

FOR HONOUR AND TROPHIES: AMATEUR ROWING IN AUSTRALIA, 1888-1912

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Rowing has played a very important role in Australian sporting history, especially since Edward Trickett became the first Australian World Champion in sport in 1876. Research has shown that professional sculling contributed in no small way to the development of a national identity in Australians in the late nineteenth century. Victories by Beach and Searle reinforced:

the growing attitude that they (colonials) should think of themselves as Australians first, and inhabitants of separate colonies second.¹

Nationalism developed into a necessary factor to form a federation of the colonies in 1901.²

Much of the research into rowing and the development of an Australian national identity has focused on professional sculling. The role of amateur rowing in this process has been ignored, in spite of a regular intercolonial eight-oar race that was held at least annually since 1878 and four-oar races since the 1860s. This paper proposes to examine the struggles with the definition of amateurism in rowing as an indicator of Australian nationalism in the period 1888-1912.

As mentioned, amateur intercolonial eight-oar races had been held annually between New South Wales and Victoria since 1878. In 1890 Queensland joined in on a regular basis after having competed once in 1885 (along with Tasmania). Western Australia and South Australia began competing regularly in the late 1890s and, with the participation of Tasmania in 1905, all the states were participating on a regular basis.⁴ The eights race was the most prestigious event on the Australasian rowing calendar, and nearly all problems with amateurism surfaced because the desire to compete in and win the race was great. This study focuses upon this event as it represents

the national aspect of amateur rowing.

The methodology used was to trace the history of this race through the eyes of the two major colonies - New South Wales and Victoria. A newspaper from each colony was selected on the basis of its coverage of amateur rowing in general: *The Referee* (Sydney) and *The Leader* (Melbourne) were chosen. *The Australasian* (Melbourne) was referred to on specific occasions after 1900. The minutes of the Interstate Conferences of the period 1896-1912 were utilised for information and verification of newspaper reports.⁵

Some problems with this methodology includes its narrowness in scope. Firstly, only two out of the five colonies' points of view are represented. This factor is negated somewhat by the fact that the other colonies sided with either Victoria or New South Wales. For example, Queensland copied the Victorian definition of an amateur in this period.

Secondly, as the problems of amateurism have been researched from metropolitan newspapers they tend to reflect the urban, upper middle class viewpoint. The views of the country and provincial centres were, as will be shown, critical to the whole amateur debate, but their views tend to be under-represented. The views of the working class were neglected by the newspapers, and, therefore, a complete picture is not attained.

Thirdly, there is a problem of bias which, while negated to some extent by comparing the two cities, cannot be totally overcome. This bias had led to selective reporting of certain aspects and the exclusion of some important facts. It would have been desirable to compare the newspaper reports with the official records of the New South Wales Rowing Association (NSWRA) and the Victorian Rowing Association (VRA).⁶

The year 1888 was chosen as the starting point for a number of reasons. The main reason being that a major push to organize a crew to compete in England was occurring and in December, 1888, the colonial rowing associations deemed it necessary to hold a Conference on the amateur definition in an effort to gain some uniformity across colonies. This date also allows detailed examination of the 1890s - the era of nation-making.

With respect to national feeling, the culmination for the amateur sport was in 1912 when a representative Australian eight raced, and won, at Henley-on-Thames and competed at the Stockholm Olympic Games. This was the first time that an "Australiar" crew competed internationally in spite of over twenty-five years of trying to "match blades" with the Old Country in particular. The expense of such an excursion was a major factor in the delay but, as will be demonstrated, the amateur difficulties were also significant in preventing a crew being sent "Home". Hence, 1912 was chosen as the end point in this paper.

In short, this paper is examining the development of amateurism in Australian rowing in the years 1888-1912. It will concentrate upon the differences between VRA and NSWRA, manifested in the inter-colonial regattas. An associated theme is to examine the effect of amateurism on the nationalisation of amateur rowing, and to determine whether these trends were occurring in the broader society.

The centennial year (1888) was characterized by two inter-colonial eights races - one in April and one in November. One reason for holding an extra race was its use as a selection trial for a proposed Australian crew to row in England.⁷ As the NSWRA had officially complained over the amateur status of two of the Victorian crew in the April race, it was proposed that a conference be held of delegates from the colonies to arrive at a common definition of amateurism at the latter regatta.

The problem was the inclusion of two manual labourers in the Victorian crew. The two in question were saddlers by trade, and this, whilst unacceptable to the NSWRA (as saddlers were not "bonafide" amateur), was perfectly acceptable to the VRA.⁸ The fact that the two men had been selected in the previous few intercolonial races without any protest being raised created suspicion in the minds of the Victorians.⁹

It was obvious that there was a lack of communication between the two rowing powers. The NSWRA was under the impression that the race was to be rowed under their conditions, that was with no manual labourers, while the VRA was not aware of any condition excluding manual labourers from intercolonial contests as that differed from their own concept of amateurism.¹⁰ Each colony in fact had a dif-

ferent form of amateurism:

in New South Wales the definition laid down by the Amateur Association of England is adopted, while New Zealand amateurs have been in the habit of rowing for money prizes, which become the property of their clubs. In Victoria, it appears if saddlers &c. are allowed to compete among the bona-fide amateurs.¹¹

In Sydney, the NSWRA did not recognize manual labourers as "bona-fide" amateurs, and hence there existed a class of manual labour amateurs who had their own clubs and association.

Several issues can be seen to be emerging. On the surface, there appears to be a dispute over what constitutes a manual labourer, but there are much deeper issues involved here. Each colony was displaying an air of superiority regarding their amateur definition in the promotion of amateur sport. For example:

past experience has taught us how undesirable it is to attempt to amalgamate the two classes and the success which has attended the formation of manual labour amateurs or working-men's clubs is conclusive proof that the amateur definition as accepted in this colony is the best, not only for bona-fide amateurs, but also for the manual labour class as well.

The Victorians were equally assured that the "caste" distinction was morally wrong, and detracted from the promotion of amateur sport. It was evident that the amateur question was also concerned with the issue of whether the classes should mix. A battle for supremacy was anticipated at the forthcoming Conference.

Another issue that was emerging, but yet to achieve any great significance, was the idea that professionalism was a trait-like and permanent feature. In New South Wales, a manual labourer could be admitted as a bona-fide amateur only after five years cessation of his occupation. In Victoria, the period was only two years.¹³ This indicates the VRA considered professionalism less a flaw in the "character" and perhaps a result of circumstances, or of a moment of weakness. This attitude has major ramifications in the mid-1890s and will be discussed later.

The differences between Melbourne and Sydney are encapsulated within the views on amateurism. As Nat Gould wrote in *Town and Bush* in 1896:

If Sydney is an old world city, Melbourne is certainly one of the newest of the new.¹⁴

The NSWRA adopted the "old world" definition - the Amateur Rowing Association (ARA) definition with all its class distinctions and apparent stuffiness. Meanwhile, "Marvellous Melbourne" adapted the ARA definition to its own conditions, and as the class distinctions did not conform with the egalitarian ideals, they were removed from the definition.

This was the background to the Conference in Sydney on December 1st, 1888 held in conjunction with the intercolonial rowing regatta with representatives from New South Wales, Victoria, New Zealand and Tasmania. The structure of the conference reveals how "colonial rights" were to be protected - an issue most prevalent in the Federation debate of the time. New Zealand and Tasmania each had three delegates and Victoria and New South Wales had two. In spite of the larger numbers of rowers under the control of the VRA and NSWRA, they had no greater voting power than the smaller colonies.¹⁵

The Victorian delegates moved that a common definition (based on their definition) that allowed all amateurs irrespective of class be adopted for the intercolonial races. The definition stated:

That in the opinion of this conference it is desirable that all the future inter-colonial races shall be open to all amateurs, viz.:-

1. Anyone who has never entered for a race advertised as for watermen.
2. Anyone who has never competed in any open competition, for a stake, money, or entrance fee.
3. Anyone who has never earned, or partially earned, his living by rowing, or has taken money, directly or indirectly in recognition of his skill in rowing.
4. Anyone who has never taught, practised, or assisted in athletic exercises of any kind, as a means of gaining a livelihood or pecuniary benefit.
5. Anyone who has not been employed in or about boats for money or wages.
6. Anyone who has never competed in a match in connection with which a wager or bet is recognized.¹⁶

This definition was agreed to by all the colonies except New South Wales. However, the conference could only make recommendations, and had no binding powers over the individual colonial associations. "Colonial rights" were certainly flourishing!

Whilst the VRA wasted no time adopting the "conference definition", and the smaller colonies followed suit, the NSWRA rejected it on the grounds that manual labourers in NSW would not be eligible anyway because they rowed for cash.¹⁷ What is more, both colonies

expressed their determination not to continue the race under the other's definition. It was thought that the race was at an end - at least in its current format.

It is now appropriate to investigate why the NSWRA persisted with the manual labour bar. The justification often used was that the manual labourer was engaged in "muscle developing work" and, therefore, had an advantage over non-manual workers." It was also claimed that, in Sydney, manual labourers' work was "on the water" and therefore they were also watermen who were excluded by the Conference definition. The manual labour amateurs also rowed for cash prizes under ten pounds.¹⁹

The NSWRA would not open the door to the manual labourer for these reasons. However, the reasons must be challenged as to whether they were valid claims or excuses proposed for the sake of exclusion. The first contention that manual labourers gained a physical advantage over their non-manual counterparts was found to be incorrect within the other colonies. For instance, the Victorian crews of April, 1888 contained six clerks and two saddlers.²⁰ It was frequently contended by the Victorians that the non-manual worker would not be out-classed by the "brawny, well-knit frames of such men..."²¹

That all manual labourers in Sydney were watermen is nonsense. Some would have been, but it is obvious that in a city the size of Sydney,⁹ not all categories of manual labourer would work on the water. If such was the case, why was the bar extended to include barbers, saddlers and bootmakers?²² These occupations were not remotely connected with improving one's skill and strength as an oarsman. They are not even tasks that are likely to develop any degree of strength and stamina which would disadvantage the non-manual worker.

The Sydney manual labour amateur did row for small cash prizes and this may have presented a problem in joining with bona-fide amateurs. However, a Victorian solution was advanced so as to admit manual labour amateurs who had not competed for money after a set date.²³ This was also rejected by the NSWRA because they considered the manual labour class would only be interested in gaining a profit from sport. For example, it was claimed in *The Referee* that

manual labour clubs did not concern themselves with races in which the prize value was too small:

. . .the recent action of the Manual Labour Clubs in Victoria would seem to indicate that small trophies and "honour and glory" are not to their taste.²⁴

This claim was refuted by the Victorian association stating that manual labourers were amongst the keenest promoters of amateurism.

Research of an earlier period encompassing the establishment of the "bona-fide" and "manual labour" clubs and associations is needed to establish more exactly the reasons behind the exclusion of the manual labourer from the NSWRA. The reason may have been that, when the NSWRA was formed, the manual labour amateurs were already competing for cash prizes, thereby disqualifying themselves from the NSWRA. However, if the NSWRA were to have excluded them on the basis of class, the manual labourers may have then formed their own association with their own amateur rules. Although a detailed explanation is not provided within this paper for the exclusion of manual labourers from the NSWRA, it is contended that the exclusion is at least partially class-based, as supported in the clause excluding barbers, saddlers and boot-makers.

It must be recognized that each colony was not totally supportive of its respective associations definitions. There was a strong feeling in some Sydney clubs (e.g. Glebe, Leichhardt and Balmain) for the inclusion of manual labour amateurs. For instance, in 1892, a motion to the NSWRA to include the manual labourer was defeated by only one vote.²⁵ In Victoria, several non-manual labour clubs flourished, including the Melbourne, University, Electric Telegraph, and Civil Service Rowing Clubs. The 1888 conference decision was not welcomed by all Melbourne clubs, especially the Melbourne and Yarra clubs, for much the same reasons as proposed by the NSWRA.²⁶ An analysis of the various non-manual labour clubs' membership in Sydney and Melbourne would provide some useful information regarding the conflict of opinion - it could inform as to any similarities between clubs refusing the manual labourers.

This diversity of opinion within the colonies allowed the inter-colonial regattas to proceed. In 1889, the VRA withdrew its patronage of the race because of the insistence of the NSWRA on the use of the NSWRA amateur definition. However, a committee of some of the

aforementioned "bona-fide" amateur clubs in Melbourne took it upon themselves to organize a crew complying with the New South Wales definition.

An interesting comparison was with the drive to send an Australian crew to England. The ARA definition was to be adhered to, and there was no challenge to the authority of the ARA by the VRA. Only the non-manual labour oarsmen were to be considered for selection. As *The Leader* noted;

Shall the condition that Victorians would be willing to comply with against England prove a bar against the continuance of the race with New South Wales?²⁷

This displays the imperial sentiment which was present in Australia, along with a strong "national" feeling.²⁸ It also lends credence to the view of Australian nationalism responding to the beat of an imperial drum.

The race continued under the organisation of the Melbourne "bona-fide" clubs because the VRA did not want the possibility of a split occurring within its ranks and a non-manual labour association set up in opposition to it.²⁹ It was considered unjust that the manual labour clubs would have to subsidise the race they were ineligible to compete in. Although the VRA desired the continuance of the race, it was not to be at the expense of its own survival.

This arrangement continued until 1892, when the Victorians decided it was time for the intercolonial race to be open to all amateurs. This could have been in response to their third (and last) placing in the 1891 race, as previously they had dominated the event. The Victorians annoyance at not being able to field fully representative crews led to the proposal to institute a separate intercolonial race with South Australia and Tasmania under the conference definition, and New South Wales could "go to pot".³⁰

The prospect of being left out spurred the NSWRA into a debate over the inclusion of manual labourers.³¹ As mentioned, a closely fought struggle ensued with the manual worker eventually being rejected at a meeting in March, 1882, by thirteen votes to twelve on the grounds that the gambling element would be introduced if the proposal went ahead?³² This meant that the NSWRA could not compete against the other colonies in the proposed "open" race, but indications were that the Victorians were keen to row two intercolonial races

under the two separate amateur definitions.³³ However, the preference was for one race under a uniform definition with the NSWRA "altering their amateur definition so as to admit manual labourers who are prepared to row for honour and trophies."³⁴

The Melbourne committee decided to hand the organization of the intercolonial race back to the VRA after the 1892 event.³⁵ The result was that in 1893 and 1894 the NSWRA invited the other colonies to row under each colony's own amateur definition.³⁶

It is obvious from the debate over the manual labour amateur that a class-based motivation was still prevalent in the 1890s. The NSWRA did not abolish this clause until 1903, apparently in response to repeated poor performances at interstate level.³⁷ However, the conflict over the "caste" definition did not arise to the same heights again that decade, although the problem remained to sour the relations between the two premier rowing bodies for the rest of this period.

The other major concern of amateurism in the 1890s was the separation of the amateur from the professional and, in particular, the status of professionals in other sports. In 1892, the VRA passed an amendment to the amateur definition;

[An amateur is].. Anyone who has not competed in a race or match 'with or against an oarsman who does not come within the definition of an amateur.'³⁸ This did not only exclude matches for a prize, or exhibition, but also "friendly spins on the river" with such a person. It has been claimed that in the 1890s amateurism and professionalism drew further apart, and this is supported by this resolution.³⁹

The separation of the amateur and professional was not always so pronounced. Henry Searle was granted honorary membership of the East Sydney Rowing Club and wore their colours when he raced.⁴⁰ George Towns was heavily involved in coaching the New South Wales crews of the 1900s, was linked with the Balmain club, and coached his brother-the amateur sculler for NSW (J. Towns).⁴¹ Professional assistance was the norm and it was not until 1903 that the ARA in England considered curbing the assistance given by a professional.⁴²

In 1895, the question of amateur/professional interaction flared with the inclusion of a "cash cyclist" (R.E. Dawson) in the Victorian crew. According to the NSWRA he was a professional and should not have been in the crew. Not only did Dawson infringe the NSWRA definition, but he was a professional according to both

the VRA definition and the 1888 Conference definition (which the NSWRA did not recognize anyway!).⁴³ The section of the rule infringed, according to the NSWRA, was section two - "Anyone who has never competed in any open competition for a stake, money, or entrance fee". The NSWRA was justified in complaining and the VRA freely admitted that Dawson had cycled for cash, but stated he was still, an amateur. The Victorian logic was;

Sub-section 4 of this rule clearly applies to those who take part in athletic exercises other than rowing, and under that sub-section Dawson is exempt from disqualification, for he has never taught, pursued, or assisted in athletic exercises of any kind as a means of livelihood.⁴⁴

For the VRA, sub-section two was to be interpreted as for rowing and sculling only - a very narrow definition of "open competition".

Basically, the VRA stance was this - a man was an amateur provided he did not row for cash or receive money for assisting in the pursuit of athletic exercises in any way. However he was allowed to compete for, and receive, money prizes in other sports. This interpretation of an amateur was not acceptable to the NSW in view that "a man could not be an amateur in one branch of athletics and a money-earner in another".⁴⁵ To the New South Welshmen, professionalism was a character trait - a defect in one's personality.

The Queensland Rowing Association was caught up in the bitterness between the two powers and adopted a very diplomatic view. They considered Dawson would not qualify as an amateur under their rules, which were identical to the Victorians, but that each colony had the right to interpret their own rules to select their own amateurs.⁴⁶ Queensland did not consider it right to interpret another's rules for them and Victoria was most indignant that the NSWRA would question their judgment; The NSWRA believed they had every right to interpret their opponents' rules and that the other colonies had an equal right to examine theirs. This can be interpreted as being a microcosm of the political battles occurring between "protectionist" Victoria and the "free-traders" New South Wales.⁴⁷

To complicate the issue, the New South Wales eight refused to comply with the directive of their association not to row

in the race because there was a "professional" in the Victorian crew. This meant, therefore, that the cream of NSWRA rowing immediately became professionals by knowingly rowing against a non-amateur in the annual intercolonial race held in Brisbane on May 18, 1895. Consequently, the N.S.W. crew were disqualified as amateurs but almost immediately re-instated at a special meeting in August, 1895.⁴⁸

The actions of the NSWRA indicate that they considered professionalism a grave danger to their sport. They reacted strongly against it by adopting stringent conditions designed to prevent any contact with them. There was a section of the Melbourne rowing community who thought the same way.⁴⁹ The fear was that a "professional attitude" may "infect" the amateur men. The major concern was to keep out the betting element, which was destructive to the values of fair play and sportsmanship. There was also a working-class identification with professionalism and the rejection of any encroaches on amateurism may have been a rejection of the labour classes and their ideologies.

The 1890s were characterized by the mobilization of the working-classes in the economic and political spheres. Correspondingly, the upper classes also collected their resources and many bitter struggles were fought.⁵⁰ This class struggle may have manifested itself in rowing circles in terms of the manual labour bar and as a rejection of professionalism. It would be expected, then, the strongest opponents to manual labour amateurs were those who bore the brunt of the working class wrath in both colonies.

The feeling against "cash amateurs" in the VRA was not as strong as the NSWRA because of the inclusion of the provincial and country regions in the former. The NSWRA was an exclusively Sydney metropolitan entity so that its name was somewhat a misnomer. Whereas the VRA sought to include the country areas in its regattas and decision making, the Sydney clubs had minimal contact with its provincial centres because of the greater distances and expenses involved and largely because of the inflexibility of the Sydney clubs' amateur definition.

The country regions found it necessary to survive with a much more relaxed amateur definition, including manual labourers

and cash winners in other sports because of their smaller populations. The attitude of Sydney was that they were not to compete with the country areas because country rowers were not bona-fide amateurs. In fact, in 1899, a rival rowing association, called the North Coast Rowing Association, was established in Grafton over the amateur question. Its amateur definition was almost identical to the VRA definition. The NSWRA refused to recognize the new association because of its "dubious" amateur status, but was preparing for the intercolonial race against a Victorian crew rowing under a similar definition at the same time!⁵¹

The best illustration of the power of the provincial clubs in the respective colonies was during 1896-8. In the lead up to the 1896 race, the NSWRA stated that it would not compete against anyone who had competed for a cash prize in any branch of athletics.⁵² The VRA viewed this as both unreasonable and contradictory. Firstly, the Victorians were eligible to row as amateurs despite having competed for cash in another sport under their own definition (as discussed in the Dawson case); and secondly, the New South Welshmen were known to be allowed to sail for cash prizes. Therefore, the Victorians opted for a conference to be held in conjunction with the next intercolonial race in 1896.⁵⁵

The main thrust of the 1896 Conference was to determine the status of men who accepted cash prizes in other sports. The VRA was prepared to outlaw men who took cash in any sport but the NSWRA did not wish to include all sports in this definition - notably sailing. Significantly, the colonies were also not prepared to empower their delegates to bind their respective associations to the Conference decisions, so it was again only to make recommendations for the individual colonies to accept or reject if they wished.⁵⁴ The issue of provincialism was still extremely strong and, in spite of the progress being made in the federal sphere, there was no desire to accept a "federal" decision.

The 1896 Conference added the clause, "Anyone who is not disqualified as an amateur in any other branch of athletic sport" (Subsection 7) to the existing 1888 Conference definition.⁵⁵ This clause was passed only on the casting vote of the chairman - a New South Welshman. The VRA objected to the new clause because it neither

defined an "athletic sport" nor prohibited the earning of cash in every sport. There was also the problem of policing the new law in the country regions - a problem which was unique to the VRA.⁵⁶ Victoria, Queensland, or New Zealand did not adopt the recommendations of the 1896 conference.⁵⁷ Therefore, the VRA decided to attempt to define "athletic sports" more clearly and amended their rules to:

debar from rowing as an amateur within the colony any man who competes for a stake, money or entrance fee in running, walking, rowing, swimming, boxing, wrestling, cycling, pole and high jumping, long jumping, hammer throwing, weight putting, throwing cricket ball, kicking football, lacrosse,⁵⁸ tennis, skating, acrobatic exercises and sailing.

The New South Wales response to this was:

The inclusion of "sailing" savours of a cantankerous spirit, for there is nothing more, if as much, athletic exercise about it as there is about rifle shooting, pigeon shooting, or even billiards.⁵⁹

An analysis of the list of sports has provided a new insight on the amateur definition. Most notable were the omission of sports which did not include any great physical effort, such as rifle shooting, billiards, golf, lawn bowls or chess. Also excluded is horse riding, so a rower may have earned a substantial income from being a jockey, or a horse trainer, and still have been classed as an amateur.

The VRA had problems in passing the new amendment, but it was finally accepted (with sailing exempted) to agree with the demands of the NSWRA. It was plain that there was strong objection in Victoria to the adoption of the new rule - particularly from the country clubs - and there was talk of another association being formed in opposition.⁶⁰ From this point, the power of the country areas became most evident. Meanwhile, New South Wales had adopted the 1896 Conference proposals.

The new VRA rule was proposed to apply from January 1st, 1897 so that the various members would have time to learn of the rule. There were cases arising whereby the defendants were competing for cash prizes in other sports whilst unaware that the new law was in force as previous to this it was perfectly acceptable amateur behaviour. This did not appeal to the NSWRA as "The same idea introduced here would include Beach, Kemp, Stanbury, Nielsen, and all the others . . . as amateurs".⁶¹

Therefore, the NSWRA would only row the intercolonial races under the 1896 Conference definition, though it was decided not to make the definition binding on all the colonies. The VRA altered its rules to come into agreement with the Conference proposals by forbidding athletes who competed for cash in selected branches of sport. However, on the insistence of the country clubs' in particular, and to make rowers aware of the new rule, the VRA made the rule apply from January 1st, 1897. The NSWRA view was that the clause should have been retrospective and they could not accept the VRA position.⁶² Therefore, NSW did not compete in the 1897 intercolonial regatta.

According to the Victorians, the NSWRA had no appreciation of the difficulties faced by the VRA with regard to enforcing the amateur definition because the NSWRA was solely a Sydney institution.⁶³ With continual opposition from the provincial clubs (especially the Ballarat clubs) the new VRA definition was creating a rift between city and country and aggravating the differences between manual and non-manual labour clubs in Melbourne. With accusations that the Melbourne clubs were merely following Sydney's lead, and the desire not to have the rowing men of the colony split further into two camps, a compromise was sought by the VRA even though this jeopardised the already uneasy relations with the NSWRA.⁶⁴

Conferences between the city and country clubs reached this compromise by altering the amateur definition to allow amateurs to compete in athletic events in which cash was offered as a prize.

Why should an amateur be debarred from gaining honour in any competition, provided that if he wins he shall take a trophy?⁶⁵

The new Victorian arrangement, adopted in January, 1898, meant that amateurs were to receive a trophy in lieu of cash if they were successful. It also abolished the clause concerning competition against those ineligible to be amateurs. The new VRA definition was as follows:

1. Anyone who has never entered a race advertised as for watermen.
2. Anyone who has not competed in a rowing or sculling race for a stake, money or entrance fee (new clause).
3. Anyone who has not since the 31st December, 1896, accepted directly or indirectly an award in money as a competitor in any branch of sport (new clause).
4. Anyone who has never earned or partially earned his living by rowing, or taken money either directly or indirectly in recognition of his skill in rowing.

5. Anyone who has never taught, pursued, or assisted in athletic exercise of any kind as a 'means of livelihood.
6. Anyone who has not been employed in or about boats for money or wages.
7. Anyone who has not competed in a boat race in connection with which a wager or bet is recognized, or who has not been interested in any bet upon the result in which he is a competitor.
8. Anyone who is not or has not been within a period of three years a bookmaker.

New clause - For the purpose of section 3 of the preceding regulation, every Victorian oarsman shall, upon entering for any contest in sport for which a money prize is offered, declare himself to be an amateur and shall, if he be successful, obtain, and when required, furnish to the committee of this association a certificate, signed by a least two of the officers who governed such contest, that a trophy has been awarded to him of the full value of the money prize, such certificate to specify the article awarded as a trophy.

The basis of this definition showed that the VRA, under the influence of the provincial centres, now considered an amateur as somebody who had not accepted a cash reward. The notion that one could become a professional merely through contact in competition had been superceded. However, the NSWRA could not come to terms with this "queer sort of amateurism":

How amateurs can race in events for cash presumably against the most thorough professionals (which has all along been regarded as a "hostile" act as regards amateur status) and retain their status simply by purchasing a trophy with the coin, passes comprehension.

New South Wales was not represented again in intercolonial races in 1898.

One thing agreed to by all parties was that an amateur could not row or steer for a cash prize - the amateur only rowed for honour, glory and trophies. The stigma against cash prizes, as opposed to the acceptance of quite valuable trophies, was probably derived from:

. . .the Victorian (England) rationale of recreation which maintained that the most appropriate recreations were those which provided the greatest contrast with a man's work.

Cash was the reward for a man's work and, hence, deemed an unsuitable reward for his play. This attitude was consistent across all amateur sports of the time.

However, in Victoria, circa 1889, there was a great deal of argument over the nature and value of trophies. As a cost saving

measure, it was proposed that the VRA limit the value of the trophies. This had met with strong opposition. This is surprising as it indicates a willingness to "make the honour of the victory a secondary consideration to the value of the trophy".⁶⁹ An amateur association, theoretically, should not be concerned with the value of the trophy. It indicates that some sections of bona-fide amateurs were seeking a more tangible reward as shown by the VRA-approved list of trophies:

the following articles be recognized as trophies, viz.,
books, jewellery, cutlery, photos of winning and other crews,
pictures, boats, oars, sculls, bicycles, tricycles, walking
sticks, musical instruments . . .⁷⁰

The fact that some of these items could be readily turned to cash further confused the issue of "cash-free" amateurism.

In 1899, a compromise was reached. The VRA proposed to row the race under the conditions that each colony select their own amateurs.⁷¹ The NSWRA replied it would race under the 1896 Conference definition, but it would date the definition from January, 1897, and not retrospectively as previously proposed. Victoria agreed to this, which meant the crew was composed of men who had not competed in an event in which a money prize was offered since January 1897. However, it was proposed that another conference should be held.⁷²

On the eve of Federation, both sides considered themselves being conciliatory - Victoria proposing that each colony should be trusted to select their own bona-fide amateurs while New South Wales was urging that a common definition should be reached.⁷¹ This was still a reflection of the times - Victoria defending state rights for the smaller colonies in the new Federation, while New South Wales was partly afraid of Federation because it would lose some of its political and economic muscle. New South Wales desired to have a greater power over the affairs of the new Commonwealth than what it appeared to be gaining. The NSWRA, by enforcing a common definition on the other colonies, would have more control over amateur selection than if it was left to individual colonies. In this manner, it was reflecting the attitude of the colony.

The NSWRA's proposal to the 1899 Conference was to accept the 1896 Conference definition dating from January, 1897. Each association was to be represented by three delegates, and, most importantly, the associations voted that the majority decision of the

Conference be bonding on all the associations.⁷⁴ This indicates the colonies' preparedness to accept the decision of a federal body. However, there was some conflict to be expected as the VRA proposal to the Conference was to row the future races under each colony's own definition of an amateur.⁷⁵

The result of the Conference was a "complete victory for the New South Wales association".⁷⁶ Queensland and South Australia voted with New South Wales and Victoria against. This meant that not all Victorian amateurs would be eligible for their colony/state - which was the same predicament they had found themselves in with the manual labour question a decade earlier. As *The Leader* pronounced:

Victoria must either agree to the decision of the conference, or decide to withdraw from the intercolonial races.⁷⁷

With Federation only months away, this was not likely. However, the VRA definition of an amateur remained different from the interstate definition for some years to come; but there was not another interruption to the eights race over the amateur question.

The events of the 1890s set the pattern for the relatively calm period of the 1900s. The communication between the states improved with inter-state conferences becoming almost an annual event, indicating a desire for the associations to work together to promote amateur rowing. "State rights" was still a dominant issue, however. In 1908, Western Australia moved:

That an amateur definition in each State be adopted to agree with the definition governing interstate races.⁷⁸

The motion was not carried. Tasmania, in 1910, wished that the power to select re-instated amateurs in the interstate crews be granted to the state bodies. In order to understand this request from Tasmania, and the issue of State rights, it is necessary to relate the outcome of events of the interstate sculling race in 1908.

This sculling match, held at the same regatta as the eights in Melbourne in May, under the control of the VRA, was won by E. Jack of Tasmania. However, it can be ascertained from the minutes of the Interstate Conference of 1910 that Jack was later disqualified by the VRA "on the grounds that he made his living on the water".⁷⁹ The impression was that Jack was a boat-builder, "employed about boats"⁸⁰ According to a report in *The Australasian* in September, 1908,

Jack had been asked to submit a statutory declaration declaring that he "had not been engaged in or about boats for profit" Jack had replied that he had been engaged with his father in building boats of various descriptions. The VRA disqualified him after conferring with the other State Associations.⁸¹

It has been difficult to ascertain whether either of the Tasmanian rowing bodies (i.e., the Tasmanian Rowing Association and the Tasmanian Rowing Union) were consulted on this matter at this time. However, the South Australian association was not convinced that Jack should be disqualified. It understood that the 1908 interstate Conference had decided to take no action regarding the Tasmanian competitors for that year but that the Conference "had provided for proper guarantees as to the status of competitors being given in the future".⁸² This is supported by an amendment to the 1908 Conference minutes in 1909 and this was clearly the Tasmanian understanding of the "Jack Affair" .⁸³

In addition, in 1909, Tasmania proposed to the Conference that clause 5 of the amateur definition be altered to read "anyone who does not gain his living on the water and has never done so".⁸⁴ This proposed alteration from one which read "anyone employed in or about boats for money or wages" was of vital concern for Tasmania. Not only had Jack been disqualified, but there had also been problems associated with a member of the eight (J. Artis) who, in addition to being employed at the Electric Light Company, had also acted "as a Caretaker of one of the Rowing Sheds for a nominal sum".⁸⁵ This proposal was ruled out of order because one month's notice of an alteration had not been given but, in 1910, this proposal was again put forward by Tasmania.

Whilst this 1910 motion by Tasmania was carried as amended by the Victorian delegates, the VRA and the NSWRA did not recognize it.⁸⁶ This action was criticized by the Tasmanian delegate at the 1911 Conference but the Chairman of that Conference (A.E. Nash, from NSW) stipulated:

. . .that the NSW Rowing Association had power to refuse to ratify any business done by a conference, and they [NSW] conceded the same right to every other Association.⁸⁷

Such a statement highlights that the power of the Conferences was still restricted by the issue of state rights. Similarities can be

noted with the relationship of the new Federal government to the various state governments.⁸⁸

The structure of amateur rowing in Australia reflected the society's peculiar and uneasy form of nationalism which was a blend of provincialism and patriotism.

Just as the sentiment of Federation has run through other sports so has it had its influence on rowing, and has suggested the idea that a body more permanent and continuous in character, and clothed with greater power than the conference [be established] ...⁸⁹

Although *The Referee*, in 1902, had reported that the question of an Australian Rowing Association be left to each State Association," and Tasmania, in 1907, had put forward a motion for an Australian Board of Control which was rejected as being too "premature"⁹¹, the Conference appointed a sub-committee to draft a constitution for an "Australian Amateur Rowing Board of Advice". The role of this Board was to deal with matters pertaining to interstate events and "was not intended to lessen in any way the authority of the state associations"⁹²

Such a constitution was drafted for consideration by the state associations⁹³ and resubmitted to the interstate conference in 1910. It was postponed for consideration until the next conference.⁹⁴ However, it was never discussed at the 1911 Conference and, apparently, subsequently forgotten. *The Referee* displayed some concern that the absence of such a body could make amateurism in rowing more vulnerable to an attack, "perhaps insidiously", and that any attack should be repelled by the combined strength of a united Commonwealth.⁹⁵ When an Australian crew was to be sent to the Olympic Games in Stockholm in 1912, it was selected, organized, and largely funded by New South Wales. The reasons for this was the lack of a federal rowing body, the amateur requirements overseas, and the lack of a uniform amateur definition across Australia.

In summary, this paper has shown that amateur definitions in Australia during the 1890s were class based and are considered to be partly due to the mobilization of the upper and working classes against each other. The notion of amateurs competing with professionals was a major element in the evolution of the amateur definition. The authors also contend that amateur rowing at an intercolonial level was a much more accurate indicator of Australia's peculiar

nationalism than was professional sculling. It reflected elements of imperialism and individual "state rights" - an uneasy blend of provincialism, imperialism and nationalism. As White has stated, "at the birth of the Commonwealth, the precise relationship between Australia, the States and the mother country, . . . was often confused and at times open to misinterpretation".⁹⁶

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. S. Bennett, *The Clarence Comet*. (Sydney, 1973), p.66.
2. S. Bennett, *The Making of the Commonwealth*. (Melbourne, 1971).
3. For example; A. Brown, "Edward Hanlan, the World Sculling Champion, Visits Australia", *Canadian Journal of History of Sport*, Vol. 11, Dec., 1980, pp.1-44; Bennett, *Clarence Comet*; S. Bennett "Professional Sculling in New South Wales", *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, Vol.71(2), Oct., 1985, pp. 127-142.
4. For details of results and participants see G. Inglis, *Sport and Pastime in Australia* (London, 1912), pp.22304.
5. The authors are grateful for the support of John Boulton of the Australian Rowing Council for providing a copy of these minutes. It should be noted that these minutes were not always comprehensive and, indeed, for the years prior to 1906 only a summary of these meetings were included.
6. It is known that the records of the VRA for this period are now in the Australian Gallery of Sport, but were unavailable to the authors at the time of writing.
7. *The Leader*, November 30, 1889, p.21.
8. *Ibid.*, September 15, 1888, p.20.
9. *Ibid.*, June 16, 1888, p.21; September 15, 1888, p.20.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *The Referee*, October 24, 1888, p.8. Tasmanian amateurism had been similar to that of New Zealand - rowers could row for cash prizes which would then become the property of the rower's club. *The Leader*, September 1, 1888, p.21.

12. *The Referee*, November 14, 1888, p.3.
13. *The Leader*, September 15, 1888, p.20.
14. N. Gould, *Town and Bush*, (London, 1896), p.118.
15. *The Leader*, December 8, 1888, p.20. Preliminary research by the authors has indicated that similar conferences were held, in cricket in the same era, and similarly the rights of the individual colonies were to be protected. See D. Lane, "Sport and Federation, 1880-1900", (Unpublished paper, Department of Human Movement Studies, University of Queensland, 1986).
16. *The Referee*, December 5, 1888, p.3; *The Leader*, December 8, 1888, p.20.
17. *The Referee*, December 5, 1888, p.3; January 23, 1889, p.8; May 1, 1889, p.6.
18. *Ibid.*, November 27, 1889, p.3; *The Leader*, July 13, 1889, p.21.
19. *The Leader*, June 22, 1889, p. 21; *The Referee*, December 5, 1888, p.3.
20. *The Leader*, June 16, 1888, p.21.
21. *The Referee*, November 14, 1888, p.3.
22. *The Leader*, September 15, 1888, p.20.
23. *Ibid.*, December 4, 1891, p.15.
24. *The Referee*, April 17, 1889, p.6.
25. *Ibid.*, March 2, 1892, p.9; *The Leader*, March 5, 1892, p.15.
26. *The Leader*, December 15, 1888, p.21; January 26, 1889, p.21.
27. *Ibid.*, June 22, 1889, p.21.
28. For elaboration on this point see M. Dunn, "The Britannic Question" in *Australia and the Empire*, (Sydney, 1984), pp.60-86, and R. White, *Inventing Australia*, (Sydney, 1981).
29. *The Leader*, January 11, 1890, p.20.
30. *Ibid.*, October 3, 1891, p.22; *The Referee*, October 14, 1891, p.1; November 25, 1891, p.8.
31. *The Referee*, December 9, 1891, p.3.
32. *Ibid.*, March 2, 1892, p.9; *The Leader*, March 5, 1892, p.15.

33. *The Leader*, October 3, 1891 , p.22.
34. *Ibid.*, January 9, 1892, p.16.
35. *Ibid.*, March 12, 1892, p.17.
36. A.N. Jacobsen, *Australia in World Rowing*, (Melbourne, 1984), p.37.
The Leader, January 28, 1893, p.16. There appears to be some confusion over the adoption of this agreement as *The Referee* does not mention it. The record of the NSWRA meeting needs to be checked to ascertain the NSWRA's actions on the matter.
37. *The Australasian*, July 18, 1903, p.136.
38. *The Leader*, January 16, 1892, p. 16.
39. R. Counter, "Amateurism in Australia, 1890-1900 with Particular Reference to Rowing" (Unpublished paper, Department of Human Movement Studies, University of Queensland, 1980).
40. Bennett, *Clarence Comet*.
41. *The Australasian*, May 9, 1908, p.114.
42. *The Referee*, May 20, 1903, p.6.
43. *Ibid.*, May 22, 1895, p.1. A letter to *The Referee*, June 5, 1895, p.5 purportedly from a Victorian, claimed that J. Donald (the stroke of the Victorian eight) was also a "cash cyclist". The writer congratulated the NSWRA on its stand, further highlighting divisions within the Victorian establishment.
44. *The Leader*, June 1, 1895, p.18.
45. *The Referee*, August 7, 1895, p.7.
46. *Ibid.*, July 24, 1895, p.6.
47. M.N.H. Clark, *A Short History of Australia*. (Ontario, 1980) Ch.9.
48. *The Leader*, August 17, 1895, p. 18.
49. For example in *The Referee*, June 5, 1895, p.5, was a letter to the editor from "Victorian" congratulating the NSWRA and supporting its stand.
50. B. DeGaris, "1890-1900", F. Crowley (ed.), *A New History of Australia* (Melbourne, 1974), pp.216-259; R. Connell & T. Irving, *Class Structure in Australian History*. (Sydney ,1980).

51. *The Referee*, July 19, 1899, p.5; *The Leader*, June 3, 1899, p.18. Details of the amateur definition of the North Coast Rowing Association can be found in *The Referee*, July 19, 1899, p.5.
52. *The Referee*, March 4, 1896, p.7.
53. *The Leader*, March 7, 1896, p.18; March 28, 1896, pp.17-18.
54. *The Referee*, May 27, 1895, p.3.
55. Minutes of Interstate Rowing Conferences, pp.1-2. The clause, "anyone who is not or has not been within a period of three years a bookmaker" had also been added "unofficially" previously. See *The Leader*, February 9, 1889, p.20; February 16, 1889, p.20 and *The Referee*, December 9, 1891, p.3 for a discussion of this point.
56. *The Leader*, May 23, 1896, p.18; June 27, 1896, p.17.
57. *Ibid.*, July 29, 1899, p.19. There is some confusion over the Queensland Rowing Association's reaction to the 1896 Conference. It appears as if the QRA initially accepted the resolutions (*The Leader*, April 24, 1897, p.18; *The Referee*, April 28, 1897, p.6), however it appears that they did not enforce them.
58. *The Leader*, July 18, 1896, p.18.
59. *The Referee*, July 22, 1896, p.6.
60. *The Leader*, October 31, 1896, p.14.
61. *The Referee*, February 17, 1897, p.3.
62. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1897, p.6; *The Leader*, April 24, 1897, p.18.
63. *The Leader*, October 9, 1897, pp.17-18.
64. *Ibid.*, October 16, 1897, p.18; October 30, 1897, p.18; November 6, 1897, p.18.
65. *Ibid.*, November 20, 1897, p.17.
66. *Ibid.*, January 15, 1898, p.18.
67. *The Referee*, January 26, 1898, p.3.
68. P.C. Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*. (London, 1978), p.131. This is evident in the Australian way of thinking - see W. Bunday, *Reminiscences of Twenty-Five Years Yachting in Australia*,

- (Adelaide, 1888), pp.131-2.
69. *The Leader*, May 18, 1889, p.21.
 70. *Ibid*
 71. *Ibid.*, July 8, 1899, p.18.
 72. *Ibid.*, July 29, 1899, p.19; August 5, 1899, p.18.
 73. *Ibid.*, July 22, 1899, p.18; *The Referee*, July 26, 1899, p.6; August 2, 1899, p.6.
 74. *The Referee*, October 18, 1899, p.6; November 1, 1899, p.4. *The Leader*, October 14, 1899, p.18.
 75. *The Leader*, October 14, 1899, p.18.
 76. *Ibid.*, November 25, 1899, p.18.
 77. *Ibid.*, December 30, 1899, p.17.
 78. Minutes of the Interstate Rowing Conference (1908), p.20.
 79. *Ibid.*, (1910), p.33.
 80. *Ibid.*, (1908), p.18.
 81. *The Australasian*, September 12, 1908, p.670. The "winners certificate" was passed to the second place-getter (H. Brasch (Vie)) whose name appears in all subsequent historical records as the winner of the 1908 interstate sculling match.
 82. *The Australasian*, August 8, 1908, p.345.
 83. Minutes of the Interstate Rowing Conferences (1909), pp.24-5.
 84. *Ibid.*, p.26.
 85. *Ibid.*, (1908), p.18.
 86. *Ibid.*, (1911), pp.43-4; J. Lang; *The Victorian Oarsman*, (Melbourne, 1919), p.337.
 87. Minutes of the Interstate Rowing Conferences (1911), p.44.
 88. White, *op.cit.*, Ch.7.
 89. *The Referee*, March 17, 1909, p.10.
 90. *Ibid.*, June 11, 1902, p.4.
 91. Minutes of the Interstate Rowing Conferences (1908), pp.11-13.

92. *Ibid.*, (1909), pp.27-31. The Victorian delegates were opposed to the idea of a Board of Advice and abstained from voting. Therefore, no Victorian was delegated to the sub-committee to draft the constitution.
93. *Ibid.*, p.31. Details of this draft constitution can be found in *The Referee*, March 16, 1910, p.12.
94. Minutes of the Interstate Rowing Conference (1910), p.37.
95. *The Referee*, March 8, 1911, p.11.
96. White, *op.cit.*, p.113.