

highly readable and well produced. For any student of Australian sports history who needs an introduction to the world of horseracing *A Racing Heart* is an essential text.

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Wray Vamplew, *PAY UP AND PLAY THE GAME: PROFESSIONAL SPORT IN BRITAIN, 1875-1914*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988. Appendices, tables. pp.xix + 394, \$102

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth Century organised professional sport emerged as a new mass consumption industry in Britain. While sport has attracted the interest of popular and social historians it has been ignored by economic historians who have studied the economic growth of late Victorian and Edwardian Britain. Vamplew's masterly *Pay Up And Play The Game* seeks to fill this void in examining the growth and development of professional sport in Britain in the period 1875 to 1914. As Vamplew explains in the preface his aim 'was to produce a quantified economic and slightly social, history of commercialised sport by the application of comprehensible economic theory to hard, empirical data' (p. xiv).

In conducting his research and examining various issues Vamplew has focused on four major sports. They are horse racing, cricket, football (or soccer), in both Scotland and England, and northern union (or rugby league) following its split from rugby union over lost time payments for players in 1895.

The book is organised into six sections. The first contains two

chapters where Vamplew provides an overview of the work and examines the hitherto minor role played by economic historians in sports research. He debunks the notion that there was a 'golden age' of sport and demonstrates that the problems which seem to currently bedevil modern sport have strong historical antecedents. His case for economic historians is built around their ability to test hypotheses and 'to prevent the abuse and misuse of history' (p.13). The second section contains five chapters which examine how sport developed from a recreational activity or pastime to an organised commercial activity. Vamplew argues that economic growth was necessary to provide both the income and leisure to enable the growth and development of mass spectator sport.

Section three comprises four chapters where Vamplew examines issues associated with, what might be called, the product market of sport. These chapters examine whether clubs participated in sport to make profits or to provide utility for members and supporters; how the various leagues or controlling bodies operated as cartels in developing and co-ordinating the various joint needs of the respective sports; and the class or occupational background of club shareholders and directors.

Section four contains five chapters which examine the employment and earnings, or labour market experiences, of the respective sportsmen. Vamplew documents how each of the sports moved away from the amateur ideal and 'embraced', or accommodated themselves to, professionalism. He demonstrates the widespread existence of shamateurism with W.G. Grace, who, between 1870 and 1910, received £120,000 from playing cricket as an amateur (p. 201), being the most conspicuous example. The labour market for sportsmen was strictly controlled with restrictions on mobility and earnings. Other than for a

small number of highly skilled jockeys most sportsmen earned relatively little from their respective sports, had short careers, were subject to the ever present risk of injury, and had limited employment prospects once they retired from their sport. English soccer players formed a union in 1907 in an effort to improve their lot. Vamplew provides details of their activities including a major confrontation they experienced with the Football Association in 1909.

The fifth section contains two chapters which examine betting scandals and attempts at match fixing, and various measures to minimise crowd disturbances and enhance the general accountability and smooth functioning of the respective sports. The final section comprises a brief concluding chapter where Vamplew pulls together the threads of his study and repeats his call for economic historians to turn their skills to the study of sport.

This is an outstanding piece of work and Vamplew is to be congratulated for his scholarship, dedication and hard work. The breadth of his research and use of primary sources is breathtaking, as is his use and command of secondary material. Vamplew has collected a wealth of information on the various sports concerned and has produced a very readable and finely crafted work, written with an attention to detail and a wry sense of humour.

The only possible problems with *Pay Up And Play The Game* are that some readers might find the concluding chapter overly brief and that rugby league, presumably because of problems with sources, receives substantially less treatment than the other sports. There also seems to be a minor contradiction in the handling of English football's 1909 industrial dispute. In the introductory chapter we are told that it was

caused by the Players' Union threatening 'a national strike for the abolition of wage control' (p.5); whereas in the chapter on unionism it resulted from attempts by the Players' Union to pursue legal actions before the courts on behalf of members (p. 245). Vamplew may also have experienced some problems in his use of the utility maximisation hypothesis. The hypothesis, as developed in the 1960s and 1970s, was mainly used to explain the behaviour of clubs in the labour market in acquiring players whose cost in terms of wages and transfer fees exceeded their marginal revenue products. Vamplew has primarily used this hypothesis in attempting to discuss decisions made in the product market rather than the labour market. More generally this may reflect a historiography problem of applying 'modern' theoretical notions to earlier time periods.

Finally Vamplew's pleas concerning the role that economic historians can play in sports research needs to be considered. While he acknowledges the need for a more interdisciplinary approach (p.18) his plea for the specialist role of the economic historian needs to be challenged. In this context it is interesting to note that scholars from all disciplines seem to increasingly claim that they hold the key to knowledge. It might be more sensible to divide the world into social scientists who produce useful and insightful research and those who do not. Vamplew is an example of the former who has produced a seminal

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work on the economic history of commercialised sport in Britain in the period 1875 to 1914. This is a book which all of those who are interested in the serious study of sport should purchase.

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[This book was awarded the inaugural NASSH BOOK AWARD for the best sports history book published in 1988. Congratulations Wray - Ed.]