

occasionally contradict his data. If, however, one wants to understand diehard fan resentment to national expansion and corporate footy, Nadel provides the bellwether.

This book encapsulates the oft-simultaneous strengths and weaknesses in the writing of Australian sports history. To date, the bulk of the published work has concentrated on Melbourne and Sydney, and has focused on the major male team sports or the Olympics; while often well documented, the studies are frequently nostalgic in tone. Certainly Nadel is guilty of the latter in this volume. While this book offers little insight that is new for the Australian sport history scholar familiar with the history of Australian football, it does provide the best introductory history of the rise of Australian football as a mass spectator sport, central to the cultural life of hundreds of thousands of Victorians. It should be essential reading for anyone beginning to examine the history of sport in Australia.

—JOHN NAURIGHT
University of Queensland

ADAIR, DARYL, AND WRAY VAMPLEW. *Sport in Australian History*. Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. xiv + 169. Notes, index. \$29.95 pb.

Sport in Australian History addresses the global view—fact or fiction, stereotype or truthful portrayal—that Australians are obsessed with sport and that playing and watching sport are national pastimes. Chapter 1 (“Sporting Belief, Historical Record”) opens with a wonderfully graphic quote from a 1989 issue of the *Bulletin*:

The image of the bronzed Aussie may be a myth. But there is nothing fictitious about the importance of sport as a way of life in Australia: it promotes health as well as competitive spirit. We must stop short of obsessed, but sport is as available to all Australians—and as necessary—as meat pies, kangaroos and Holden cars (1).

Adair and Vamplew adeptly portray the rich tapestry of the interdependence of culture, sport, and society. Their eight chapters do a nice job of spotlighting key elements in the athletic mosaic.

Chapter one examines the theme of historical record, and is especially effective in debunking the many myths and fallacies that have all too frequently obscured the real picture of Australian sport. For example, the authors mention that the *Sports Illustrated* claim that Australia was one of the leading sporting nations in the world was based on the sensational Australian performances at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics and on a retinue of stellar Davis Cup performers. “If the same survey had been conducted in 1976, it would have shown that Australians did not win any gold medals at the Montreal Olympics and that tennis players from the United States and Sweden were dominating major tournament” (13).

Chapter two is entitled “The Sports Industry,” and again the authors are to be congratulated on their analysis and critical focus. They note that rugby league players among “the best in Australia” (32), were paid less than \$70,000 in 1994. Adair and Vamplew also explore the notion of union solidarity and its effectiveness “down under.” They point out that up to the beginning of 1995, there had been 27 attempts to form unions to protect Australian sports persons—only five survive!

Subsequent chapters include “Political Football,” “Sporting Women,” “Groups on the Margins: Minority Experiences in Sport,” “Stretching the Limits: Sports Performance,” “Not ‘Playing the Game’: Problems in Sport,” and “State of Play.” The chapter on gender is Adair and Vamplew at their sparkling best. They arguably beat out Richard Cashman’s chapter “Gender” in his *Paradise of Sport* (1995)—and the Cashman chapter was a first-class narrative. They vehemently disagree with Sydney radio commentator Alan Jones, a former Australian rugby coach, who supports earning differentials among leading athletes. The Jones thesis is that Tom Jones and Liza Minnelli do the same thing as entertainers—that is, sing—so they should be paid the same. However, while Boris Becker and Steffi Graf do the same thing—play tennis—they perform at different levels of athleticism; thus Becker should be paid more. Adair and Vamplew say Jones is wrong, and that the key element is not “performance” but “entertainment”. Their plea is for “theoretical models by which to assess the entertainment value of various sporting events and their participants” (59).

While the material on gender is thought provoking and wonderfully eclectic, the subchapter on “Aborigines” is disappointing. I remain convinced that the Maori athlete in New Zealand and the Native American athlete remain virtually unexplored terrain in terms of sociocultural examination. Within the Australian context, Colin Tatz’s work on Aborigines, however, solidly paves the way for future sport historians. Adair and Vamplew attempt to cover Aborigine sport in six and a half pages. Their treatment, perhaps made necessary by compressing the whole picture of Australian sport to less than 150 pages of text, becomes a lightly sketched overview rather than a substantial or profound analysis. They conclude questioning “if Aborigines are truly our brother and sister Australians” (70). I studied and visited Australia—true, for only for a short period—but my perception was of a major racial divide and of white Australian attitudes towards Aborigines that closely parallels the views of white Mississippi society toward African Americans during the civil rights turmoil of the 1960s. Two content concerns also emerge after a reading of *Sport in Australian History*. The theme of the folk hero or icon, or indeed the physiological/psychological superstar, is underdeveloped. Although the book’s discussion of Herb Elliot and Dawn Fraser is inconsequential (92), they arguably were the greatest runner and swimmer, respectively, of all time. Second, there is little sense of regional and geographical differences within Australia. Readers of the *Journal of Sport History* should look at Jaggard and Ryan’s *Perspectives on Sport and Society: Studies in Western Australian History* (1997), particularly Cheryl Kickett-Turner’s essay on “Urban Nyoongar Children’s Sense of Self in Sport.”

The authors note in their introduction that they hope their volume “will both guide and inspire a new generation of students of Australian sport” (xiv). Wray Vamplew’s vision and energy led to the founding of De Montfort International Centre for Sports History and Culture, an institution that supported the publication of *Sport in Australian History*. Both authors can rest easy. Their work is both a celebration and an insightful criticism of Australian society.

—SCOTT A.G.M. CRAWFORD
Eastern Illinois University