

self-defense as a key mechanism in the prevention of rape and other physical assaults, for it shatters the stereotype of “male invulnerability and female helplessness” (177). McCaughey also convincingly dispels the myths that self-defense classes lead to a false sense of security among graduates. It is from here that McCaughey takes the reader through a number of self-defense classes from full-on body contact and martial arts to weapons such as guns.

While this book may not be worthwhile for most sport historians, it is certainly a valuable insight into the physical control and regulation of women’s bodies. Certainly, it is a useful text for those in feminist or women’s studies and for those interested in issues surrounding the body and self-defense.

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GEMS, GERALD R. *For Pride, Profit, and Patriarchy: Football and the Incorporation of American Cultural Values*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2000. Pp. ii + 224. Notes, bibliography, index. \$35.00 cb.

During the last half century, football has emerged as America’s most popular team sport. The National Football League has established a professional league in Europe, and its Super Bowl broadcasts are seen by hundreds of millions of fans worldwide. Select college teams play games periodically in Mexico, Japan, and the British Isles. Despite its growing popularity, relatively little attention has been focused on the cultural and ideological impact of American football. Many scholars have carefully examined the cultural significance of baseball, but football remains largely overlooked. Gerald R. Gems provides a service to sport historians and those interested in popular culture by filling this void.

In his first chapter, “For Victory and Profit,” Gems gives an overview of the development of American football up to 1900. Building on the work of scholars such as Ronald A. Smith, Michael Oriard, Robin Lester and others, Gems incorporates important new research, mainly from university archives, to provide a succinct and riveting introduction to American football. As is the case throughout the book, Gems uses his extensive research most impressively and skillfully. He links early football with manliness, *laissez-faire* capitalism, and nationalism as well as militarism. Gems pulls no punches in describing the brutality of the early game, the rampant commercialism which enveloped it, and the dishonesty and hypocrisy of coaches and benefactors at the increasing number of colleges which fielded teams. Throughout the book Gems tends to be nonjudgmental in his analysis. He might have pointed out more forcefully the contradiction of many coaches and football promoters preaching amateurism and manly Christian values while on the other hand subsidizing players and conducting illegal recruitment.

In dealing with gender, Gems makes it clear that football was and largely remains a man’s game. Many late nineteenth century American males feared effeminate trends in society and found football to be a powerful antidote. “Football more so than any other game,” Gems maintains, “marginalized women, restricting them to spectatorial roles in the symbolic maintenance of gender relations” (51). While football turned its back on

females except in subordinate roles, it took up the challenge of producing male leaders and was closely associated with things military. Gems analyzes these associations from the era of Social Darwinism through World War II. Although he is correct that football has been closely linked with leadership and the military starting in the late nineteenth century, it was not until World War I that the armed services embraced the sport. Even then the main reason the services were interested in sport generally and football in particular was to fill the idle hours of troops (who had embarrassed the army during the 1916 Mexico Expedition) in training camps at home and abroad. The idea that football players or other athletes make better leaders and/or soldiers dates back at least to the Duke of Wellington in the early nineteenth century. Gems cites a number of U.S. generals who predictably make that connection, but it might have been more productive to have focused more carefully on how and why the close relationship between football and the military evolved, and if there is any evidence that football players really do make better soldiers than non-athletes.

Gems maintains that football was also important in helping to bring certain religious, ethnic, and minority groups into the mainstream of American life. He provides impressive evidence indicating that Jews, Catholics, African Americans, and Native Americans, to name a few groups, were more readily welcomed on the gridiron than in the larger society. Some groups like African Americans and Native Americans found integration slow, uneven, and painful to their pride. Almost all immigrant groups—except Asians, who provided only a handful of college and professional players—became quickly involved in football.

In a chapter entitled “Gridiron Wars,” Gems deftly shows how football spread rapidly from its elite origins in the Northeast to all regions of the country by the early twentieth century. Although the East (through the print media) claimed dominance of the sport into the 1930s, Gems argues that the Midwest followed by the South and West quickly gained parity or surpassed the East in football excellence in the opening decades of the twentieth century. In the process, football helped shape national values.

For Pride, Profit, and Patriarchy is a pioneering study which places football within the larger framework of American culture. Scholars may disagree with some of Gems’ conclusions concerning football and American culture, but the book will serve as a starting point for further discourse.

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