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FRANKS, JOEL. *Hawaiian Sports in the Twentieth Century*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002. Pp. ix+222. \$109.95 cb.

Joel Franks attempts to chart the history of major sports in Hawaii and their influence on American culture. His thesis is that sports in Hawaii represent a distinctive local culture that has been created by its history as a sovereign kingdom overthrown by the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, as a state 2,500 miles from the mainland, and as the most racially diverse population in the union. All of these factors have combined to produce a "local culture of in-betweenness and transcendence" (p. 3). Hawaii exists between Asia and the United States, and it has had to transcend the potentially debilitating effects of its history as a melting pot of ethnic groups brought to the Islands as plantation workers. Franks focuses on the roles of the Asian groups who worked on the plantations and then left to pursue better lives and on the indigenous Polynesians in creating the particular blend of an Asian-Pacific sports culture.

To demonstrate the specific qualities of Hawaiian sports, Franks concentrates on three local athletes--Wally Yonamine, Herman Wedemeyer, and Duke Kahanamoku--who became famous outside of Hawaii and were lauded as its ideal representatives because of their racial diversity and winning personalities. Wally Yonamine is a quint-essential Hawaiian hero whose life story involves his Asian parentage, his boyhood on a Maui sugar plantation, his playing baseball and football on the grassroots level, success as a local high school and semi-pro star in the two sports, a season with the San Francisco Forty-Niners, his experience in the American minor leagues, and finally a forty-year career in Japanese professional baseball as a player, coach, manager, executive, and Hall of Fame member, which earned for him a special lifetime award from the Japanese government.

"Squirmin" Herman Wedemeyer enjoyed an equally celebrated status as local hero, who achieved his greatest impact as the "hula-hipped" running back for little St. Mary's College in Moraga, California, during the war years. He was a hero for the times, providing electrifying runs which charmed audiences hungry for heroic deeds. In 1945, he led his team to the Sugar Bowl where they were defeated by a superior Oklahoma A&M team. As a result of his heroics, Wedemeyer was a consensus All-American and finished fourth in the Heisman balloting. He later played minor league baseball with

Yonamine but did not have the stellar professional career in football or baseball that his friend did. Instead, he achieved celebrity status by appearing on the popular television program *Hawaii 5-0* as Officer Duke, a character loosely based on the legendary swimmer and surfer Duke Kahanamoku.

Franks traces Kahanamoku's great career as an Olympic swimmer and water polo player spanning three Olympiads, 1912, 1920, 1924, and as an ambassador of surfing and goodwill. Franks makes some astute comments about Duke's overall image and the problems attendant upon his being the Hawaiian white people wanted to see and cultivate. But these observations are made in passing and should have been developed further to add depth to his analysis of Kahanamoku and the concept of the local culture hero.

The major problem with the book is Franks's attempt to describe the development of Hawaiian sports and their influence on American culture within the context of the overarching concept of local culture and *aloha*. As he describes it, the Hawaiian local sports culture consists of individuals with multi-racial lineages interacting with other multi-racial players to overcome their differences in ways not practiced on the mainland. The Hawaiian spirit of transcendence creates an ethos of *aloha* which invests Hawaiian sports with the power to transform the meaner aspects of American competitive sport.

In an attempt to bolster his thesis, Franks provides an encyclopedic history of major high school, college, and professional sports and athletes in Hawaii. In this context, his book proves to be a useful companion text to Dan Cisco's *Hawaii Sports: History, Facts, and Statistics* (1999), which he cites frequently. Nevertheless, although Franks provides excellent capsule summaries of Hawaiian sports milestones and athletic achievements, as well as bibliographic references that will serve any scholar interested in this field, this portion of the book is somewhat tedious because it does not support his thesis. The umbrella term of "Hawaiian" which he uses to describe the athletes becomes confusing as the meaning alternates between an indigenous Polynesian, a resident of Hawaii or, finally, merely someone who played sports at the University of Hawaii. Overall, Franks provides a service to Hawaiian sports history by taking it seriously and demonstrating its strengths, but his thesis about its special status is impossible to prove because the concepts are amorphous and cannot be used to characterize an entire sports history.

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