

CHARROIN, PASCAL AND TERRET, THIERRY. *Une Histoire du Water-Polo: L'eau et la balle*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998. Pp. 248. Notes, appendix. EUR 22.07 pb.

This book traces the history of water polo since the nineteenth century, focussing on the institutional and technical dimensions of the sport in France—changes in rules, techniques, tactics, competitions, training, and organizational structures—and placing these changes in an international context that illuminates both the particulars of the French experience and the external forces that shaped the sport in France. Charroin and Terret argue that despite its promising beginnings as an exciting mixture of swimming and soccer in the aquatic galas of the Belle Époque and its early inclusion in the Olympic Games, water polo has failed to establish itself as a popular sport in France. The reasons for this failure include the lack of outdoor French pools that could be used for water polo in the sport's early decades; the unpleasant, humid conditions of more recently constructed indoor facilities; the perception after World War II among swimming coaches that water polo was bad for a swimmer's stroke; the violent, foul-plagued nature of the sport, which discouraged television coverage and until recently disqualified water polo as a sport for children; and the generally poor results of the national team in major competitions.

The authors also argue, less convincingly, that water polo in France has long suffered from a "cultural" disadvantage, an "identity" problem: first viewed as aquatic soccer or rugby, and later as aquatic basketball or handball, the sport has only in recent decades established its own distinct "legitimacy." Why such perceptions would delegitimize the sport in the eyes of potential fans or players is unclear; after all, many if not most sports—including very popular ones—begin as hybrids of, or borrow from, other sports. Terret and Charroin also curiously suggest that water-polo has been unable to overcome widely shared prejudices against recourse to strength (*la force*) and cleverness (*la ruse*) in contemporary French society (231). What, one wonders, do they make of the enduring popularity in France of soccer and rugby, which (like most sports) reward both force and cleverness? Such arguments reflect the book's major flaws: careless hypothesizing and an uncritical, limited approach to "cultural" history.

Charroin and Terret focus almost exclusively on the internal "culture" of French water polo, and generally neglect the links between water polo and French society. They provide little historical context that might ground the development of the sport within broader French political, social, and cultural trends: for example, the authors fail to relate the continuing problem of violence in the sport to shifting attitudes in French society towards appropriate social and competitive conduct. How did a sport perceived as violent and "physical" figure in debates about national regeneration and the construction of a new, more "virile" masculinity in Belle Époque and interwar France? And to what extent did social class color perceptions of "excessive" or "acceptable" brutality?

Indeed, the extent to which notions of class have informed French perceptions is largely ignored. The authors note that before World War I water polo players were praised as "complete athletes," but they fail to understand that such a formulation was usually intended at that time—in water polo as in other sports—to exalt the middle- and upper-

class amateur “sportsman” at the expense of the overly specialized and therefore “incomplete” lower-class professional or semi-professional athlete. And while the authors offer a brief, tantalizing examination of how water polo came to represent national identity in Hungary, they offer no corresponding examination of the discursive and iconographic treatment of water polo players in France. Surely a cultural history of the sport, emphasizing attitudes (*mentalités*), representations, and the construction of identity should address such issues in depth.

Similarly, the authors’ brief treatment of women’s water polo suffers from an inadequate conceptualization of gender. They ask whether women’s water polo, because its players do not seek to imitate their male counterparts, will develop as a “real” female sport (176). What exactly is a “real” female sport? Presumably, one in which women remain “feminine,” that is, distinct from men. But who defines “feminine” and to what ends! The authors uncritically accept such categories as “masculine” and “feminine” as neutral and self-evident, rather than as social constructions designed to maintain or challenge a gendered social order.

Charroin and Terret convincingly argue that French water polo has been a relatively insignificant sport with few fans and players, and even fewer galvanizing moments of national triumph. With that in mind and although this book raises a number of interesting questions and provides a useful technical and institutional history of the sport in France, their failure to connect that specific history to broader trends, issues, and concerns in twentieth-century France will likely limit their audience.

—CHRISTOPHER S. THOMPSON  
*Ball State University*

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FITZPATRICK, FRANK. *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Basketball Game That Changed American Sports*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000. Pp. 264. \$14.95.

Only a few basketball games in college history have captured a place in the collective memory of the past fifty years and almost all have involved some coach’s landmark victory—Dean Smith finally captures a tide, Indiana goes 31-0 under Bobby Knight, Jim Valvano’s Wolfpack upsets Phi Slamma Jamma, Wooden captures his   th (fill in the blank) tide. A few are remembered for the players—Magic versus Bird, Jerry Lucas and OSU top Cal, David Thompson and Tommy Burleson lead NC State. Almost none, however, are known for players that few people can actually name, and the 1966 NCAA title game was such a contest. The two coaches were both elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame, but only one, Adolph Rupp of Kentucky, was seen that way then. His coaching counterpart, Don Haskins, was just 36 and beginning his coaching career, though the victory for his Texas Western squad would constitute his only trip to the Final Four, let alone another NCAA title.

This game was forever immortalized when the Texas Western five took the floor—five players of African American descent starting for one team for the first time ever in an NCAA title game. Today this hardly draws a second glance, but in 1966, just three years after Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech and two after the 1964 Civil Rights