
TOOHEY, KRISTINE, AND A.J. VEAL. *The Olympic Games: A Social Science Perspective*. Wallingford, U.K.: CABI Publishing, 2000. Pp. ix+276. Illustrations, tables, figures, appendix and index. \$70.00 cb.

The Olympic Games is based on "an undergraduate and graduate course on the Olympic Games [that the authors taught] in the School of Leisure and Tourism Studies at the University of Technology in Sydney. . . . There is no recent publication which seeks to provide a broad, independent, multi-disciplinary account of and perspective on this unique phenomenon. . . . What we aim to do . . . is to provide an overview and introduction to the various ways in which the [g]ames interact with changing social and cultural environments and to raise issues and provide pointers to further study" (p. ix). Their work is a credible effort to meet those goals.

The book has an introductory chapter to set the stage and give an overview of the goal of the succeeding chapters. Those chapters deal with 1) the ancient Olympic games; 2) the revival of the Olympic games; 3) the modern Olympic phenomenon; 4) politics, nationalism and the Olympic movement; 5) the economics and financing of the games; 6) the Olympics and the mass media; 7) drugs in the Olympics; 8) women and the Olympic games; 9) case studies; and 10) the future of the Olympic games. While not claiming to be all-inclusive, it covers a substantial range of areas, more than adequate to meet its stated purpose.

The first two full chapters give historical overviews of the ancient and modern games, focusing more on social history and sociology. They are on the whole accurate, with occasional minor errors (that the modern long jump record is two-thirds of fifty-six feet, which

adds about eight feet to that record). Good discussions show the influence of myth and false history on both the ancient and modern games, as well as contrasts between the theory and reality of the games (such as the political influences and the clash between amateur ideals and professionalism). The chapter on the modern games provides a good overview of the precursors to the 1896 revival while demonstrating that many of today's problems were already present a century ago.

The chapter on drugs has a serious (and popular) inaccuracy, the charge that the Soviet Union initiated the use of steroids in the 1950s with strength athletes (p. 143). In fact, the coach of the United States weight-lifting team admitted that his athletes were using steroids during that era, and that it was his athletes who introduced the use of steroids to the Soviet lifters.

The increasing use of website citations raises questions of verification for scholars, as none of those citations gives more detailed sourcing, such as an author or document. Instead, only a website with a posted item title is provided, leaving us to wonder if the citation is fact, slanted fact, misinterpretation, or fiction. This is not meant to question the authors' veracity; instead, it is a question that all researchers need to address.

Discussions of the limited television coverage of women athletes at the games (p. 168) may be misleading, as it is based primarily on Australian data. In the United States the NBC network focused far more coverage on women in 2000, though not for reasons of fairness. Instead, they want to gain the large audience of women who are not interested in sports. NBC argues that sports fans will watch anyway, so the network is not concerned with them. This agrees with the authors' contention that "increased media coverage does not necessarily mean equality. . . . [It] can trivialize, marginalize and at times demean females" (p. 169).

There are some careless editing problems, but those are equally the fault of the publisher. Commas sometimes seem to be randomly dropped here and there into a sentence. Some tables are carelessly edited, such as Table 9.2 (p. 163) showing women's participation at the Winter Olympic Games, which in 1998 apparently had 80 males, 7 females and an unnoted 2,913 athletes of indeterminate sex, for a total of 3,000 athletes. Furthermore, 80 males and 7 females apparently completed the 2002 Winter Games by 2000.

Notwithstanding those quibbles, this text would serve well as the primary text for an undergraduate course or as a lead text for a graduate course dealing with the broad issue of the Olympic Games and its place in and impact on the modern world.

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