

Reet Howell (ed.), *Her Story in Sport: A Historical Anthology of Women in Sports*. Leisure Press, New York, 1982. pp.615 \$US19.95 paper.

Her Story in Sport presents a collection of articles detailing the nature and development of women's sport in North America. Drawing our attention to the absence of any significant and comprehensive analysis of women in sport by historians of the past, the editor, Reet Howell, endeavours to redress this imbalance by focusing on the participation and contribution of women in, and to, sport in Canada and the United States.

The cohesion and, inevitably, the significance of the anthology is compromised by its structural inconsistency. The first three sections progress chronologically, and concentrate largely on describing the recreational and sporting pursuits of women from the time of settlement to the 1980s. In the next - more satisfactory - section the articles are linked thematically, and the importance of educational institutions and reforms to the establishment and acceptance of sport for women is examined. Abandoning this approach the focus again shifts, and the final section consists of articles on various traditional (to women) and non-traditional sports. Without a consistent methodological approach to draw together the many points and insights made throughout the anthology, cohesive and relevant conclusions remain elusive.

The least satisfactory aspect of this collection is its overall lack of systematic analysis. The majority of articles, while good, rely heavily on a narrative-descriptive approach to sports history and fail to adequately discuss the wider implications of the material presented. This is perhaps a factor of when the articles were written, as some date back to 1970. Exceptions to this generalisation include the two articles by Marian Ritters. The first article, 'Women's Participation in Sporting Activities as an Indicator of a Feminist Movement in Canada Between 1867-1914' (pp. 141-53) utilises quantitative techniques effectively to provide a sound basis for analysis. The second, 'An Analysis of Humour Pertaining to Sportswomen in Canadian Newspapers from 1910-1920' (pp. 223-33) applies psychological and sociological concepts to determine social attitudes to sportswomen. Finally, important considerations, including the impact of race and class on women's sporting

experience is largely neglected. Admittedly Howell acknowledges these omissions, taking the opportunity to encourage others to extend research to these areas.

In spite of the criticisms mentioned above *Her Story in Sport* does make an important contribution to the growing body of literature on women in sport. Undoubtedly this type of detailed documentation provides the necessary basis from which any systematic and rigorous analysis of women in sport must spring. The collection is also a telling indication of the wealth of largely untapped information available on sporting women and should prove an inspiration to those of us similarly interested in describing and analysing the historical development of women's sport in the Australian context.

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