

BARRACKERS' CORNER

This section considers barracking in both the Australian supportive and the English critical senses. We invite comments on articles or reviews in *Sporting Traditions*, but this corner is also open for readers' views on issues in sports history or contemporary sport.

Sport today often receives a bad press, particularly in such matters as player misconduct, denigration of women and corruption by monied interests. Here Roy Kirkby, President of the Australian Korfball Association, a group whose aim is to provide a sporting activity which will make a positive contribution to society, expounds the attitudes of his sport towards these issues.

"There is disquiet in many sports about the level of conduct and the attitudes of players. If we want to do something about this from within sport then we have to set conduct expectations and encourage good behaviour. In Korfball not only are such expectations implied in the rules of the game but they are also expressed directly in the Korfball Code and are explained to all new players. They are further emphasised by the coaches who, when focussing on the challenges to be faced in playing the sport, include such matters as self-control, courtesy, honesty and fair play.

However, we do not believe that it is sufficient just to set conduct goals. We feel that good conduct in sport should receive concrete support and in this korfball differs from all other sports. All our competitions are expected to have a korfball skills and sportpersonship component. Sometimes this will be in the form of parallel trophies, one for the team winning a league competition and one for the team amassing the highest number of skills/sporting points. At all school competition levels we recommend the Adelaide Integrated Scoring Scheme which combines winning with skills and conduct. With eight points for winning, four for losing, up to five for skills and seven for behaviour, it is possible for a win-at-all-cost team to get fewer league points than the side it beats. This system has been used very successfully for a number of years not only in schools but in public competitions

too. In the latter case it was introduced where we had teams coming into play korfbal and expecting to play our sport the way they played other games. It should also be noted that, for those players wishing to play at representative level, skills are not enough; they must have demonstrated good attitudes both on and off the field and also have an impeccable conduct record.

Nevertheless there are occasional problems. Sending-off is rare but the offender, where guilt is proved, is further punished by our strong disciplinary code. The minimum penalty for persistent arguing with the referee is a four months ban and life bans can be imposed for violence against another player or an official.

Off the court, in the administration of korfbal, we expect the same cooperative positive approach as we do playing the game. Not for korfbal the confrontational public wrangling between administrators that is a feature of some sports.

Too many sports are either gender-oriented or discriminate against one sex. Korfbal, however, is a non-sexist sport and the rules are such that there is no advantage for either sex; so players have to prove themselves not as men or women but as an equal member of a team. We believe that to develop a more cohesive society it is necessary to create more environments in which male-female relationships can develop without the dominance of one sex over the other. In Korfbal we believe we can create an environment where both males and females can realise their aspirations in a setting which is equally demanding of both sexes, physically, socially and intellectually. Off the court too approximately equal number of males and females are expected to be on all committees.

Some sports appear to have sold their souls to the almighty dollar. We do not intend to let this occur in korfbal. We are not against sponsorship and actively seek it but when we get sponsors we feel that we have to educate them as to what our goals are. They know theirs but they may have to modify them for the long term benefit to both parties. Sponsorship can be good for our sport but it must be taken on only if it does not compromise our codes, regulations, rules and expectations along with the support which we have built up within the sport. Our guidelines to clubs suggest that they should consider sponsorship only if positive answers can be given to the following questions. Is it impossible

to do what you want to do without sponsorship? Will the sponsorship leave you and/or others with some freedom to do other good things for the sport/club/team? Do you feel the sponsor's product or service is worthwhile and unlikely to tarnish the name of korfball in the community? [Remember children are involved in korfball.] Do all the people likely to be influenced by the association with the sponsorship feel the same way? Will the sponsorship leave you and your club or association free from any litigation (e.g. court proceedings if you do not fulfill your side of the sponsorship)? Does the sponsor understand what korfball is, what we expect of players and of the high ethical standing of the sport? Will established group or club money raising and other social activities still continue despite the sponsorship? Can you name some ways that everyone in your club or organisation will benefit from the sponsorship either directly or indirectly? (Not just an individual or a team). Have you listed ways the sponsorship can be of benefit to the sponsor? Have you planned how you can help the sponsor without jeopardising the sport or your other korfball activities? If you take on the sponsorship, have you considered how you can keep your sponsor informed of your activities that are benefiting from the sponsorship? Do you have a sponsorship liaison person?

So, in korfball, we believe it is not enough to make positive statements about the way sport is conducted but to have clear goals about how the sport is conducted and mechanisms at every level to support them..."

Roy Kirkby
Adelaide

Our second comment is a response by Richard Stremski to the review of his book by Chris McConville (see pp. 119-123)

"While researching and writing the history of the Collingwood Football Club I sometimes worried about the difficulties involved in being objective in such a task. I need not have worried: Chris McConville's review has shown that there is no such thing as objectivity when writing about Collingwood. I confessed in my preface that I barracked for Collingwood. In fairness, the reviewer should have admitted his allegiance to Richmond and his conse-

quent hatred of Collingwood. Otherwise, how can his readers comprehend his fulminations and indignation over a history that has pointed out Collingwood's pre-eminent position in the history of League football? How else can his readers interpret his concern over Richmond's 'treachery' in recruiting Dan Minogue from Collingwood when I explained that Minogue left not just for money but also because McHale's continuance impeded his desire to be a coach? I also emphasized that Minogue's 'departure was viewed as treason only because he went to another League side', rather than to the VFA, interstate or countryside.

But McConville has a tendency to take statements out of context and make it appear that I have conveyed only one side of the story. For example, he indicates that I portray Carlton as always trying 'brutally' to beat Collingwood despite Collingwood's assistance to Carlton in its lean years. Yet, I had pointedly stated that Collingwood's munificence was due only to Carlton's earlier generosity toward the Magpies, and I also stated that Collingwood's hatred of Carlton - like its earlier hatred of Fitzroy - led the Club, its players and its supporters to resort to any means in order to defeat these opponents. In fact, that is part of the explanation I provided to account for why the rest of the football world hated Collingwood, and I also explained how boastful pride intensified the envy and animosity of others. When McConville says that 'from within Victoria Park the answer rings out - the rest are jealous', he clearly has not consulted my documentation either. Long-serving secretaries of the Melbourne, Fitzroy and Richmond clubs provided that answer unequivocally.

The reviewer's assertion that I am unfamiliar with the game before the 1970s demonstrates the penchant of many coodabeen champions who are unaware that modern variants of the game evolved with the passage of time. Thus, the Collingwood-invented stab kick was, in fact, a pass that could travel over the heads of opponents in 1902 since it was as high off the ground as six or seven feet originally, particularly when travelling over a 25-30 yard distance. The fact that the optimum trajectory of a stab pass was progressively lowered to half that height hardly negates the manner of its original rudimentary implementation. Similarly, McConville's comments that I erroneously described the flick pass as a throw can

best be countered by directly quoting my actual words: 'The Magpies were the principal exponents of the flick pass, which was virtually a two-handed, or "assisted", throw. According to Mullen, "Collingwood had been getting away with a lot of bare-faced throwing of the ball" for years. The new handball rule, implemented for season 1927, stipulated that in order to handball legally the ball must be held in one hand and clearly punched with the clenched fist of the other'. Regarding the reviewer's third example, I did inadvertently omit the prefix in 'drop-punt' in one instance, but that hardly negated the thrust of the information I was transmitting. Every football follower is familiar with the legend that Jack Dyer supposedly invented the drop-punt. What obviously rankled the reviewer is that Collingwood players were proficient with that kick before his Richmond hero came along. If he had bothered to check my footnote, he would have discovered that Dyer admitted in 1949 that he borrowed the kick from the Colliers.

There are many legitimate criticisms of my book that could have been made, but McConville hasn't made them. Instead, he offers the least meaningful comment that a reviewer can make: a complaint that a book on a different topic was not written! McConville wistfully views the game from the outer and yearns for a history of football to be written from that perspective. He implies that I wrote it from the grandstand, like some Collingwood silvertail, and thereby betrayed the Collingwood boot workers, upon whom he alleges all the Club's traditions are based. But woe to the author who writes such a one-eyed and unhistorical account. The barrage from Collingwood-bashers would be even more unbearable than the pangs from his own conscience. Ironically, McConville complains that I don't analyze the mystique of Victoria Park, but is oblivious to the fact that I do analyze the mystique of the Collingwood Football Club - or is he?

When the reviewer complains that my discussion of the political in-fighting in recent decades crowds out some of the pre-World War II themes, he demonstrates once again that he has not fulfilled the most elementary task of a reviewer, namely, discerning the thesis of the author and presenting the key features of his argument. If the reviewer can only indicate that I blame cruel fate for Collingwood's recent failures, then he has not read the

majority of the latter part of the book very carefully. Collingwood, like football in general, has undergone a substantial transformation in recent decades. The suburb's inhabitants are no longer rabid supporters of the Club, and the barrackers in the outer are a disappearing, and in many ways inconsequential phenomenon in the mid-1980s. I try to show how and why this has happened at Collingwood rather than just bemoaning it and wishing for a return to the "good old days" when football was king, footballers were gods and the outer was sacred turf. McConville's ideological resentment that I have not written a people's history should not be translated into the statement that *Kill for Collingwood* is just another club history. If the reviewer wants to try to demonstrate that argument, he should compare my book with those of that genre in concrete terms. But he hasn't, and his parallel desire for a romanticized version of football would be more suitable for journalistic consumption than for serious history.

There are many contradictions in his review. McConville claims that I destroy myths and will alienate one-eyed Collingwood supporters, yet also claims that I don't debunk myths and that my book will please Collingwood supporters. Therein lies the crux of the matter. I don't debunk the myths enough to suit the reviewer, and though I take Collingwood champions down from their pedestals, I cannot make them into non-champions through some historical sleight-of-hand. Thus, I have been insufficiently analytical!

What irritates the reviewer most about my book is the fact that Collingwood *is* the most important institution in the history of football, that it is, after all, *the* Club. That is not just Collingwood's own perceived image, but a generally perceived one. The reviewer cannot reconcile himself to this fact, although he cannot deny it. I could only analyze the flaws in the institution and demonstrate the myths in its tradition: a history can destroy neither. McConville says: 'This is a history for those who live inside the "Club" and who never pause to question the broader conditions within which it prospered'. All I can reply to such nonsense is: "read the book and judge for yourself."

Richard Stremski
La Trobe University

Peter Sharpham is a Sports Historian and writer who at Illinois State University took up a scholarship to study Sports History in 1979. He graduated with a Masters Degree in 1980. On returning to Sydney he joined the Australian Society for Sports History. Here he takes issue with Martin Sharp.

"In his review of my *Trumpter: The Definitive Biography* Martin Sharp gives a rather myopic and ponderous overview of certain aspects of the work. Firstly, he states incorrectly that the book confirms, "among other things, his previously suspected illegitimacy." As a historian there is no excuse for Mr Sharp's comment. There is no historical evidence to support the notion that Trumpter was illegitimate. On the contrary, as I state in the book, the possibility of his being an orphan, or a distant relative of the Trumplers who was adopted by the family is very likely.

For the record I quote from the biography:

The inescapable conclusion is that Victor was not a product of the union of Charles and Louisa as it is doubtful if they knew each other seven years prior to their marriage, although it is possible. Was Victor an orphan who was adopted by Charles Trumper? As adoption records for the era are non-existent we do not know this. Another possibility is that he was the son of a relative of Charles or Louisa; he came to visit and eventually became a permanent and integral member of the family... It is generally believed that Victor Trumper was born in Darlinghurst, however as there is no genealogical evidence to support this notion, his exact birthplace remains a mystery.

Since the book was released I have exhaustively researched the birth records for New South Wales from 1870 until 1880. Only one child with the christian names Victor Thomas was born during the decade, at Harden in 1874. Yet Trumper on his marriage certificate had his place of birth recorded as being Sydney, so he obviously believed that he was born in that city. Although death certificates can be notoriously inaccurate, Sydney is given as his place of birth on the document recording his passing. Records in New Zealand, Great Britain and the other Australian states show no birth. Hopefully the intriguing question of Trumper's birth will eventually be resolved.

Secondly, it must be asserted that my biography was much more than merely a detailed account of Trumper's cricketing career.

This is the first book on Trumper outlining his childhood and the residences in which he lived. He lived his boyhood days in Surry Hills not Paddington as was previously thought. The locations of his sports stores are also revealed as are a number of previously unpublished letters which help reveal Trumper's personality. Indeed a number of reviewers who read the book in depth wrote the following:

In detailing his family background, in the early development of the boy cricketer, he has created a mark of respect of players for Trumper the cricketer and the man. Having read the book you know Trumper more intimately. (Ronald Cardwell in *Hill Chatter*, March 1986)

Sharpham is a sports historian... his ability to turn up new facts about one of the most famous cricketers in history is simply magnificent. (Warwick Hadfield in *Weekend Australian* November 30 1985)

All kinds of testimony are pooled to refine that feeling that Trumper must have been the most gifted of them all... There might even be a danger of a latterday devotee or two feeling the way New Zealander C.A. Redgrave felt when he went to interview Trumper in 1905: 'I fell in love with him at once!' (David Frith in *Wisden Cricket Monthly* June 1986)"

Peter Sharpham
Taree, N.S.W.