
POPE, S.W. (ed.) *The New American Sport History; Recent Approaches and Perspectives*. Sport and Society Series. Urbana: University of Illinois press, 1997. Pp. xv, 423. Notes, index. \$19.95 pb., \$42.50 cb.

RIESS, STEVEN A. (ed.) *Major Problems in American Sport History: Documents and Essays*. Major Problems in American History Series. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997. Pp. xix, 437. Notes, illustrations. \$21.56 pb.

American sport history, as the editors of these two works proclaim, has taken on a new form over the past two decades. It has, through the work of a corps of capable and inquisitive sport historians, transformed itself from traditionally descriptive accounts of events and deeds of individuals or groups to meaningful analyses of broad social and cultural issues that affect or afflict humanity in a variety of ways. No longer are Babe Didrikson's, Joe Louis's, or Joe DiMaggio's heroic feats just awesome achievements in the athletic world; they have far greater importance for examining how America has dealt with its more thorny issues of gender, race, and ethnicity. In a similar vein, monolithic explanations that depict static relationships between sport and social class, urbanization, technology, or commercialism overlook the dynamic interactions between sport and these entities, which have had considerable impact on social, political, and economic developments in this country. Increasingly, recent sport history has become more attuned to the larger role sport has played in American society and how it has helped to shape ideas, values, behaviors, and mores of the American people.

Historically, sport, for both editors, not only shaped and instilled middle-class values, particularly in American youth, but it also reinforced those values as they moved into adulthood. To them, sport became a progenitor of self-discipline,

self-reliance, confidence, and dexterity-values that guided youth, chiefly males, through the turbulent period of adolescence and molded them into productive citizens. The influence of muscular Christianity, imported from England, coupled with antebellum health reform enabled Victorian Americans to use sport as a medium to connect physical attributes and morals. Sport, then, not only developed character but also preserved the body and soothed the soul. But sport also had another side. Gambling, violence, cheating, animal cruelty—all associated with sport—revealed a vile side of human nature. Commercialism, impact on local and regional economies, and venue for heroic forms are yet other aspects of sport. Those multiple meanings of American sport surface and reappear throughout the two anthologies.

Not so many years ago, social historians gave us the “New” Social History and urban historians created the “New” Urban History. Now Steve Pope brings us *The New American Sport History*. In his anthology, Pope sets out to construct a new paradigm for sport history in which he posits the theoretical basis of the discipline within the context of cultural studies. He proposes this paradigm in a provocative introduction to his text. Sport history, he reasons, is no longer a subdiscipline of social history. It has matured enough to stand alone. In conceptualizing the framework for this new sport history, Pope rejects modernization as popularized by Allen Guttman in *From Ritual to Record* and Melvin Adelman in *A Sporting Time* in favor of Stephen Hardy’s conception of “long residuals,” a continuous approach in which the present is attached to the past. Pope, then, builds this new paradigm on four pillars: national culture; gender and the body, class, race, and ethnicity; and markets and audiences. The seventeen essays written by fifteen scholars are stimulating, from Elliot Gorn’s opening piece, “Sports Through the Nineteenth Century,” to Ben Rader’s closing article, “The Quest for Self-Sufficiency and the New Strenuousness.” Though each essay does not match his new paradigm exactly, Pope reveals that Gorn’s second treatise, “The Meaning of Prizefighting,” “comes the closest to integrating the entire anthology’s fundamental concepts” (p. 13), for it captures the meanings of prizefighting for participants and fans as boxing climbed from a bachelor subculture preserve to a “manly” activity that reinforced middle-class values in a society searching for identity in a nation seeking recognition on the world stage.

The essays by Gorn, Adelman, Michael Oriard, and Mark Dyreson examine the role of sport in shaping American nationalism. Each one embraces white middle-class values—discipline, order, self-reliance, and physical prowess, among others—that an emerging nation needed for its own identity and self-confidence. Gorn provides an extensive overview of sporting developments during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, while Adelman and Oriard tie the emergence of baseball and football, respectively, to American nationalism. In “Regulating the Body and the Body Politic,” Dyreson investigates the impact of Progressive ideology on national identity. In dealing with bourgeois culture and republican doctrine preached by Progressive leaders, Dyreson takes us on an intellectual journey that transfers tenets of the athletic world, “fair play” for instance, to political and economic arenas. Control of the human body through

the dictates of sport made it feasible, at least in principle, to regulate the body politic. Gender issues are covered effectively by Nancy Struna, Steven Riess, Donald Mrozek, and Guttman, though one wonders why an essay by Patricia Vertinsky, Martha Verbrugge, or Susan Cahn was not included. This is particularly perplexing in view of Vertinsky's directive of placing "new emphasis" on examining women's involvement in sport from the standpoint of "women's culture rather than women's place" (p. 9). On class, race, and ethnicity, Gorn, Peter Levine, William Baker, Gerald Gems, and David Wiggins draw upon their research and knowledge to show the impact of sport on those topics. Pope's hegemonic leanings are most evident here, for he sees the acquisition and manipulation of power crucial for assessing the relationship of sport to racial, ethnic, and class conditions. This section, though, strengthens the text because it reveals the paucity of sport history literature on the working class. The concluding section on markets and audiences discerns how small groups of people can influence the masses through organization, promotion, publicity, and advertising. Hardy's work on "Entrepreneurs, Organizations, and the Sports Marketplace" develops a theoretical construct for sport as "game forms, services, and goods," which he applies to his own research, as does Pam Cooper in her analysis of the New York City Marathon.

Steve Riess, like Pope, considers sport history autonomous, no longer subsumed in social history. But while Pope takes a functionalist approach in which social, economic, political, and ideological forces involving sport are all related to one another, Riess endorses modernization and views sport as progress, emanating perhaps from his own excellent research on sport during the Progressive era. Sport, then, changes over time, supposedly improving conditions—human, societal, or otherwise—as it moves from its premodern to modern to postmodern forms.

Major Problems in American Sport History combines seventy-seven documents with thirty essays that cover broad issues dealing with social class, sporting cultures and subcultures, education, urbanization, commercialization and professionalization, gender issues, race and ethnicity, and heroes and culture. The one- to three-page document excerpts come from travel accounts, personal reminiscences, period newspapers and magazines, court records, legislative statutes and testimony, and other primary source materials. They include first-person and newspaper accounts of sporting events, newspaper and magazine editorials, opinions of noted sportswriters, statements and views of prominent leaders and politicians, and personal reminiscences of famous athletes. The reader is treated to vivid descriptions of cockfighting, horse racing, Indian lacrosse, rat baiting, and boxing. Horace Greeley's editorial on the decadence of pugilism and Grantland Rice's adulation of Sullivan, Ruth, Bobby Jones, and Helen Wills reveal, among other things, sport's changing perception in the press. The views of Walter Camp on sportsmanship, Richard Harding Davis on football ritual, and Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson on manliness lend credence to sport's increasing role in character formation. Senda Berenson's development of basketball rules for women and Oliver Wendell Holmes's justification of baseball's antitrust exemption unveil two controversial issues that continue to stimulate discussion.

Shoeless Joe Jackson's confession and former lightweight champion Ike Williams's testimony before Congress on the corruption of boxing reveal sport's darker side. The personal reflections of Billie Jean King, Cool Papa Bell, Jackie Robinson, and Muhammad Ali are riveting and enlightening.

The essays, selected to amplify issues raised in the documents, are the works of prominent scholars. Following three introductory essays on the nature of sport history by Gorn and Oriard, Guttman, and Hardy, the text follows a general chronological pattern with integrated topics from colonial America to the present day. In viewing sport as progress, Riess drew upon the works of Gorn, Adelman, and George Kirsch to show how it changed from an unscrupulous and degenerate activity to a refined, controlled, and useful practice. He relies on Gorn, Linda Borish, Roberta Park, Susan Cayleff, and Susan Cahn to examine gender roles, while racial issues are dealt with by Randy Roberts, Jules Tygiel, and Michael Oriard. Roberts's essay on the 1910 Jeffries-Johnson fight, Cayleff's work on Didrikson, and Oriard's analysis of Ali are excellent pieces for looking at race and gender, two major problems of American sport. Ron Smith and Robin Lester reveal the disparity between the idealism and behavior of two great football coaches, Walter Camp and Amos Alonzo Stagg. Hardy and Riess show the interrelationship of politics and urban development. Hardy demonstrates how park creators had one idea for the location and usage of public parks in Boston while the politicians and populace had another. Riess uncovered how the Tammany Machine controlled boxing, horse racing, and baseball in New York City. Their clout led to the adoption of policies that regulated these activities and determined the location of sporting facilities. Harold Seymour's essay on the formation of the National League and Michael Isenberg's piece on the Sullivan-Corbett fight reveal sport's commercial leanings toward professionalism and promotion, respectively. Timothy Breen and Nancy Struna provide insightful analyses of colonial sport.

The editor arranged the text's fourteen chapters into three, broad, overlapping sections: to the 1870s; the 1870s to the 1930s; and the 1930s to the present day. Each chapter contains four to nine documents followed by two essays (except for one chapter, which contains three) that address the chapter's theme; the chapters conclude with suggestions for further reading. Riess introduces the reader to the documents in each chapter with opening commentary, and then, after the documents appear, he comments on the essays. This format separates, rather than integrates, the essays and documents. Had the editor kept the comments on the documents and essays together, he would have fostered greater cohesion and strengthened the text.

The documents themselves are quite satisfactory, and the essays represent excellent scholarship. Few could quarrel with the choices of either, but the text's overall organization is questionable. The editor selected a chronological pattern with a number of topics incorporated into each time period; however, a topical structure with the chronology embedded would have enhanced clarity. Moreover, judicious organization could have reduced, if not eliminated, recurring themes and needless repetition. Why is it necessary to have two chapters apiece on race,

gender issues, and commercialism? Similarly, social class fittingly stands alone in a chapter, yet it cuts across various time periods in other chapters. Why not bring all the various aspects of social class together in one chapter? The same argument can be made for education.

In spite of its organizational shortcomings, Riess's text is a valuable contribution to sport history. Students need to examine primary documents to access history through eyewitness and contemporary accounts. The documents place a particular sporting concern, issue, or question before the reader, and the essays provide synthesis to those issues or problems.

Riess, a former editor for the *Journal of Sport History* and author of four books on sport history, and Pope, an emerging scholar with an attractive publication record, are assiduous researchers. That's why it was surprising to find that Riess mistakenly identified football as the third intercollegiate sport (p. 112) when it was the fourth, preceded by crew (1852), baseball (1859), and cricket (1864). Similarly, Pope incorrectly places Jimmy "The Greek" Snyder's offensive remarks about the breeding practices of slave owners (p. 17) five years before Al Campanis's infamous statement in 1987 about blacks not having the "necessities" to be managers or general managers, when in fact it occurred in 1988, nearly one year after the Campanis debacle.

Both Riess and Pope, with their new texts, have elevated the standing of sport history, and their works strengthen the autonomy of the discipline. *Major Problems in American Sport History*, one of the eighteen titles in the Major Problems in American History Series, confirms the discipline's independence from social history, while *The New American Sport History* moves sport history toward a credible theoretical construct. Historians and sport historians alike will find either text useful for undergraduate sport history courses or graduate seminars.

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