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Sport's Images, Symbols and Representations in the Portuguese Printing Press at the Turn of the Century

By the turn of the century, the Portuguese press was a decisive agent of the development of sport. Throughout their regular reporting of sport events, journalists found one particular way of drawing public attention to be highly effective: the use of photographs. Not only was photography becoming a fashionable technology, visual images had a powerful impact on the public. They appealed to the visual sense and aesthetic sensibility and helped satisfy the desire to take part, join in the action, and become a member of an exclusive circle. The press expected that pictures along with written text would appeal to all that wished to experience physical and sporting activities. Words were just one element used to convey the images, symbols, and representations of sport.

Visual images have been important elements in the history of sport in society. Comprehending how they have helped structure attitudes and ideas, conscious and unconscious, is critical to comprehending sport as a social phenomenon. This paper, focusing on the sporting press in turn-of-the-century Portugal, contributes to furthering that objective.