
CASHMAN, RICHARD, JOHN O'HARA, AND ANDREW HONEY, EDs. *Sport, Federation, Nation*. Sydney: Walla Walla Press in conjunction with the Centre for Olympic Studies, The University of New South Wales, 2001. Pp. viii+216. Notes, bibliography, illustrations, tables, commentary. \$22.00.

Sport, Federation, Nation is a compilation of nine chapters that explore the relationship between sport, the coming of Federation, and the creation of the Australian nation between 1880 and 1930. Although there is a substantial body of literature on Australian sport during this era, this book examines the connections between sport and Federation in Australia, over a period of fifty years. A pioneering work, it provides a new perspective from which to examine the development of Australian sport in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In *Sport, Federation, Nation* the authors raise a number of concerns regarding the treatment of Federation within existing source material. On the one hand, they note a hegemonic discourse within the historical literature that dismisses Federation as a "bad deal" for the nation and treats ideas about nationalism with suspicion. On the other hand, they note how sport historians have avoided the topic of Federation in their research, assuming it is one and the same as the idea of nation. While the authors may be correct in their assessment of the literature, their attempt to distinguish between Federation and nation remains a problematic issue because they do not discuss in any significant way the fundamental differences between them nor do they provide a rationale for the time frame selected for this study. These oversights, which are apparent in several papers, weaken the text where the linkages between sport, Federation, and nation are tenuous and debatable.

One of the chief merits of this book is in its structure. It is organized by themes into three sections, each with a brief introduction and a final commentary, a valuable feature that provides an excellent brief summary of the main points forwarded by each paper. The commentaries also call attention to specific areas that need further thought or elaboration and provide academicians with a good starting point for exploring new lines of research. The first section investigates how Federation made an impact directly upon Australian sport through government policies on physical education, immigration, and Aborigine assimilation. The second section examines the relationship between Federation and the emergence of national sport organizations, as well as the role and significance of Australasian teams to Australian sport. The origins of Australian surf lifesaving and the connections between women, first wave feminism, and Australian sport are explored in the third section. Aside from some minor editorial mistakes, the papers are generally well written and provocative. The authors make good use of public primary source documents such as newspapers, journals, government legislation, and minutes of meetings. Perhaps not surprisingly, issues related to Aborigines and women need to be further explored and referenced using a wider variety of sources, including oral histories, private letters, correspondence, and journals. In the end, the authors do not make any definitive statements about the connections between sport, Federation, and nation except to say that further research is necessary.

Even while recognizing its theoretical limitations, this book should make a significant contribution for the way it challenges long-held assumptions about the origins of Australian sport that have been produced and reproduced in the sport literature. For example, Sean Brawley's research on the Royal Life Saving Society poses a significant challenge to historical claims that Australian surf lifesaving is an indigenous sport and to Doug Booth's well-established thesis that Australian surf lifesaving was a competitive sport form, not a humanitarian cause. This book also challenges Australian sport historians to think more broadly about the social, political, and economic arrangements in which sport operated and to look beyond the Australian border for factors that might have shaped Australian sport at the turn of the twentieth century. The papers in section two, which examine the role of Australasian sport teams to Australian sport, demonstrate how Australian sport authorities relied on British imperial sporting alliances, especially with New Zealand, to achieve sporting success at major national, international, and Olympic Games.

Sport, Federation, Nation is written for an academic audience interested in extending the debate on Australian sport history. The manner in which it is written, like a "work in progress," also makes it a fine addition to graduate classes in sport history in which historiographical issues are discussed.

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