
MILLER, PATRICK B., ED. *The Sporting World of the Modern South*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. Pp. x+355. Notes, photos, index. \$49.95 cb., \$19.95 pb.

Patrick Miller has compiled a collection of essays that examines sport within the context of modern Southern history from a variety of perspectives, utilizing a wide range of methodologies. From a close examination of archival and manuscript sources to oral history, ethnography, and symbolic anthropology, these essays explore the legend surrounding football and NASCAR and interprets the diverse ways sport reflected and constructed the social, cultural, and political history of the region. A fundamental underpinning of these readings is the ways sport summoned traditional declarations of Southern honor, ignited the ideal of an antebellum past, and reinforced the hierarchies of racial and gender privilege and subordination. Concurrently, they illustrate how athletics in the post-Civil War era adopted the regulations and standardization of modern sports, like baseball and football, and how these institutions exemplified the "New South Creed."

The essays are divided into three sections. Section one explores the transition of Southern sport from its isolated episodes of local and region competition to participation in team sports and national pastimes. Athletic promoters and entrepreneurs in college and professional sport offered a plethora of meanings for "modernity," as they confronted changing class, gender, and race relations in the postbellum South. Robert Gudmestad's examination of professional baseball in Richmond highlights the interweaving of the Lost Cause and New South imagery in the evolution of a postbellum sporting endeavor. Gudmestad argues that baseball in Richmond was compatible with the modern notion of war that began to emerge simultaneously with the Lost Cause. Club officials used the sport to promote the culture of the Confederacy, while the team became a visible reminder of the recent conflict. Concurrently, club owners embodied many values of the New South and of the nation's growing middle class. They exemplified the modern values of uniformity, standard business practices, and the need to integrate the team into a national system.

Section two deals with race relations and Southern sport, and focuses on African-American culture expressed within the athletic programs of Historically Black Colleges, and sport desegregation in the South during the Civil Rights movement. A significant feature of the evolution of sport during segregation era was the utilization of athletics in the cause of racial reform. Rita Liberti, in her excellent article on Bennett College, states that a high caliber of play was matched by the pride and intensity of athletes who competed for the school from 1928 to 1942. Black women who enrolled as students and athletes in colleges and universities during this period challenged and accommodated to the boundaries of class, race, and gender arrangements in their community. Generally speaking, women's collegiate athletic experiences were viewed favorably in the black community, but their participation in sport was not promoted with the same intensity or enthusiasm. Ambivalence by some members in the black community regarding female athleticism reflected restricted notions of gender and an uneasiness surrounding women's involvement in sport. However, as Liberti points out, opposition to female participation in sport was by no means monolithic in the black community, because the lived experiences of women necessitated and exposed a wider range of attitudes.

The final section examines the myths, symbols, and stereotypes in Southern sport, and the ways heroes and traditional notions of manly honor continue to shape a distinctive regional identity. Moreover, these notions have also been reconciled to images of modernity. Andrew Doyle's assessment of Alabama head football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant links the Civil Rights struggle to the gridiron of the traditionally white colleges and universities in the South. Bryant and his players exemplified a reconciliation of the optimism and the misgivings white Southerners held regarding the social changes associated with the "Bulldozer Revolution." Although he maintained a cautious silence on the volatile race issue, this did not prevent many of his fans from regarding the success of his all white teams as symbolic of the viability of white supremacy. Like other aspects of Southern life, football was viewed through the lens of racial politics. A racial moderate, Bryant quietly allied himself with businessmen working for a peaceful end to legal segregation. Yet Doyle ponders the effect Bryant may have had on race relations and the larger history of the South if he had used his prestige to advance the cause of desegregation.

These essays adds to our understanding regarding the ways sport reflected and shaped the societal, cultural, and political history of the modern South. An assessment of the impact professional team sports had upon the process of desegregating the modern South would have made the book more compelling. To be sure, more research is needed regarding this phenomenon. By the 1960s, however, professional football, baseball, and basketball began making inroads into the South. Football became the first major league to expand in the South with the rise of the American Football League in 1960. By the mid 1960s, major league baseball relocated the Milwaukee Braves to Atlanta, and the National Football League expanded into Atlanta and New Orleans. The American Basketball Association was, for the most part, a Southern league with franchises in Miami, Charlotte, New Orleans, and Lexington. Expansion resulted in Southern politicians and businessmen coming to grips with Jim Crow segregation, if they wanted their city to be considered in the next round of expansion. What impact did expansion have on the desegregation process? Clearly the response to desegregation was not a monolithic one. More impor-

tant, the question remains unanswered regarding the impact professional and college sport had upon the desegregation process.

Despite this minor critique, *The Sporting World of the Modern South* adds significantly to our understanding of sport and the Southern experience. It is thoroughly enjoyable and interesting book to read. The book would be a welcome addition to any class examining Southern history.

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