

Alun Evans
DeMontfort University

Thicker than Blood: **Sport, Citizenship and Nationalism**

International sporting competition has been considered an important medium for the expression of national identity. It provided for the fusion of diverse communities within a common boundary, for at the outset of organized sport, eligibility for selection for a national team was determined by strict qualifications of birthplace. In late Victorian and Edwardian times in Great Britain, these regulations were often supplemented by the requirement of social standing.

The paper seeks to identify those issues that modified and governed national selection beyond place of birth. In particular, it examines the manner in which the rules of international federations governing eligibility have been altered and expanded as a consequence of the trend towards professional athletes and the commercial influences which have accompanied the globalisation of sports.

The specific issues addressed include political changes such as the relationship of Northern and Southern Ireland, the Hungarian uprising, and the boycott of South Africa; racial inclusion and exclusion; and commercial needs reflected in, for example, the expansion of the Ryder Cup, Davis Cup, and America's Cup teams from the original concepts.

Whereas the origins of international contests may have been emblematic of an inculcation of national identity, an examination of the influences listed above will demonstrate a trend away from an expression of national identity and towards the culture of nationalism in its various facets. It also maps out the changes in society as national boundaries are rendered inferior to those of the global market.