

Sport History In Academe: 1930 To The Present

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Previous reviewers of the status of Sport History in North America have identified two major streams, one through History and the other through Physical Education. They have referred to such weaknesses as “its Janus-like status” and “paucity of research” (Adelman in 1973); its “perilous situation” (Metcalf in 1974); and its “full measure of confusion” (Rader in 1979). A neglected stream of influence has been the prestigious contributions through Classics, epitomized by Gardiner’s *Athletics of the Ancient World*, published in 1930, and continued to date. Also, the briefer contributions of various social historians, such as Fumas or Lower, have received insufficient attention, as have the increasing contributions of personnel from other disciplines such as Anthropology, Philosophy and Sociology. Even the brief “asides” about sport in the contemporary bestsellers of Toffler or Lasch may be more significant to posterity than other more specific sport texts. It is time, in fact, for a comprehensive international review of the status of Sport History in *Academe*. to update previous overviews.

There has been significant progress in Sport History in recent years, not only in North America, but in other countries as well. (For example, there is a long and respected German tradition of research into the history of sport, which is still producing some of the best publications in the area). This progress can be seen in the number of more committed and gratified adherents; the number of Sport History Associations and Conferences with their forums for debate, and published *Proceedings*; and especially in the increasing amount of quality literature. The future will probably see more Departments of Sport Studies (or Sports Science); more specialization in such areas as Sport and Art, Sport and Politics, or Sport and Religion; and more Anthropologists, Historians, Philosophers and Sociologists researching sport. Some planning, but not a rigid structure, and co-operation will be essential in the future between all parties engaged in the study of Sport History in *Academe*. if it is to move from its present status of “late adolescence” towards maturity. The “confusion” already referred to also contains much useful energy, enthusiasm, and expertise. But what will be needed most of all - between individuals and between Associations or Institutions - is mutual respect and tolerance . . . such as existed between Professor of Classics E.N. Gardiner and Physical Educator R. Tait McKenzie.