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KIDD, BRUCE. *The Struggle for Canadian Sport*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. Pp. 323. Photographs, notes, index. \$60.00 cb., \$18.95 pb.

This is a book about national-level control over Canadian sport, on par with the academic quality of Gruneau and Whitson's *Hockey Night in Canada* and Howell's *Northern Sandlots: The Struggle for Canadian Sport*. Through a selected series of analyses, Bruce Kidd examines the emergence of sport in Canada. The book consists of eight chapters including an introduction that establishes Kidd's views on sport, some significant historical markers, and a brief interpretation of some of the work that has been done in the sociocultural study of Canadian sport. Groundwork for the rest of the book is provided in the chapter titled "The State of Play," in which Kidd provides an overview of some of the issues significant to the emergence of sport in Canada. In this section, the reader is immediately aware of Kidd's methodology, or organizing interpretive framework, which is employed in the interrogation of data throughout the rest of his work. Selected points of analysis include: "The Making of Men," a discussion of the battle between proponents of amateurism and professional sport; "Girls' Sports Run by Girls," a chapter examining issues related to the controlled emergence of women's sport; "Worker's Sport, Worker's Culture," his best chapter, which analyzes worker's sport in Canada, an area of historical significance previously ignored in

the literature; “Brand-Name Hockey,” a documentation of the triumph of capitalism and the NHL over Canadian hockey; “Capturing the State,” an overview of state initiatives in Canadian sport; and in conclusion, “The Triumph of Capitalist Sport,” a brief argument lamenting the dominance of commercial sport culture in Canada. Kidd’s book provides valuable insights into these areas of struggle.

However, contrary to what the book’s title might lead the reader to expect, the areas of struggle to emerge out of the analyses are mainly situated in central Canada. This is not a book about regional concerns and local identities. There is fair mention of the western provinces, but the Maritimes do not factor significantly in the material. While it does delve into issues about race, class, and gender, these kinds of issues are woven subtly throughout the text rather than treated as distinct categories of analysis. Mention of native sport and the historically institutionalized racism of Canadian sport is conspicuously absent.

The strength of the book rests in its conscientiously applied interpretive framework Kidd utilizes a cultural studies approach to explore the relationships between individual and society, structure and action, as groups and individuals battled for the control of sport in Canada. Unlike Gruneau and Whitson’s book, the arguments raised are not explicitly based in theory, While Kidd’s use of social theory is certainly implicitly applied, it is never far removed from the substantive material. Indeed, this is one of the few books documenting Canadian sport history that effectively utilizes social theory to interrogate empirical evidence. However, some of the applications of Gramsci’s notion of hegemony are only loosely invoked. Like other work in the history and sociology of sport, Kidd oscillates between a Gramscian application of hegemony—which is closely tied to political economy, dominant fundamental groups in specific historic blocs, and the place of sport within broader dominant ideologies and emergent cultural forms—and the use of a dictionary definition that equates hegemony with the leadership of individuals and groups over others in sport on a microlevel. Kidd’s overall understanding and synthesis of sport within extant relations of power, however, is never in question.

The main point of the book, and a valuable lesson in Canadian sport history, is that there are alternatives to conventional understandings of sport and history and that stories of resistance to dominant actions and ideologies are every bit as vibrant as traditional accounts preoccupied solely with the historical “winners.” This becomes particularly evident in the chapter on worker’s sport, through which the alternative visions of the worker’s sports associations, critical of “ruling class” sport, are examined in detail. Although he may be criticized for some points in the book, such as his somewhat nostalgic views on the amateur ideal, Kidd is very successful in delivering his historical messages, in part because of his meticulous research, sourcework, and careful writing. Kidd’s *The Struggle for Canadian Sport* is a book that will be valuable to both general readership and to students in history, methods, or Canadian studies courses.

—Kevin B. Wamsley  
*University of Calgary*