

Postage Stamps: A Teaching Device for the Sport Historian

HOWARD STIDWILL

Cornwall, Ontario

The purpose of this presentation is to demonstrate the particular effectiveness of stamps as a teaching device for the instruction of sport history. The choice of this particular method is based upon the recognition that stamps, like coins and photographs, provide an ideal source of historical information and that the careful annual cataloguing of the world production of stamps provides the investigator with a wealth of facts and statistics (Shepard, 1983). Also, as visual devices, the choice of stamps is in accord with research, which indicates that pictures are better remembered than words (Brody, 1984); and that in motivating students to learn, people seek and enjoy stimuli that are somewhat different from those they are used to (McKeachie, 1977). Using the techniques of macro-photography, color slides representing several areas of sport history will be shown. General classifications include ancient and modern Olympic sport, sport in the middle ages, North American sport and women in sport. The criteria for selection were on the basis of educational content, historical accuracy, artistic merit and commemorative value. The significance of each stamp and its content will be described. It is concluded that stamps are inexpensive and readily accessible (and unfortunately often overlooked), sources of primary and secondary material and by means of slide presentation offer a novel and stimulating method for the teaching of sport history.