

Journal Reviews

Boria Majumdar, "When North-South Fight, the Nation Is Out of Sight: The Politics of Olympic Sport in Postcolonial India," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 23, no. 7 (November 2006), pp. 1217-1231. Reviewed by Christine M. O'Bonsawin.

In a country obsessed with its national history and the rising popularity of twentieth century sport, it is disconcerting to learn that the history of sport in India finds modest attention from an intellectual historical perspective, particularly from that of social history. Common to the postcolonial experience, sport has traditionally served as a site of interface for national political struggles that are regional, racial, class- and gender-based, and religious in nature. While contemporary sport in India is unmistakably influenced by the orders of politics and commerce, the history of sport in this nation has failed to penetrate the discipline of 'history proper' and has accordingly adopted a cross-disciplinary focus. Consequently, the 'history from below' movement in India has rejected that sport serve as an acceptable intellectual priority for mainstream historians who are engaged in the business of social history. While this is not unique to the case of India, Boria Majumdar correctly acknowledges the absence of sport from the academy to be a worldwide failure and he effectively applies this quandary to the unique circumstances plaguing the post-independent sport movement in India.

Upon preliminary analysis, Majumdar curiously attributes the decline of India's leading Olympic sport in the 1970s to a decision on the part of the International Hockey Federation to move from grass to artificial turf. On the surface, this argument appears one-dimensional; however, Majumdar's discussion further reveals that the regional political struggles between the north and south blocs, which eventually placed the Indian Hockey Federation into a position where "it had little choice but to offer tacit consent to the move to AstroTurf," were deeply embedded in India's colonial and postcolonial histories. Majumdar supports his argument by drawing attention to significant episodes in the nation's history, including the international successes of men's hockey in the early and mid-twentieth century – most notably, at the Olympic Games; Britain's recognition of the Calcutta-based Indian Football Association in the 1930s and 1940s as the official governing body of hockey in India; the emergence of the southern states in the 1970s as active players on the national political scene; and, finally, the intersection of power and politics in the organizational landscape of hockey in India. In the section titled, 'When It All Went Wrong,' Majumdar provides an exceptional multifaceted analysis of the power struggles for hockey in India, an analysis which addresses regional interests, including those of the

north and south blocs, as well as organizational differences of opinions, to say the least, between organizations such as the Indian Hockey Federation, Indian Olympic Association, International Hockey Federation, and the International Olympic Committee.

While this article provides an outstanding examination of the Indian hockey scene in the 1970s, there are a few points of contention, the first being the organizational structure of the discussion. Following a thorough overview of the political, regional, and organizational power struggles that plagued Indian hockey in the 1970s, the author concludes the discussion with a summary of 'The Past.' This synopsis sheds light on the sporting practices of colonial India and on how British rule served to institute a regional imbalance of power. This overview, however, would be better positioned, for an otherwise uninformed reader, at the commencement of the discussion. Secondly, the author broaches the 'gender question' by suggesting, "hockey continues to be regarded as a male domain, taboo for respectable middle-class women." Unfortunately, this point leaves more questions than answers. Most notably, one may ask how this relates to the broader position of women in postcolonial India. Overall, Mujumdar's article makes a notable contribution to the field of sport history. Beyond the sad plight of Indian hockey and a compliance to shift to AstroTurf, we learn that sport history in this nation proves to be a significant pursuit for historians engaged in the trade of 'history from below' and thus deserves to be integrated as an intellectual priority that is central to the business of social history in India.



Florence Carpentier and Jean-Pierre Lefèvre, "The Modern Olympic Movement, Women's Sport and the Social Order During the Inter-war Period," The International Journal of the History of Sport 23, no. 7 (2006), pp. 1112-1127. Reviewed by Carly Adams.

Throughout the Modern Olympic Movement, there has been an ongoing process of incorporation whereby dominant groups, such as male sport leaders, have shaped, altered, and modified women's sport in an attempt to diminish possible threats to the established patriarchal social order. Evidence of attempts to regulate women's sport abound, as do efforts to resist this control. In the 21st century, women have achieved unprecedented recognition in, and access to, the Olympic Games and sport in general, suggesting that transformations can be achieved through concerted actions of resistance. Yet, the continuing inequality in resources and access to administrative positions suggest that there is a process of incorporation that has shaped women's sport, allowing access only under explicitly defined terms and conditions.

Drawing on key primary sources such as meeting minutes of the Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale (FSFI), minutes from the International

Olympic Committee (IOC) Executive board meetings, and other documents from the archives of the IOC, Carpentier and Lefèvre explore how the IOC responded to, and protected itself from, women's demands for access and inclusion in the Olympic Games, particularly during the 1920s. Focusing on the reactions of Olympic leaders to the challenges posed by the women's emancipation movement, the authors examine the debates that have emerged within the IOC regarding women's sport and women's demands for access to the Games. They discuss the arguments used to justify the inclusion and/or exclusion of women, what was at stake when women were granted partial inclusion in 1928, and what solutions were adopted to maintain the existing social order. Ultimately, the authors suggest that the Presidency of Henri de Baillet-Latour marked a turning point in the history of women's participation in the Olympic Games.

Carpentier and Lefèvre offer a concise narrative of the events leading up to women's inclusion in athletics in 1928. Although the structure of the paper is disjointed at times and the interpretations of data are often too simplistic, the authors offer an important and unique contribution to the literature, exploring the issue from the perspective of the women involved—the women of the FSFI. Probing the complex relationship between the IOC, FSFI, and the International Amateur Athletic Federation, Carpentier and Lefèvre conclude that key sport leaders such as Sigfrid Edström and Avery Brundage had a profound disdain for women in sport and supported patriarchal notions of male domination over women.

Overall, the greatest contribution and seminal importance of this article to Olympic studies and the field of sport history in general is the authors' use of FSFI 1921-1936 meeting minutes. Until now, for various reasons, scholars have not been able to access these documents conserved at the Musée National du Sport, Paris, France. Carpentier and Lefèvre have opened the door to unexplored material, broadening our understanding of the FSFI's complex dealings with the IOC and the IAAF and the internal workings of the organization.



Heather L. Reid, "Olympic Sport and Lessons for Peace," Journal of the Philosophy of Sport 33, no. 2 (2006), pp. 205-214. Reviewed by Natalie Szudy.

In this article, Heather Reid analyzes the potential for current Olympic sport competition to foster and promote valuable lessons of peace and equality. She argues that ideals of peace and equality were first demonstrated during the ancient Olympic Games, concepts that can be integrated into the Modern Olympic Movement. These lessons are based on philosophical ideals linked to the development of peace and equality, which she believes are found in ancient Greek religious and cultural values. The first lesson is based on the Hellenic tradition of *xenia*, which required all Greeks to welcome strangers into their home. This

cultural value Reid uses as an explanation of why during the time of the ancient Olympics people were allowed to travel freely to the Games. She contends that this tradition extended beyond cultural groups and resonated at the personal level; this 'truce' can be reinstated into modern sport. The second lesson is based on the notion of equality. Reid maintains that inequality due to class, race, and social standing was not in evidence among spectators or athletes who participated in the ancient Olympic Games. The practice of competing naked further reinforced the elimination of categorization based on cultural and social hierarchies. The third lesson Reid examines is the acceptance of cultures and a tolerance of the differences that exist globally. Reid refers to the ancient idea of 'cosmopolitanism or world citizenship' in support of the dismissal of stereotypes.

Reid argues that the ideal of Olympic peace can be considered paradoxical due to the conflicts between cultural and political rivals on the one hand, and the promotion of friendship and unity that were associated with the ancient Olympic Games on the other. She claims that there is a strong association between Olympic sport and the promotion of peace and equality that can be reinforced through the modern Olympic Charter. Although this claim is appealing, the definition of peace and equality that is used in this article is narrowly focused on ancient sporting practices and rules. It should be stressed that not all scholars accept the view that the ancient Olympics promoted peace. Moreover, these ideals are not readily applicable to modern sport. The promotion of peace and equality advocated by Reid arises from sporting competitions that are based on mutual achievement; this does not seem like the definition of competition that is promoted in the current (or ancient) Olympic Games. She maintains that the Olympic Charter has the framework to promote the incorporation of peace, tolerance, and equality. Although this framework does exist, it is unclear whether the notions of peace and equality that Reid advocates can be applied globally. It has been argued that Olympic sporting competitions are influenced by a Western definition of sport, which does not account for global differences.

Reid's argument is based on demonstrating a connection between ancient Greek culture, Olympic sport, and philosophical ideals of peace. Using sport as a medium, Reid argues that values of peace and equality can be promoted at the Olympic level and that this development reinforces the connectivity between cultures globally. She argues that by understanding why ancient Greek culture promoted ideals of peace and equality, we can come to understand the importance of integrating similar cultural notions into the Modern Olympic Movement. The strength of this paper is the incorporation of philosophical analysis in the study of Olympic sport. Reid argues that applying Kantian and Platonic ideals of peace and justice to the development of international sporting competitions can promote universal ideals of peace and justice that will benefit countries around the world. The incorporation of these ideals highlights the influence that sport can have globally and provides strength to the argument

presented in this article. The acceptance of the influence that the philosophical discussion of the impacts that sport can have on communities and individuals affords valuable support to the philosophical study of sport.



Ryan Eyford, "From Prairie Goolies to Canadian Cyclones: The Transformation of the 1920 Winnipeg Falcons," *Sport History Review* no. 37 (2006), pp. 5-18. Reviewed by Anne Warner.

Because it is undeniably entrenched in both the historical and current cultural fabric of Canada, any discussion about hockey is not simply about sport. Indeed, hockey bridges class, race, and gender distinctions. In this article about the history of the Winnipeg Falcons hockey team, the author offers an analysis of the meanings attached to sport through the relationship between hockey, war, and an early immigrant group.

The Winnipeg Falcons were made up of the sons of Icelandic immigrants, and went from a mere community team in the early 1900s to Olympic gold medallists in 1920. Eyford effectively discusses the integration and acceptance of this Icelandic immigrant group by Anglo-Canadians in Winnipeg, which he believes resulted in part from their highly regarded 'Nordic race.' The author suggests that the Icelanders' willingness to conform and adapt to Canadian culture made their transition easier into, and acceptance by, the mainstream culture. Further, the integral role played by Icelanders in World War I reinforced the favourable qualities of their "race," in the eyes of Anglo Winnipeggers. Thus, it is not surprising that the Falcons attracted many supporters and fans in the city. By examining the team's positive portrayal in the popular press at the time, Eyford shows how the victory of the Falcons at the Olympics was not just about winning, but also demonstrated the capacity of sport and war to assimilate immigrant groups from a 'certain stock' into the ideal of Canadian manliness in the twentieth century.

This is an innovative and insightful contribution both to hockey's early history and to our insights into sport and ethnicity. While the article for the most part presents arguments in a convincing fashion, several unanswered questions remain. For example, while Eyford argues that the Falcons were moulded into the epitome of manliness, he does not sufficiently discuss or define the traits embodied in this term. This is surprising, since an extensive literature exists about the early 20th century view of manliness, including the strong influence of Muscular Christianity in Anglo-Canada. His arguments would have been even more insightful and thought provoking if he had framed them in this historical context. Moreover, Eyford opens his article by describing an incident in 2001 in which Wayne Gretzky and the Canadian Hockey Association mistakenly identified the Toronto Granites as the first Olympic gold medal hockey team

in Canada. While this is a meaningful and thought-provoking incident, Eyford does not pursue the reasoning behind this oversight. This is all the more puzzling, when he goes on to describe in detail the popularity and importance of the team in Winnipeg. The reader is left wondering why historical records do not accurately acknowledge the achievements of this team.

Despite these lingering questions, Eyford's study is useful in that he focuses on an 'outsider' group that was accepted and ultimately granted entry into the upper echelons of sport, while most studies concerning ethnic groups focus on their exclusion from ventures enjoyed by Anglo-Canadians. The fact that this significant achievement was almost a forgotten piece of history suggests that there might be other examples of sport being used to assimilate immigrant groups that have not been accurately remembered.



Cesar R. Torres, "The Latin American 'Olympic Explosion' of the 1920s: Causes and Consequences," The International Journal of the History of Sport 23, no. 7 (November 2006), pp. 1088-1111. Reviewed by Megan Popovic.

Even in the third decade of the modern Olympic Games, the Olympic Movement had yet to make significant inroads toward the achievement of Pierre de Coubertin and the aim of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to internationalize the Games. In this article, Torres investigates the expansion of the Olympic Games into Latin America during the 1920s. More specifically, he focuses on the sudden increase in the involvement of the area in the Olympics during this period. Torres argues that various causes sparked the explosion of interest in the Games in Latin American countries that ultimately left lasting consequences on the region's sporting milieu. He dissects this pattern of dissemination and hones in on the factors and players involved in the evolution and organization of modern sport.

Torres provides a detailed overview of the external pressures and internal conundrums that played a part in the incorporation of Latin American countries into the Olympic Movement. At the onset of the paper, he notes that modern sports arrived in the early 1900s from outside influences, whereby indigenous athletic activities became victims of cultural appropriation and adaptation. The initial wave of influence began with the entry of British capitalists and the appeal of their 'modern' forms of sport, and was followed by the mass appeal of North American sports and their connection to the concept of 'progress.' Narrowing the focus on the Olympic Games, Torres details the development of the working-relationship between de Coubertin, President of the IOC, and Elwood S. Brown of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), which had a tremendous impact on the internationalization of the Olympic Games. The IOC's idealistic vision in conjunction with the YMCA's established worldwide struc-

ture suited the interests of both parties and provided the IOC with an inroad for expansion into virgin territory. The author sheds light on several achievements that resulted from the IOC-YMCA partnership, such as the creation of the 1922 Latin American Games, IOC representative Count Henri de Baillet-Latour's successful continental tour that promoted and fostered Olympic linkages, the establishment of several National Olympic Committees, and the installation of delegates from South and Central America into the IOC.

After focusing on the external influences on Latin American sport and Olympic incorporation, Torres identifies the internal challenges that derived from these rapid shifts. He highlights the power struggles between former national sporting organizations and newly formed Olympic committees in Argentina and Uruguay, together with challenges from bureaucratic stagnation and tensions in Mexico, Chile and Brazil, and negative assessments of national sporting culture by Cubans. Thus, while the global ambitions of institutions such as the IOC and the YMCA were increasingly realized, this created turbulence and constant turmoil within the participating nations.

In his assessment of the affairs in the region during the 1920s, Torres provides a succinct summary of the events, while integrating key challenges and outcomes. For example, he states that while the Latin American Games aided the achievement of national unity and furthered regional inclusion into the Games, the situation was 'loaded with dynamite' (p.1004) and the Olympic explosion generated both unexpected optimistic and discouraging outcomes. Furthermore, he notes the shortcomings in the IOC-YMCA connection, such as unclear policies, actions that contradicted organizational rhetoric, and a strong sense of Eurocentrism. Thus, Torres recognizes the positive outcomes that stemmed from the internationalization of the Olympic Games into Latin America, such as the establishment of sport within the nations and the attention to the needs of, and potential for, their national sporting futures. However, he also emphasizes the inherent paternalism and historical and cultural insensitivity of the IOC and YMCA, the homogeneous application of policy within the diverse and heterogeneous region, and the misdirected actions that occurred from these changes.

In his usual fashion, Torres exudes a brilliant awareness of the transformation in this epoch from a broad contextual lens, while bestowing immaculate attention to the minute intricacies of the situation. His extensive use of primary sources in various languages is impressive, and the endnotes show a meticulous attention to detail. In all, this article contributes to the history of the Olympic Movement, particularly the interrelatedness of the Games with nationalism, regionalism, and globalization.



Graham Knight, Margaret MacNeil, and Peter Donnelly, "The Disappointment Games: Narratives of Olympic Failure in Canada and New Zealand," *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 40, no. 1 (2005), pp. 25-51. Reviewed by Megan Popovic.

In this article, Knight, MacNeil, and Donnelly examine the narrative structure of press coverage in Canada and New Zealand during the 2000 Olympic Games. In particular, they assess how disappointment themes are woven into the media coverage of the event, which signal a "rupture in the relationship between expectations and action, and threaten the basis on which the reproduction of sociality is made possible." Media discourse has a large interpretive role in determining how this disappointment is experienced. In providing a comparative analysis of the disappointment narrative of these two countries, the authors show how local perspectives can vary in their approach to reporting on the outcomes of the same event.

Canada and New Zealand were selected because both possess similar political and economic systems, often place in the middle range of the Olympic medal tallies, and have close links with neighboring sporting powerhouses, the United States and Australia respectively. One major newspaper was selected from each country, the *Toronto Star* from Canada and the *New Zealand Herald* from New Zealand. The study was limited to one week prior to the Opening Ceremonies and one week following the Closing Ceremonies of the 2000 Olympic Games. Knight and his colleagues examine media coverage in the sports pages and news sections of the newspapers, including hard news reports, feature stories, opinion columns, and editorials. They focus their attention specifically on Olympic prospects and performances of Canadian and New Zealand athletes.

The authors base their study on Luhmann's (1995) theory on disappointment, which states that disappointment signifies the inception of insecurity into social relations on two levels: cognitive and normative. Cognitive disappointment implies an uncertainty of knowledge and possibility of inability in action, while normative disappointment represents a failure to fulfill social obligations with the potential for actions to be considered irresponsible or deviant. Both cognitive and normative orientations to disappointment imply a loss of trust and confidence because of the failing outcome. However, the critical distinction between the different levels is whether the action is interpreted to be open to pragmatic learning and modification. On the one hand, normative disappointment condemns the action as a failure to meet expectations with limited capacity for learning. Failure in this case is explained by an attribution of responsibility, blame, and intense nostalgia. In contrast, a cognitive response to disappointment moves beyond direct blame to identify how and why failure occurred and devises a strategic plan to improve future outcomes. While there is a historical tendency to transition from normative to cognitive levels of disappointment, the media narratives in this study contain a mixture of both levels.

Knight, MacNeil, and Donnelly examine two types of narrative framing. More specifically, thematic frames are used to identify and define the central events of failure to expressions of disappointment, while explanatory frames account for causes and effects of the disappointment itself. In addition, the authors consider the overall narrative framing of discourse within the delimited timeframe.

The findings conclude that the narrative frames varied between the two newspapers. Prior to the Games, several *Herald* articles assumed a pessimistic tone and mentioned the possibility for failure in the Games. A few days into the event, early failures were represented by negative emotional experiences for the athletes themselves. However, this initial self-contained, sport-by-sport failure became the dominant explanatory frame of disappointment for the Games coverage. The issues of athlete motivation and attitude were raised, and the competitors were criticized directly for their inability to achieve personal bests and win medals. The *Star* also noted individual failures early in the first week when the Canadian hopefuls did not reach the podium but there was no anticipation for failure before the event. As the Games progressed and several athletes missed their opportunity to win a medal, these failures transformed to expressions of disappointment within the discourse. In the latter half of the event, Canada's medal tally escalated, but the overall sense of disappointment persisted. Unlike the *Herald* reports, the focal point of the *Star*'s narratives shifted from competition results to more general institutional reasons.

The general narrative framing in the newspapers transitioned from failure to disappointment. Although both newspapers reflected athletes' individual expressions of apology and disappointment, the media's acceptance of this apology impacted the divergent direction of the discourse. There was a much stronger normative dimension to disappointment within the New Zealand coverage at both levels of framing. Thus, the *Herald*'s narrative addressed a number of causal factors at various points during the Games, but focused on athlete motivation and attitude as the main reason for disappointing results. The thematic frames in the *Herald* were extremely nostalgic in their coverage of the events in that they looked to past successes with great reverence, thereby investing the current loss with an inflated sense of symbolic significance. Furthermore, at the explanatory level, the coverage assumed a moral tone, focusing on motivation, determination, winning attitude, and willingness to make sacrifices in an attempt to frame the direction of responsibility and blame.

In the *Star*, the normative dimensions were not as apparent and a cognitive orientation to disappointment took precedence. While New Zealand athletes remained the objects of blame within the narrative, the Canadian athletes themselves played a critical role in shifting the focus toward external reasons for disappointing results. There was no sense of nostalgia and early references to athlete blame were quickly dismissed as the narrative shifted to more abstract

issues, such as government funding, sport policy, and effectiveness of the sport system. Canadian Olympians were absolved of responsibility for failure because the explanatory factors for their outcomes fostered sympathy toward the “struggling athletes.” The disappointment narrative in the *Star* was premised on political, rather than moral, causes and fostered determination of more practical identification of problems and solutions.

Knight, MacNeil, and Donnelly weave the disappointment theory intricately into their discussion of the narratives, while still allowing the narrative aspect of the newspaper articles to shine through the paper. The authors have provided a wonderful comparative analysis of the media discourse within Canada and New Zealand surrounding the 2000 Games. This article would be of importance to anyone interested in the contemporary Olympic Games, media analysis and interpretation, and sport as a reflection of nationhood and society.



Mike McNamee, “Olympism, Eurocentricity, and Transcultural Virtues,” Journal of the Philosophy of Sport 33, no. 2 (2006), pp. 174-187. Reviewed by Sarah Teetzel.

In this article, Mike McNamee utilizes his extensive background in moral philosophy to apply several philosophical theories, concepts, and ideals to the Olympic Movement. Rather than providing a descriptive account or reconsideration of what Olympism involves and how the notion was conceived of in the past, McNamee focuses on what Olympism should entail from a moral point of view. While Pierre de Coubertin intended the world to embrace Olympism at the universal level, McNamee argues that we must first step back and determine if universal principles exist before we can specify any potential principles for Olympism to celebrate; only then can we move on to analyze critically whether these virtues are in fact universal and transcultural, or if they are primarily Eurocentric in nature.

In order to unpack the notion of Olympism, McNamee asks several challenging questions and cites the views of many influential philosophers on universalism, essentialism, and virtue ethics with respect to the Olympic Movement. The theory and terminology McNamee uses to form his analysis is easy to understand, because of the background information he includes and his addition of relevant and contemporary examples to illustrate each point. Nonetheless, readers with little knowledge of philosophy will find McNamee’s analysis wide-ranging and complex, as he draws on the works of such varied ancient and modern thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martha Nussbaum, Edmund Pincoffs, and Alasdair MacIntyre, among others. From these works, McNamee takes a virtue ethics approach to producing a morally acceptable ac-

count of Olympism based on the virtues and qualities Olympic athletes can reasonably be expected to embody.

In typical philosophical fashion, McNamee asks far more questions than he answers in this article; however, this cannot be considered a serious flaw because the queries he raises are all thought-provoking issues that Olympic scholars would benefit from considering. He challenges the reader to think critically about Olympism and recognize the biases and genetic fallacies associated with most critiques of Olympism. In so doing, McNamee tackles some of the most challenging questions that have been debated among philosophers since the time of the ancient Olympic Games. He questions, for example, whether it is possible to reduce morality to principles; whether virtue ethics can, as Aristotle believed, provide the framework for a universal moral theory; and, if this were the case, what virtues should be celebrated in Olympians and in Olympic sports. Furthermore, McNamee addresses the question of whether the Olympic ideals that form the basis of any discussion of Olympism are transcultural and universal, or if it would be more appropriate to label them Eurocentric and particular. As he points out, "Olympic scholars and administrators blithely talk of 'fundamental universal principles' without realizing that their very existence has (a) been questioned for centuries by Western philosophers and (b) not even been conceived of by Eastern philosophers as a credible ethical posture" (p. 178). McNamee's analysis thus demonstrates the importance of studying Olympism from a philosophical perspective and the need to challenge the International Olympic Committee's claim that Olympism is a philosophy of life that respects universal and fundamental ethical principles.