of the historical scoundrel?" Equally apposite was his query as to whether"... the social history of sport in general [has] become just another discrete historical ghetto where fans with typewriters practice their esoteric craft with little contact with the historical mainstream?"[6] These questions, deliberately provocative, need to be posed. For if they have established themselves as "serious" historians, the practitioners of sports history now need to consider how they want their history to develop.

The question of the seriousness of the whole project is, in fact, scarcely now an issue. The days are gone when eyebrows were raised by "proper" historians at those studying sport. In fact, in a recent summary of developments in British sports history, Richard Cox was perhaps unduly low-key over the discipline's claim to academic legitimacy.[7] It is true, as Cox observes, that in comparison with North America there is a dearth of sports history courses in British universities; and there still exist some serious technical obstacles to research arising from difficulty of accessing sources.[8]

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[4] Baker, *op. cit.,* 66.

[5] Richard William Cox, *Sport in Britain: A Bibliography of Historical Publications 1800-1988* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991).

[6] "Writing the History of Sport," unpublished seminar paper, Centre for the Study of Social History, University of Warwick, UK, 10 October 1991. I am grateful to Dr. Mason for allowing me to quote from his paper.

[7] "A Brief History of British Sports History," *Physical Education Review,* 15:2 (1992): 119-26.

[8] See Richard William Cox, "A Model for Sports History Documentation: the Origins, Objectives, Methods, Findings and Recommendations of the British Sports History Bibliography Project," *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 9:2 (August 1992): 252-79.

But there seems little reason to dispute the claim that a distinctive and legitimate genre has been established. A clear indication of its existence is provided in the collection of essays brought together by Richard Holt in 1990 under the title *Sport and the Working Class in Modem Britain.*[9] It is worth dwelling on the contents of this volume for a moment to consider what they reveal about the current direction of sports history in Britain.

The overall aim of these studies implants them firmly in Thompsonian soil: to investigate popular sport "from below" and thereby gain a perspective on working class culture and social relationships that could not be acquired by studying dominant national forms of sport. "Making 'submerged' traditions and cultural identities more visible is the purpose behind this volume," says Holt.[10] Much of the focus is therefore local. Important themes emerge which challenge some of our established notions of social history and at the same time illuminate areas of previous ignorance. There is, for example, a posthumous contribution from Stephen Jones on working class sport in Manchester between the wars which serves not only to bring out the rich diversity of sporting activity in this particular city, but also to suggest ways in which occupation, skill, status, gender and age affected the experience of sport.[11] H. F. Moorhouse provides a further insight into the relationship between class and national consciousness in Scottish football (soccer) by examining the "emblematic" role of football stars in the twentieth century: "their lives," says Moorhouse, "... articulate certain tensions, themes and myths and their flights contain compelling metaphors which help explain the earthy predicaments of the fans."[12] Welsh boxers-"emblematic of their society"-are the subject of a related study by Dai Smith, who argues that boxing heroes were invested by their fans with an image of their community. This was never more so than when Tommy Farr challenged Joe Louis in 1937 for the world's heavyweight championship and emerged a glorious loser; the boxing match stood as a metaphor of the Welsh nation's fight against economic adversity in the 1930s.[13] This relationship of sportsmen with their local community is similarly explored in an essay by Tony Mason, who in charting the progress of the footballer Stanley Matthews from local to national hero shows just how much emotional capital was invested in him by the inhabitants of his home town, Stoke-on-Trent, in the late 1930s. Matthews was the man whose footballing prowess had put this isolated potteries community "on the map" and, when it seemed that for financial reasons he might be transferred to another club, townspeople of all social classes mounted an orchestrated civic campaign to keep their hero in Stoke.[14] Likewise the American historian Charles Korr, building on earlier

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9. Richard Holt, ed., *Sport and the Working Class in Modem Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

10. *op. cit., 3.*

11. Stephen G. Jones. "Working Class Sport in Manchester Between the Wars": 67-83.

12. H. F. Moorhouse, "Shooting Stars: Footballers and Working Class Culture in Twentieth Century Scotland"; 179-97.

13. Dai Smith, "Focal heroes: A Welsh Fighting Class": 198-217.

14. Tony Mason, "Stanley Matthews": 159-78.

work, delves further into the role of West Ham United football club in the working class communities of the east end of London in the inter-war years. He stresses the mythologies that developed in the aftermath of the club's appearance in the 1923 Cup Final (a defeat, like that of Tommy Farr) and the importance of these memories of glory, encapsulating as they did a distinctive *idea* of West Ham, for a community in the grip of poverty and depression.[15]

Other contributors address themselves to different themes. Douglas Reid's analysis of popular blood sports in the first half of the nineteenth century reveals the intensity of the confrontation between, on the one hand, those who wished to suppress activities such as bull-baiting and cockfighting in the name of civility and, on the other, proponents of these old blood sports. A protracted campaign of suppression eventually accounted for the disappearance of the sports, but only after a period of underground activity based on pubs.[16] In their response to this alleged decline of'traditional" pastimes in nineteenth-century Britain, Alan Metcalfe and Neil Tranter, in separate case studies of working class communities in Northumberland and Stirling (Scotland), both demonstrate the durability of such sports. Metcalfe shows that among the miners of Northumberland the old established games of potshare bowling, quoits and fives remained undiminished in popularity at the end of the nineteenth century, despite the rise of professional football in the area.[17] David Bowker, in a case study of the textile town of Ashton-under-Lyne, near Manchester, casts doubt on the claim that the rational recreation movement of middle class moral improvers ran into the sand at some point in the Victorian period. Bowker shows it to be alive, if not over-generously endowed, in the hands of municipal councillors of the inter-war period who were intent on directing public sports provision into "improving" recreational services such as swimming baths and parks.[18] A similar point is taken up in the study by Jack Williams of "recreational" cricket (i.e. cricket played for enjoyment rather than to achieve high performance or profit) in the Bolton area of Lancashire in the same period. Socially, Williams argues, this form of cricket served to perpetuate divisions within the working class between "rough" and "respectable" elements, as well as to augment the influence of organized religion, with which the respectable were often associated. "Hence," says Williams, "the work of 'rational recreation' went on surreptitiously, long after it had ceased to be a prominent ideological issue at the national level."[19] Trans-class bonds of community were therefore fostered through this sport. This point emerges, too, in the present author's investigation of the cricket leagues of northern England before the Second World War, where emphasis is also directed to the process of re-definition that occurred when middle class sports were absorbed into working class society.[20]

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[15] Charles P. KOIT, "A Different Kind of Success: West Ham United and the Creation of Tradition and Community": 142-58.

[16] Douglas A. Reid, "Beasts and Brutes: Popular Blood Sports c. 1780-1860": 12-28.

[17] Alan Metcalfe, "'Potshare Bowling' in the Mining Communities of East Northumberland 1800-1914": 29-44. N. L. Tranter, "Organised Sport and the Working Classes of Central Scotland, 1820-1900: the Neglected Sport of Quoiting": 45-66.

[18] David Bowker, "Parks and Baths: Recreation and Municipal Government in Ashton-under-Lyne Between the Wars": 84-100.

[19] Jack Williams, "Recreational Cricket in the Bolton Area Between the Wars": 101-120.

Though Holt's collection brings together a diverse range of studies it does illustrate in a number of ways some key features of current sports history practice in Britain. Firstly, it shows that, in spite of the relative absence of official records and private papers, it is possible to construct a history from below, especially when the wealth of information from the provincial press (and, though to a lesser extent in this volume, oral history) is exploited. Secondly, by virtue of the local case study approach adopted in many of the contributions, it underscores very firmly the feature of *diversity* in working class sport, reminding us to be wary of over-simple generalizations. Though Great Britain was probably a more homogeneous society at the beginning of this century than some of its continental neighbors, there were nevertheless many variations: for example, in the pace of cultural change, the timing of the take-up of particular sports, and the cultural behavior of different sections of the population. Thirdly, the volume confirms the consolidation of a particular trajectory in the study of popular sport. Customarily, the older tradition of sports history had been concerned with great deeds on the field and the development of the dominant institutions of sport: it had perpetuated a sporting variant of the "Great Men" school of history writing. Following the paths marked out by Mason, Baker, Walvin and others, historians of sport are seen to be firmly aligning themselves with major debates and concerns in social history. Finally, and perhaps ironically in the light of the volume's title, the studies show clearly the value of concepts *other than class* in the study of sport. In particular, *community-whether* treated territorially (locality, region, nation) or socially (class, ethnicity, gender)-emerges as an important focus for further study. Moorhouse especially, in teasing out the interaction of class and nationalism in Scottish sport, points a new way forward by moving into the realm of *meaning*, of what sporting heroes signified to their followers: "The stars in their courses," he says, "send complex signals."[21]

Though unfashionably omitting gender from serious consideration, Holt's collection nevertheless breaks new ground by departing from what has become the dominant paradigm in the study of British sport: social class. The preoccupation might strike the American reader, nurtured in different approaches, as odd, but for a long time now there has been a close association in British life between sport and social class. This is nowhere better seen than in relation to the working class, where certain sports-greyhound racing, darts, speedway, rugby league, pigeon racing and, of course, association football-became very firmly fixed in the public mind with a "cloth cap" image. Others, such as cricket and (despite its alleged lack of appeal to the middle class) horse racing, had the capacity to bring all classes together in a "national" sport. But generally speaking, sporting preferences in Britain since the second half of the nineteenth century have been very

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20. Jeffrey Hill, "League Cricket in the North and Midlands, 1900–1940": 121-141.

21. op. cit., 195.

clear signifiers of class position. The differences between, for example, the two codes of rugby, Union and League, extend far beyond the field of play.[22] This being so, it is perhaps not surprising that the academic history of British sport has often been written from a class perspective. The more so when it is considered that many younger sports historians have arrived at the subject from a prior interest in labor history and popular culture. And it has to be admitted that, in the hands of several historians and sociologists-Richard Holt, Stephen Jones, John Lowerson and Ian Taylor being among the more prominent-this has provided an immensely illuminating perspective.[23]

The attachment to social class as the cardinal explanatory concept has shaped the discourse of sports history in important ways. Notably, it has resulted in the predominance of a distinctive problematic. Baker noted ten years ago the attention given to questions of "social control" in the study of Victorian leisure.[24] There was an obvious link with issues generated by the work of E. P. Thompson and even earlier contributors to the "standard of living" debate. In some respects, Baker's comments are still relevant. The idea of social control continues to exercise a strong influence over debate, though usually in a somewhat more subtle form than that observed by Baker. John Hargreaves, for example, in offering what has so far been the most systematic attempt to place the development of British sport in a *theoretical* perspective, employs the concept of hegemony.[25] Fundamental to his analysis, as to other Gramscian approaches, is the concept of class. If, as Richard Holt has wryly reminded us in his other recent book, *Sport and the British,*[26] recourse to hegemony as an explanatory tool can, in its cruder forms, lead to nothing more than the old "social control" thesis in a new guise, the Gramscian concept nonetheless holds a powerful appeal. A number of historians have employed ideas of negotiation and contestation to produce important analyses of cultural relations in sport, taking a perspective similar to that expressed by Holt himself. Commenting on the massive and at times perplexing upsurge of sporting activity at the beginning of the present century, he draws attention to the *creative* energies of working people in sport:

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[22] See Paul Greenhalgh, "'The Work and Play Principles: the Professional Regulations of the Northern Rugby Football Union, 1898-1905," *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 9:3 (Dec. 1992): 356-77. James W. Martens, "'To Throttle the Hydra': the Middle Class and Rugby's Great Schism," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport,* XXII:! (May 1991): 52-76.

[23] See Richard Holt, "Working Class Football and the City: the Problem of Continuity," *British Journal of Sports History,* 3:1 (May 1986): 5-27. Stephen G. Jones, *Workers At Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure* 1918-39 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986). *Sport, Politics and the Working Class: Organised Labour and Sport in Inter-War Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988). John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes 1870-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993). Ian Taylor, "Putting the Boot into a Working Class Sport: British Soccer After Bradford and Brussels," *Sociology of Sport Journal, 4* (1987): 171-91. E J. Hobsbawm has also incorporated the effects of sport into his discussion of working class consciousness in Britain in the 20th century. See *Worlds of Labour: Further Studies in the History of Labour* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1984), chs. 10 and 11.

[24] Baker,op. *cit., 58.*

[25] John Hargreaves, *Sport, Power and Culture: A Social and Historical Analysis of Popular Sports in Britain* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

[26] Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990 ed.).

> the unifying thread which runs through this vast and diverse world of popular sports is the idea that workers make their own culture rather than having their play organised for them or sold to them. For popular sports have often been seen as the product of initiatives from above that were imposed upon, or passively adopted by, those below. This 'diffusionist' view of popular culture needs close and careful scrutiny.27

In place of the "top downwards" perspective which tended to influence older analyses, the viewpoint developed some years ago by Peter Bailey[28] now holds sway. This is perhaps most distinctively employed in the work of the late Stephen Jones.[29] Jones is an interesting example of a cultural Marxist who has shed most of the trappings of economic determinism and who stresses the Gramscian notion of sport as an arena of social and cultural struggle, where sporting practices and experiences are made and re-made.

Elaborating this notion, Jones provides us with a valuable categorization of the main "sectors" (as he terms them) in which British sport and leisure have taken place: the "commercial," the "voluntary," and the "state." Each sector contains a different kind of cultural relationship, and between the sectors various forms of tension can arise.[30] Voluntary association, for example, has been an extremely strong feature of social life in Britain and has often proved resistant to commercial penetration. Much sport and other leisure activity can only be understood, as far as Britain is concerned, by reference to this sector of self-created pastime. On the other hand, the state, in its various forms, has generally been less intrusive in the whole area of recreations than in certain other European countries. Consequently, its role in the formation of sport has attracted minimal interest from historians, though Jones's work prompts thoughts about areas for future attention. One notably neglected topic in this sector, for example, concerns the role of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)-a state monopoly for the 30 years following its foundation in the mid 1920s-in constructing an "experience" of sport among the listening and, later, viewing public. And, of course, the very existence of a *corporate* broadcasting system reveals much about the British state's moral and regulatory approach to cultural provision and its fears about the *quality* of provision available in the commercial sector. In some ways, the most problematical of these sectors for the idea of cultural negotiation has been the commercial, on which much discussion continues to be focused. It provides a clear illustration of the kinds of question currently under discussion by sports historians. Did it provide opportunities for subordinate groups to negotiate and "re-define" sport according to popular visions, practices and traditions? Or, was the sector one in which a mass-produced culture was marketed for the passive consumption of the people?

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[27] *Ibid.*, 135. There is an acknowledged inspiration here in the work of Gareth Stedman Jones.

[28] *Leisure and Class in Victorian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978).

[29] See *Sport, Politics and the Working Class*, ch. 8.

[30] See *Workers at Play*, chs. 2–4.

Paying spectator sports, with professional football to the fore, were evident in Britain well before they made their appearance in other European countries. The entire range of developments has been amply documented in the recent study by Wray Vamplew of commercial sports before the First World War.[31] Football may be taken as our exemplar. It was the sport commonly referred to by the end of the nineteenth century as "the people's game," "almost a lay religion," according to Eric Hobsbawm.[32] By this time, virtually all the clubs in the main English commercial league, the Football League, as well as many of those in the rival Southern League, had registered themselves as limited liability companies. Among other things, this enabled them to raise the necessary public share capital for equipping grounds and buying the players needed for successful competition. The most successful clubs were those whose financial reserves allowed them to secure scarce top-class talent on the transfer market. This was the key to ensuring the frequent victories on the field which, in tum, maintained the regular supply of fans at the turnstiles to provide the "gate" receipts that supplemented capital raised from shares. By the inter-war period Arsenal Football Club (London) had become the leading team in England as a result of applying these commercial techniques. But commercial success was elusive for the many smaller clubs and only a few could hope to emulate the financial and playing achievements of Arsenal.[33] Nevertheless, by the 1930s the Football League had grown to 88 clubs and drew large crowds to its matches. From an annual figure of around 6 million in the early 1900s, attendances climbed to over 30 million by the last season before the outbreak of the Second World War. The period just before and just after the war represented the peak of popular support for the game.

Thus, through this process a game which had originated among an elite of public schoolboys in the middle of the nineteenth century became "the people's game" of the twentieth: from being a participant sport, it had been transformed essentially into a commercial spectacle. Similar changes overtook sports such as boxing, greyhound racing, speedway, rugby league, cricket and others, if in a less dramatic way because none had quite the same crowd appeal as football. Did it all result in a game over which spectators were passive consumers with little control over what was being served up for them? On this question there has never been a shortage of comment, from all quarters of opinion. Much of it has been political, with strong moral overtones. The recent work of Chris Waters, while not concerned primarily with sport, is very relevant here.[34] Waters shows that many members of the socialist and labor movement, for example, regarded football as a mere capitalist ploy to divert the working man's attention from more serious matters. It could not fail to reproduce the values of capitalism, they claimed, because it placed such a strong emphasis on competition and a "win at all costs" mentality. To such socialist critics there seemed little evidence of an equal relationship between the businessmen who ran the football clubs and their customers, the spectating masses. Football was very much "for" the workers rather than "of' them. To be sure, recent empirical studies suggest that there might be some truth in all this. In terms of shaping the nature of the game, the odds did appear to be stacked in favor of the people whose money provided the impetus for commercial sport. Mason's work on English clubs, for instance, has shown that professional football clubs were in the main directed by local businessmen; shareholders also, despite a sprinkling of working class people, were mainly from the middle class.[35] There was very little sense in which the people who supported such clubs could be said to have exerted any formal control over their operation. Spectators could, and did, exercise their right to stay away from matches if dissatisfied with performances, and they sometimes expressed their feelings about this in physical ways.[36] But this was a crude form of control which rarely influenced the decisions of boards of directors in a major way. Thanks to the recent work of Rogan Taylor[37] we now have a much clearer picture of the part played by formal organizations of supporters through the well orchestrated activities of supporters' clubs. It seems, however, that their main efforts were confined to fund-raising on behalf of their favored clubs, and to organizing transport for their members to "away" matches. In spite of the immense energy and time invested by such groups in assisting their clubs, it seems from Taylor's research that this was a largely unrequited love. Most clubs cynically accepted their supporters' favors, only to ditch them when they were no longer of value. British football clubs, for all their mass appeal, have had a poor record of public relations. Equally unenlightened have been their industrial relations. The players themselves, who in commercial sports were invariably drawn from a working class milieu, were notoriously subservient. In football, the clubs operated a draconian control over players' freedom of movement in the form of the infamous "retain and transfer" system, which tied the players to a particular club until it decided to release them.[38] Until well after the Second World War there was little attempt by players to exert any collective power against this system. "Negotiation," in either a Gramscian or even a straightforward trade union sense, seems conspicuous by its absence in the industrial and cultural relations of football.

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[31] *Pay Up and Play the Game: Professional Sport in Britain* 1875-1914 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

[32] E. 1. Hobsbawm, *Worlds ofLabour: Further Studies in the History ofLabour* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984), 185.

[33] On a smaller club see A. J. Arnold, *A Game That Would Pay: A Business History ofProfessional Football in Bradford* (London: Duckworth, 1988). Writing of the Bradford Park Avenue club, Arnold says: "Park Avenue had good facilities but were continually handicapped by moderate support and came to rely on a series of wealthy patrons. When the last of these... could not provide sound judgement as well as money, the club soon collapsed" (p. 157).

[34] Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics ofPopular Culture* 1884-1914 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990).

[35] Mason, ch. 2, Vamplew, on the other hand, suggests a larger proportion of working class shareholders in Scottish football clubs before 1914. Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game*, ch. 2.

[36] See Vamplew, "Ungentlemanly Conduct: the Control of Soccer Crowd Behaviour 1888-1914" in T.C. Smout, ed., *The Searchfor Wealth and Stability* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 139-54.

[37] Rogan Taylor, *Football and its Fans: Supporters and Their Relations with the Game, 1885-1985* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992). See also Nicholas Fishwick, *English Football and Society, 1910-1950* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), chs. 2 and 3.

[38] See Mason, *Association Football,* 104-6, 111-15. The system was not brought to an end until 1963.

Entering the cultural relations of sport from a different point of access, however, some historians have sought to affirm the power of the ordinary man in the commercial sector. Jones, discussing the inter-war years, emphasizes the sheer *enjoyment* that the expanding leisure industries brought to their customers, while drawing attention also to the opportunities to be found in sport for oppositional politics. Sport, it seems, could be a vehicle for politicizing workers in the struggle for socialism, and Jones cites a multitude of examples of sporting organizations serving the cause of left-wing politics, often promoting an alternative ideal of sport as good fellowship.[39] Yet more germane is the approach of Charles Korr. In his work on West Ham United FC, he directs attention to a still neglected subject-the community of supporters (and not just the unruly elements, upon which much recent sociological writing seems to have been fixated). Korr shows that between the supporters and the owners there were clearly understood, if unwritten, limitations upon what boards of directors could do in shaping the character of football clubs. Contrasting to great effect the unbridled commercial power exercised by the owners of American baseball teams, Korr suggests that the influence wielded by the British football director was circumscribed by *moral* obligations to the club's supporters. There was, he argues, a very strong sense in which West Ham was the community's club rather than the private property of its shareholders.[40] Of course, West Ham United might, given its own emphasis on being a "family club," have been an exceptional case. And the gist of Taylor's work on supporters' clubs (which were not, however, synonymous with the generality of supporters) certainly suggests little in the way of moral obligations. There is an interesting issue to be explored here. Until more studies of a similar nature to those of Korr are conducted on other clubs we cannot be certain. But it seems unlikely that West Ham was so very different from many other football clubs based upon small communities where football played such an important part in the creating of a local identity. Moreover, Korr's thesis chimes with the general interpretation proposed by both Stephen Jones and Richard Holt on the basis of their broader perspectives on the social class relations in sport. "Culturally," says Holt, "spectators were just as much 'members' as 'customers' of League football clubs."[41]

So, the proposition that football clubs, and by association other commercial sporting organizations, might have formed an *organic* link with the community they represented offers itself as a plausible subject for further enquiry. If, even within a commercially oriented sport, "consumers" had the capacity to re-make their experience of sport, this tells us a lot about the nature of power and influence in modern society. The point is nowhere better exemplified than in the rowdy culture of male working class sociability which has been present on the terraces of football grounds of Britain for over a century.[42] This was a far cry from the experience of "soccer"[43] in the upper-middle class environment of the public schools. It is difficult to think of middle class values being transmitted in unmediated form to the working class when the swearing, ribaldry and occasional outright violence of football terrace partisanship is taken into account. There is in this, perhaps, some reason for believing that the spectator, especially the working class one, was able to stamp his own values on this commercial game. Of course, we need more locally-based case studies into this community of spectators (in its widest sense of "followers" of sport) before we can make bold pronouncements.

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[39] See *Sport, Politics and the Working Class, passim.* Doubts about this idea are raised in Jeffrey Hill, "'Peace Through Sport?': Sport, Internationalism and the British Working Class in the Inter-War Years," *Canadian Journal of History of Sport,* XXV: 1 (May 1994): 62-76.

[40] Charles P. KOIT, *West Ham United: The Making of a Football Club* (London: Duckworth, 1986), chs. 2 and 3.

[41] Holt, *Sport and the British, 165.*

Clearly, then, the class paradigm has steered much of the discussion over the past ten years. It will no doubt continue to exercise a leading influence. However, its limitations as a tool of analysis are becoming clear. They are exposed by considering a list of areas which British sports history needs to explore: some gaps were identified by Baker, others are topics that the British Society of Sports History has been seeking to prime through recent conferences and workshops.[44] Gender, women in sport, the representation of sport in the media, the place of sport in the armed services, the sports goods industry and sport as consumerism,[45] the sporting crowd, sport and race: all are areas for serious empirical study. How are they to be dealt with? How far can the concept of social class adequately serve to explore them? Some important markers have already been laid down. The recent work of G.P.T. Finn, for example, emphasizes the ethnic and religious prejudices in Scottish football and society and casts a fresh light on the rivalry in Glasgow between the so-called "Old Firm" of Celtic and Rangers. It tells us much about the relationship among sport, ethnicity, and religion, a theme that has too often in Britain been a casualty of the fixation on class. Similarly, Graham Walker's study of the Motherwell swimming phenomenon of the 1940s interestingly probes the convergence of gender and national identity through the career of Nancy Riach.[46] It is significant, recalling Baker's identifying of just such a gap, that *Celtic* instances such as these provoke innovative methods of enquiry. English models of analysis often simply do not apply when confronted with situations across the border, a further reminder that Britain is not only England.

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42. Its nature, however, has changed over this time. See Tony Mason, *Sport and the British* (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 25ff.

43. This term, which in North America has become conventional parlance for the game, probably derived from the corruption of the word "Association" in English public schoolboy slang.

44. Recent annual conferences of the British Society of Sport History have discussed the issues of Sport and the Military (1990), Sport and the Arts (1991) and Sport and the Media (1992). See the *Bulletin* of the Society (renamed *The Sports Historian* in 1992).

45. An important contribution to the theme of the consumption of sport and sports services is to be found in John Benson, *The Rise of Consumer Society, 1880-1980* (London: Longman, 1994), ch. 5.

46. G.P.T. Finn, "Racism, Religion and Social Prejudice: Irish Catholic Clubs, Soccer and Scottish Society," Parts I and II, *The International Journal of the History of Sport,* 8:1 (May 1991): 73-95. See also Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics* in *England, 1880-1939* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993), ch. 4. On Nancy Riach, see Graham Walker, "Nancy Riach and the Motherwell Swimming Phenomenon," in Grant Jarvie and Graham Walker, eds., *Scottish Sport* in *the Making of the Nation* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994), 142-153.

Equally challenging of orthodoxy is Andrew Davies's analysis of leisure, gender and poverty in the English cities of Manchester and Salford during the inter-war period.[47] Davies's study is not "sports history" as conventionally understood, since he deals with a broad range of leisure of which sports are only a part. But it nevertheless raises a series of points which are very pertinent to sports historians. For example, Davies casts doubt on the accessibility of the football terrace and similar forms of commercialized recreation to working class males whose leisure activities were constrained by poverty. This being so, his work should cause us to re-consider our conventional notions of "sport" for this period. It might force us back to a reexamination of the neighborhood-based street pastimes of gambling, "monkey parades" and street corner gatherings which continued to co-exist with the commercial entertainments that had developed since the end of the nineteenth century. Davies raises the further issue of *age* as a determinant of recreational life by bringing into focus the problem of adolescent culture in the 1930s, which in Manchester seems to have prefigured in many ways the "teenager" preoccupations of the 1950s. Perhaps most important, however, is his use of oral evidence to illustrate the sexual division of leisure within working class communities. "Women," notes Davies, "were largely still excluded from some of the most important arenas of mass leisure such as spectator sport"; he goes on to say that "...it is hard to avoid the conclusion that at least in terms of leisure and money management, the sufferings of many working-class women were as much a result of their sex as of their class."48

Davies's work therefore points up one of the most overlooked aspects of British sport: the place in it of women. Sport being what it is-a male-dominated pastime-it goes without saying that historians of sport (an overwhelmingly male group, judging from the membership figures of the British Society of Sports History) have perpetuated a male version of history. In many cases, this has been an unconscious habit, though recently the convention has developed of issuing a disclaimer about the male focus: "women figure only fleetingly in this study," explains Richard Holt in *Sport and the British;* "this is not from any unwillingness to give them their due but because sport has been so thoroughly identified with masculinity."49 Discussions about the role of class, or ethnicity, or religion in sport, for example, have as often as not been in essence about the place of the man: his forms of sociability, the preservation of male space and privilege, the perpetuation of ideas of masculinity and, therefore, femininity. Even here, though, differences in conceptions of masculinity have to be recognized: working class "hardness" was not at all the same as the public school muscular Christian's idea of "taking hard knocks." The same applies to women. Kathleen McCrone's excellent study of women and sport in late Victorian Britain underlines the point.

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47. Andrew Davies, *Leisure, Gender and Poverty: Working Class Culture in Salford and Manchester 1900-1939* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992).

48. *Ibid., 171.*

49. p.8.

The attempts by women to establish a place in sport, and thereby to add a little to the liberation of women from their position as the "second sex," was a struggle confined almost exclusively to middle and upper-middle class females. By the beginning of the twentieth century they were to be found participating in a range of sports, notably golf and tennis, and this, as McCrone emphasizes, served to confmn women's acceptance outside the home and released them in part from the restraints of Victorian prudery.[50] But, with the possible exception of activities such as bowls and rambling, working class women, especially married ones, did not participate directly in sports. As Lowerson has said of the immensely popular participatory sport of angling: "Rarely were women found on the bankS."[51] It might be imagined, however, that they *were* to be found in the clubroom, preparing refreshments for the men after the match, a role customarily accorded to women in cricket. And spectating, as McCrone has shown, was generally considered a suitable pastime for women. It is to this (so to speak) "hinterland" of female activity in sport, where a sexual division of leisure and habitual notions of masculinity and femininity were perpetuated, that historians ought to be turning to explore gender dimensions. We need to know not only more about the place of women in sport, but more about the function of sport in constructing gender identities. Taking a lead from Davies, British sports historians must also accept that matters of gender can no longer be assumed to be of interest only to women.

If the point is accepted, it must therefore be acknowledged that the issue of gender presents further challenges. It is not simply a matter of "filling gaps," but of confronting fundamental problems of epistemology. Nowadays, gender comes trailing clouds of theory. The work of Jennifer Hargreaves, and in particular her most recent book, *Sporting Females*,[52] starkly illustrates the importance of theory. As Hargreaves points out: "The purpose of theorising is to help us understand the nature of sports in society." This involves, initially, an attempt to confront the taken-for-granted notions of sport that are often inscribed in empirical accounts of sporting activity (and which Hargreaves grappled with in earlier work).[53] But, further, it requires an engagement with the theories that have come to exercise a dominant influence, in both North America and Britain, over the understanding of sport in society. Hargreaves rejects figurational sociology and most variants of Marxism as "without exception" marginalizing gender.[54] In "sports feminism"-an eclectic grouping of ideas and political positions-she finds a corpus of thinking and action which places gender at the center of analysis, and which, moreover, provides a basis for developing a strategy of change in the gender relations of sport. "Empowerment" is a key objective in Hargreaves's writing.

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[50] Kathleen E. McCrone, *Sport and the Physical Emancipation of Women, 1870-1914* (London: Routledge, 1988).

[51] John Lowerson, "Angling," in Tony Mason, ed. *Sport in Britain: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 31.

[52] Jennifer Hargreaves, *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sports* (London: Routledge, 1994).

[53] See Hargreaves, ed., *Sport Culture and Ideology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), chs. 1 and 2.

[54] Hargreaves, *Sporting Females, 3.*

Such an approach inevitably draws sports history away from its conventional methodology. Traditionally, sports history in Britain had shown a marked unwillingness to theorize in this way. Given the range of diverse interests that have historically converged on the terrain of sports studies,[55] there has been more than a little borrowed from sociology, philosophy, anthropology and other social science disciplines. Baker instanced 1. A. Mangan's study of athleticism in the Victorian public school as an ideal case of this process, drawing as it does on insights from sociology and anthropology.[56] Eclecticism of this kind has perforce introduced some theoretical leanings, though they have usually resulted in empirical investigations that are *informed* by theories and concepts rather than theorized approaches *per se.* In truth, though it may have gone against the grain of the academic Establishment in terms of its content, sports history in Britain had nevertheless clung grimly to a methodological conservatism. Its two outstanding characteristics might be termed "empiricism" and "reflectivism"; in other words, a concern with the particular, the local, the empirical, the verifiable-by-evidence ("empiricism"); and a tendency to see sport as "reflecting" other social issues, providing so to speak a "window" into social reality, often resulting in an emphasis on the various factors-demography, transport, work and so on-which have determined the shape of sport. Sport, therefore, is justified as an area of historical enquiry by its providing an opportunity to look at these other things from a fresh angle. Between them these two methodologies have constituted sports history as a serious contribution to academic study, to do with more than merely personalities, scores and dressing room hagiography. "Empiricism" is, to a certain extent, understandable in a country where this approach has dominated historiography until very recently, and where even now it exerts a powerful influence; to the extent, indeed, that many undergraduates still find it difficult to conceive of "History" as being anything else. "Reflectivism," indeed, is itself explained partly by the existence of the empiricist tradition, which has always regarded the facts as reflecting a reality beyond them. This tendency towards a conservative methodology might also result from the relative newness of sports history and the determination of its practitioners to establish its credentials. From Baker, through Holt and Jones to virtually every book now written on the subject there is an almost ritualistic declaration about the importance of locating sports history in the totality of social, political, economic and cultural relations and values.[57] By claiming a place in the mainstream there is perhaps an inclination towards the orthodox. If sports history were to continue in this vein, there is no doubt that much commendable effort would be expended in shedding light on hitherto unknown issues, and sports history would further consolidate its position as a valued sub-branch of the discipline.

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55. See Cox, *Physical Education Review, loco cit.*

56. J. A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: the Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

57. See, for example, J. A. Mangan's editorial introduction to Jones, *Sport, Politics and the Working Class,* p. x.

But is this the status to which its practitioners in Britain should be aspiring? If some British historians over the past decade or so have at last been turning their minds to problems of epistemology, the influence of their thinking does not appear yet to have reached sports history. It is, however, surely time that the implications for it of new (and not so new) theoretical influences were considered, if only to decide how they might contribute to the overall enrichment of the genre. Without proposing the complete abandonment of the archives, it might be suggested that some of the theoretical aspects of "post-modern" influences can be usefully embraced and harmonized with the areas of empirical enquiry that are coming onto the sports historian's agenda.

It is from feminist criticism that some of the most compelling critiques of historical practice have emerged in recent years. Joan Scott, notably, has referred to the "epistemological turmoil" that has accompanied the shift from the paradigms of science (to do with causation) to those of literature (to do with meaning).[58] From the general area of "post-modernism"-in practice, linguistics and literary theory-some powerful questionings about the validity of traditional historical method have been made. They have continued in even more pointed form the "structuralist" challenges which surfaced in the late 1970s, only to subside a few years later so far as most British historians were concerned.[59] It may well be that the present "linguistic turn" will be greeted by most of us with "rank indifference" (in Patrick Joyce's phase),[60] but this would be to turn a collective back on the problem rather than to confront it. "Post-modernism," especially for a historical tradition like the British so steeped in empiricism, poses a fundamental question about the historian's craft: namely, can "the sources" be treated as a point of access to the social reality presumed to lie beyond them? The debates currently being conducted around the problem of "text and context,"[61] and the linguistic practices deployed by feminist historians like Scott in an attempt to counterpose gender and class in historical analysis, have so far passed sports historians by. How can we engage with them?

One option, of course, is simply not to. It could be argued with some justification that the "linguistic turn" has introduced an excessively metaphysical level of debate, and that it threatens to do away with History as we know it without putting anything substantial in its place. Understandable though this response might be, it would nevertheless seem an unduly defensive act to repel new methodologies which have brought many positive features, especially insofar as they are likely to heighten our sensitivity to textual and documentary analysis.[62] Far from being a negative influence, the "post-modern" paradigm seems to me to point up an area of particular interest and potential which, if fully explored, could yield significant new insights for sports history.

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[58] Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 41.

[59] See *History Workshop Journal,* 6 (Autumn 1978): 1-6.

[60] "History and Post-Modernism," *Past and Present,* 131 (November 1991): 205.

[61] See Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Ages," *Speculum,* 65 (1990): 59-86.

[62] See Lawrence Stone, "History and Post-Modernism," *Past and Present,* 135 (May 1992): 189-94.

It has to do with the issue of "meaning." What I have termed the "reflectivist" tendencies in sport history reinforce the idea of sport as a cultural by-product of other (implicitly more important?) economic and social forces. By contrast, much of the conceptual thinking that has emerged in recent years from the multi-disciplinary area of cultural studies has stressed the relative autonomy of texts and cultural practices. They are themselves seen as a determining influence. What this perspective has often produced is an emphasis on the agency of *ideology* in giving meaning to, making sense of, *representing* the world we inhabit. For sports historians to take this turn would involve moving away from concerns with causation in sporting activity, and directing greater attention to understanding the role of sport in giving meaning to social life. A valuable point of reference here is the recent work of Patrick Joyce, a historian sharply attuned to linguistic methodology. In one of his most recent books,[63] Joyce draws attention to identity: implicitly, the issues of who we are, and the processes by which our visions of ourselves and our society are constructed. His main purpose is to reassess the place of class as a form of identity, and therefore as an explanatory concept, in the social order. At the same time, he seeks to reinstate as a dominant image the old notion of "the People." His analysis makes clear the interaction in the everyday life of British people during the early years of this century of a multiplicity of identities: class, religion, neighborhood, town, region and nation. Each was reproduced through a variety of texts, from everyday language to the new forms of popular culture to be found in radio and cinema. Surprisingly, Joyce says little about sport. And yet this burgeoning branch of twentieth-century popular culture might be thought to contain some of the most influential of ideologies in the formation of identity.

Identity is the focus of one of the most imaginative of recent studies of British sport. To be more precise, it is a collective study of *Scottish* sport. Once again, non-English case studies provide remarkably fertile ground for both empirical and theoretical innovation. Grant Jarvie's and Graham Walker's *Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation: Ninety Minute Patriots?* brings together a variety of sporting examples to reconsider the assumption which forms the book's subtitle: that sport acts as a substitute for "true" national feeling. As one Scottish National Party politician observed at the time of the 1992 British general election, "... Scotland has too many ninety minute patriots whose nationalist outpourings are expressed only at major sporting events." In contrast to this idea, the studies show sport to be an active force in expressing and reflecting political and social moods in Scotland, and in giving form to a complex variety of different communities and nationalisms. This complexity is perhaps nowhere better illustrated than in the contradictory identities at work among the spectators at Scottish international football matches. Played before crowds drawn largely from the Glasgow conurbation, these matches exhibit as much local (and possibly sectarian) antagonism between the Scottish supporters as they do unified support for the Scottish team. Rival Rangers and Celtic fans often take up opposing "ends" of the stadium and use the occasion for celebrating localism alongside national feeling.[64]

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[63] Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the People: Industrial England and the Question of Class, 1984-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

There is an English parallel in this which, as yet, has been scarcely touched upon in a sports context. The idea of "the North" has a long, if problematical, provenance in English social and cultural life. It has figured especially prominently in sporting discourse. "North v. South" is a commonplace of popular journalism and pub talk over issues as diverse as the selection of the English cricket team and the merits of football clubs. It has been a notable framing device in presenting one of the principal events in the English sporting calendar, the Football Association Cup Final. This annual match, so frequently a contest between teams from the north of England and London has traditionally been seen as a stage on which regional achievement and pride can be paraded. The image conjured up by the popular press in 1952, for example, on the occasion of a Final between Newcastle United from the northeast and the London club Arsenal was one of "metropolitans" and "northerners." But were these identities accepted by anyone other than the journalists who employed them? Was there any closer affinity felt towards the "Geordies" of Newcastle by those other northern subcultures of "Scousers" (Liverpool) or "Tykes" (Yorkshire) than they felt to the team from north London? "Northerners" themselves certainly find this designation altogether too amorphous, concealing as it does sharply defined perceptions of locality within "the North" itself. Yet they have traditionally been happy to ascribe to the selectors of the English cricket team a "southern bias" in their choice of players. The point is that this resort to identities is an indispensable part of British sporting culture. It serves to give meaning to sport, which in turn is itself responsible for the perpetuation of such identities through its rituals, heroes and institutions.[6s]

This whole area of identity and meaning is one to which sports historians might profitably address themselves, following paths already signposted in the work of Mason, Smith and Moorhouse. The work of Moorhouse has particular significance for the way in which it presents the idea of sporting heroes as "texts," whose meaning is susceptible to various kinds of decoding.[66] What are being incorporated into historical analysis through this route are techniques of literary and linguistic analysis to lay bare *meaning-its* inscription in texts, its construction in terms of "otherness," its multidimensionality, and its relationship to the wider context of discourse.

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[64] Jarvie and Walker, *op. cit.*, especially Jarvie and Walker, "Ninety Minute Patriots: Scottish Sport in the Making of the Nation": 1-8, and Alan Bairner, "Football and the Idea of Scotland": 9-26.

[65] For a discussion of these topics, see Jeffrey Hill and Jack Williams, *Sport and Identity in the North of England* (Keele: Keele University Press, forthcoming 1996).

[66] See Moorhouse's essay in Holt, *Sport and the Working Class in Britain;* in a similar vein, Jeffrey Hill, "Reading the Stars: A Post-Modernist Approach to Sports History," *The Sports Historian,* 14 (May 1994): 45-55.

Implicit in this kind of project is the idea of text and audience. As Moorhouse tells us, the stars in their courses send complex signals; but how are those signals decoded? The point established by several post-structuralist critics' namely that a text, or ideology, has no inherent or authentic meaning, but derives its effects from the power relationships in which its meaning is contested, is relevant here. To take a couple of celebrated examples: is the symbolic "meaning" of a wrestling match or a cockfight inscribed in the spectacle itself (perhaps requiring a Roland Barthes or a Clifford Geertz to tease it out), or does the meaning vary according to the different cultural perspectives brought to the spectacle by the members of the audience? Many historians would no doubt answer in the latter (polysemic) vein, but it is, of course, very difficult when dealing with the past societies to be certain exactly how people responded to the cultural artifacts around them. Historians of the cinema, for example, have sought to register the ideological effects of particular films; in the case of Britain in the 1930s suggesting that the symbols of national unity purveyed in many films of the period contributed strongly to the maintenance of political stability.67 But this kind of analysis involves, in the last resort, the historian or the critic *ascribing* to the audience certain responses. We cannot, however, be sure that audiences actually took the meaning in the same way as the critic, especially when there is a temporal and cultural difference between them. So when, for example, historians of sport seek to account for the popularity of W.G. Grace, Babe Ruth, Stanley Matthews or Scottish footballing heroes by imputing qualities in them that were admired by their supporters, we rarely know whether these alleged meanings were received in that sense by the fans. Too often historians rely upon the mediations of press and other media reporters for their understanding of what the sporting audience felt. But there are many dangers in accepting at its face value the language of the sporting press. This has been made abundantly clear by one of America's foremost sports journalists, Leonard Koppett, who has demonstrated the unreliability of written accounts by pointing to quotations of players' reactions to games. Players, says Koppett, usually say what they assume *is expected* of them when being interviewed. The need to decode these utterances by placing them in their context of time, place and situation serves to remind us of the problematic nature of language as well as of the complexities of using newspaper accounts as historical sources.[68] So as Richard Holt concludes in his brilliant analysis of the "meaning" of the Scottish footballer Denis Law: "What most fans really thought of Denies we just don't know. All we know is something of what the press wanted them to think and even here the sample is far from complete."69

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67. See, for example, Jeffrey Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in Britain, 1930-39* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984).

68. These points taken from paper delivered by Leonard Koppett in the session "Sport Journalists: Historians and Historical Sources," North American Society for Sport History, 23rd Annual Convention, Long Beach, Calif., May 26-29, 1995.

69. Richard Holt, "King Across the Border: Denis Law and Scottish Football," in Jarvie and Walker, *op. cit., 58-74.*

This seems to me to be an area of cultural relations that sports historians might fruitfully investigate further. If the related issues of meaning and identity are to form a more prominent place in our work than has hitherto been the case, if we are to turn our attention more to matters of sport as ideology and symbol, there will need to be more attention to techniques of "reading" texts and understanding their reception. But many of the conventional features of our own historical craft will also provide mental equipment for the task. Over the years, sports history has followed labor history in shedding its early concern with leaders, institutions and personalities, adopting a "from below" approach to its subject matter. The attempt to reconstruct the experience of ordinary people in sport has in turn required the interrogation of new kinds of sources, including oral evidence, to uncover Holt's "submerged traditions and cultural identities." Oral history in particular has an important role to play in this, providing as it does access to all those people to whom the sports culture industry has been directed and yet who are still hidden from history. They are, in a sense, the "context" in which the "texts" of sport are situated. Their experience of sport-of what sport has meant to them in their lives-should form an important empirical addition to our continuing search for a "history from below." At the same time such an emphasis would steer sports history into some of the issues raised by the post-modernist epistemologies that have been fashioned outside our discipline, thereby ensuring that we maintain contact with theoretical initiatives that seem certain to be resonating throughout the humanities and social sciences in the decade to come. Instead of being Mason's "fans with typewriters," British sports historians would, in following this path, come to occupy a leading place in the development of their discipline.