

THE DIVERGENT SPORTING CULTURES OF SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE¹

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Differences between the sporting cultures of Sydney and Melbourne have long been a matter of both academic and popular debate. A beginning point of discussion has usually been why the two cities opted for alternative football codes in the 19th century. Another issue of continuing interest has been the seemingly greater strength of Melbourne's sporting culture. The Melbourne Cup has long been part of national popular culture whereas few outside the racing fraternity know many pertinent details about the Sydney Cup. Melbourne always seems to be able to generate much larger audiences than Sydney for sporting events in general.

One of the limitations of the debate so far has been that there has been far too much attention to the end product of divergence - continuing 20th century manifestations of sporting cultures - and far too little historical analysis of the making of Sydney and Melbourne sporting cultures. To understand why Sydney and Melbourne developed such alternative patterns of sporting culture it is essential to explore the emergence of their respective sporting traditions.

Research on the early history of cricket and rugby in Sydney has suggested some initial hypotheses. It did not take long to discover that Sydney and Melbourne sporting differences date from the early days of European settlement. It also became quite clear that there were more areas of divergence than have been described in the literature.

Melbourne developed a great and powerful cricket club, whereas Sydney did not. The Melbourne Cricket Club was established in 1838, just three years after the city was founded. Sydney failed to develop any equivalent institution. The Australian Cricket Club, founded in 1826, was a dominant club for three decades but

folded in the 1860s. The Albert Cricket Club took over the mantle from the Australian Cricket Club in the 1850s but it too did not last. The absence of a dominant club in Sydney had far-reaching implications in terms of both of the organisation of the game and access to a suitable playing field for major matches.

The Melbourne Cricket Club secured a ground in 1853 when the Governor agreed to the enclosure of ten acres which was controlled exclusively by the Club. The Club benefited from the gate-money revenue from the first intercolonial cricket game played there in 1856. Sydney officials, by comparison, were still struggling to find an appropriate venue for major cricket for several decades after this. Unlike their Melbourne counterparts Sydney officials had to pay for the cost of erecting a temporary fence and stand at the Domain each time an intercolonial match was staged in Sydney in the 1850s. The great majority of the large crowds which attended the first Sydney intercolonial in 1857 - an estimated 9-10,000 on the first day and 15,000 on the second - did not pay. Those who sat in the 'outer' - a hill on the western side had a free view of proceedings. And even some who sat in the enclosure and stand area - where there was room for 1,500 persons - avoided payment due to the primitive character of the temporary fencing: payment was avoided by 'surreptitiously jumping the railing'.²

Cricket in Sydney was also hampered because cricketers shared the Domain with other forms of recreation, the military which drilled there and the public in general. Cattle grazed there as well.³ Major games were not played at a permanently-enclosed ground until 1871 when they were moved to the Albert Cricket Ground, which had been opened in 1864. Subsequently in 1878 major cricket was shifted to the Association Ground, which later became rather better known as the Sydney Cricket Ground.

Sydney's problems with cricket grounds did not end in 1878 as Philip Derriman has shown in his history of the New South Wales Cricket Association (NSWCA). Although the grant was drafted by

Richard Driver, who was both Minister for Lands and President of the NSWCA, a legal loophole caused the Association to lose control of the ground, control of which passed to a group of trustees. So began 'almost a hundred years of acrimony, off and on' between the trustees and the Association.⁴

Melbourne also had an established racecourse long before Sydney settled on Randwick as the focal point for local racing in 1860. The Melbourne search for an appropriate venue was initiated in 1839 and the first race was held at Flemington (then known as Melbourne) Racecourse on 3 March 1840. Sydney, by comparison, had a long and often frustrating search for a home for horseracing. Starting with the Hyde Park races of 1810 horseracing moved to a succession of venues at Belle-vue, Camperdown, Parramatta, Sandy Race Course (an earlier course on the Randwick site), Homebush and Petersham, all of which proved unsatisfactory for one reason or another.

There was also a time lag between football developments in the two cities. Melbourne had its first game of what became known as 'Australian Rules' in 1858, the Melbourne Football Club was formed in 1858, the first known set of rules for Australian Football was devised in 1859, and regular games took place from that year, with the first codification of rules between the clubs occurring in 1866. The Victorian Football Association was formed in 1877.

Organised football did not begin in Sydney until the mid-1860s when a form of rugby football emerged. There has been an unsupported claim that a University of Sydney Football Club was formed in 1863 but the first recorded game involving this club did not occur until August 1865 when the University met the Sydney Club.⁵ The earliest known Sydney inter-club football match was between Australian and Sydney clubs at Hyde Park in July 1865. A regular inter-club competition did not occur until the early 1870s after the formation of a number of other clubs: the Military and Civil (1867), Newington College (1869), Wallaroo (1870), teams at The King's School (1870), Calder House and Lyndhurst College (1872), North

Shore, which became St. Leonards in 1873 (1872) and Waratah (1973).

The dispute over rules led to the formation of the Southern Rugby Union (the first governing body of the code) in 1874. A consequence of that decision was the establishment in the same year of a form of competition amongst various clubs. The formation of the Southern Rugby Union, three years before the Victorian Football Association, was the one area where Sydney preceded Melbourne in football. However, in reality, the Melbourne clubs had an informal association from 1860, when a meeting of clubs decided upon the rules of football. They met again in 1866 and 1874 to revise the rules. Regular inter-club competition in Sydney was some fourteen years behind the first 'challenge' competition occurring in Melbourne.

Suburban competition was much slower to develop in Sydney. Most of the first Melbourne football teams were based on localities - though some of them bear limited relation to their subsequent namesakes - such as Melbourne, South Yarra and St. Kilda (1858), Emerald Hill (South Melbourne) and Prahran (1859), Richmond, Collingwood and Melbourne University (1860), Royal Park and Essendon (1862), Fitzroy and Carlton (1864). Although Sydney had some suburban cricket teams by the 1850s, and some suburban football teams from the 1870s, most of the dominant teams were not based on localities. There were clubs such as Albert, Warwick, Carlton and Belvedere in cricket. Wallaroo and the University of Sydney were the dominant rugby clubs of the 1870s though there were suburban clubs at St. Leonards, Balmain and Burwood. The limited development of a suburban competition in Sydney rugby was reflected in the championship results from 1874-1893: suburban-based clubs were premiers on only four occasions.⁶ A fully fledged suburban competition, as Martin Sharp has shown, did not emerge in Sydney until 1891 in cricket and 1900 in rugby.⁷

This catalogue of historical and contemporary divergences in Sydney and Melbourne sporting cultures provides a fresh incentive to

re-evaluate the various explanations of difference. It is not an object here to review the specific reason(s) why Melbourne introduced an Australian form of football,⁸ whereas Sydney focussed more on the established code of rugby - further research is required on both codes before this question can be answered definitively. Rather the aim is to look at the many differences in sporting culture as a whole.

Based on the past work of others and our own work it is possible to suggest no less than seven possible hypotheses as to why the cultures of the two cities diverged. Many of the explanations overlap. Some authorities, in addition, have preferred to nominate more than one reason for cultural divergence. Andrew Lemon, author of *The History of Australian Thoroughbred Racing*, Vol. 1, has suggested that 'gentlemen, gold and geography' were the reasons why Melbourne became 'the capital city of early Australian racing'.⁹

Rather than providing any definitive answer on why Sydney and Melbourne were and are so different, the aim of this article is to encourage further research on the making of the Sydney and Melbourne sporting cultures along with those in other cities and regions elsewhere. However, there will be some attempt to weigh the validity of each of the seven explanations in the light of what is now known.

Dullness

First, there is a facetious theory - no doubt emanating from a Sydney source - that Melbourne is such a dull and boring place that masses of people flock to sporting events because of the paucity of alternative entertainment. Explanations for cultural divergence have been aired from time to time such as the one suggested by author Thomas Keneally in 1990:

I think Sydney is the sort of town where passions are diffused ... There is something about it, the big sky or

the nature of society, that absorbs a lot of the enthusiasm. You don't have your whole sense of self invested in your team winning the game. He or she in Sydney has more to fall back on. People here [in Sydney] have more hope.¹⁰

No one should make too much of the Sydney argument that Melbourne's strong sporting culture has emerged because of the general atmosphere of cultural dullness. Such an explanation is often trotted out when all other more objective forms of analysis seem to have been exhausted. It also perpetuates the totally unproven and fallacious myth that sport (along with other forms of mass entertainment) is in opposition to high culture. There is good reason to believe that the reverse is true: organised sport thrives alongside other forms of urban culture. While there may be an element of truth in some assertions of cultural difference such as those developed by Keneally, they are based on intuitive judgments which can be accepted only as an article of faith.

A more serious and positive element of this explanation- which remains to be explored - is the possibility that there are greater informal recreational alternatives in Sydney which may have reduced the attractiveness of organised sport. With its many beaches, bays and rivers, Sydney has been prominent in many forms of aquatic culture: rowing, sailing, boating, informal and competitive swimming, surfing and surfboard riding. Although beach culture is a relatively late (post-1900) development, many other forms of aquatic culture were popular in the 19th century.

Administrators

Next there is the hypothesis of dominant administrators which we will label the Rex Harcourt theory as he suggested this explanation indirectly at the Australian Society for Sports History (ASSH) Conference of 1987. Melbourne sporting culture benefited, right

from its inception, in having powerful friends in high places, men who were concerned to frame new institutions. Melbourne developed a tradition of capable administrators who were able to organise the sporting requirements in an efficient and business-like manner.

A related hypothesis was that Melbourne sporting culture was enhanced by the existence of what appears to be a more homogeneous elite from 1835. There was a common core of establishment individuals, gentlemen squatters, who founded the influential Melbourne Club (1838), the Melbourne Cricket Club (1838) and the Port Phillip Turf Club (1841). Paul de Serville, author of *Port Phillip, Gentlemen*, has noted that those who founded these three institutions represented an 'inner circle' who 'by default were the actual leaders of Melbourne society. This tightly-knit establishment virtually ran the city in its early years: they 'served on the welcoming committees, ran the clubs, acted as stewards at balls, organised regattas, and directed banks, business ventures and charitable and philanthropic organisations'.¹¹

It is frequently implied that Sydney lacks a tradition of effective and professional administrators capable of developing modern ground facilities and running a sport along the lines of the Victorian, now Australian, Football League. Historically, Sydney sporting administrators were far less homogeneous than their Melbourne counterparts. Different elites within Sydney, as shown below, patronised horseracing, cricket and later football.

Sports historians have paid far too little attention to the role of administrators in advancing or hindering sporting culture. Much more attention has been paid to the more visible and charismatic players although undoubtedly long-serving administrators play a key role in shaping sporting cultures. The recent history of Sydney Rugby League has underlined the importance of administration. Since a new administration took over the reigns in 1983, Rugby League has greatly enhanced its image, widened its support base and generally revitalised a game which was much criticised before that time.

Andrew Lemon has rightly noted that the ‘gentlemen’ of Melbourne played an important role in the early establishment of important sporting institutions. Melbourne sporting traditions must have benefited greatly from the organising talents and influence of a key figure in de Serville’s ‘inner circle’, Frederick Armand Powlett (1811-65) who was ‘a keen sportsman, was a renowned cricketer, race-horse owner, and huntsman’.¹² He is believed to be a descendent of the Rev. Charles Powlett, who was associated with the Hambledon Cricket Club, a celebrated 18th century English cricket club.

Powlett was a founding member of the Melbourne Cricket Club, and was its first President, the Melbourne Club, which he presided over in 1843 and 1845, and the Melbourne Racing Club, later the Port Phillip Club. Powlett moved in the right circles from the time he arrived at Port Phillip in 1838. He was a confidant of Lieut-Governor La Trobe and was agent for his property. He was initially a police magistrate, then was commissioner for the Westernport district and became the first gold commissioner in the colony. He was chief commissioner of crown lands from 1853-60.

While the gentlemen of Melbourne appeared to work together in various committees to establish a range of sporting institutions, the leading patrons of sport in Sydney were a much less homogeneous group. Probably because sports emerged over a longer time frame than in Melbourne, Sydney produced one group of individuals which promoted horseracing, another which was keen to advocate cricket, and, much later, those who favoured football. The initiative for the Sydney Turf Club, founded in 1825, came from Sir John Jamison (1776-1884) and attracted some of the leading citizens of the colony as founders, such as William Charles Wentworth. Influential cricket promoters from the 1830s included Edward Flood, Michael Fitzpatrick, Richard Driver, William Tunks and E.M. Ward. ‘Monty’ Arnold was the dominant figure of Sydney rugby.¹³

Conflict within the rather more diverse sporting establishment of Sydney inhibited, at least temporarily, the growth of Sydney sporting institutions. Sport in Sydney also suffered because political differences, which were a feature of the larger and more complex society of Sydney, spilled over into sporting clubs. There was a celebrated brawl, which had very little to do with sport, in the Sydney Turf Club in 1827 between the supporters and critics of Governor Darling, broadly those who favoured the exclusivist cause and those who leaned more to the emancipist faction. The Turf Club split on party lines and Sydney ended up with two racing clubs, the Sydney Turf Club and the Australian Racing and Jockey Club.

Politics also split the Australian Cricket Club, the dominant club in Sydney, in 1835. There were echoes of the emancipist versus exclusivist battle in this conflict also. Trouble in the club stemmed from the desire of the dominant native-born group to remove the British-born from the club's membership.¹⁴

However, it would be unwise to make too much of these differences in sporting elites in Sydney and Melbourne. Future research on Melbourne sport may reveal just as many conflicts over sporting institutions and may uncover some other capable administrators from less establishment backgrounds. Initial research on the social backgrounds of cricket administrators in Sydney in this period suggests that cricket had plenty of friends in high places. Edward Flood, founder of the Australian Cricket Club, became Mayor of Sydney in 1849 and was a parliamentarian in the 1850s, and Michael Fitzpatrick (1816-1881) rose to become an influential public servant after joining the Lands Department in 1837. He became the first Under Secretary for Lands and Works under the first Responsible Government of 1856. Richard Driver Junior (1829-1880) was an influential colonial politician, 'one of the chief law reformers in parliament and [probably the most effective improver concerned with the development of Sydney]'.¹⁵ From the 1830s there were a surprisingly large number of cricketers involved in managing,

editing and writing in newspapers which assured that cricket had an excellent press coverage from this time.¹⁶

While it seems clear that the sporting elite of Melbourne contributed to the early establishment of sporting institutions, sufficient research has yet to be undertaken to establish that Melbourne had a decided advantage in the 1830s. Sydney had its share of capable and well-placed administrators and patrons at this time. Sydney, too, seems to have had its fair share of sporting clubs and events during this period.

Timing

A third and related hypothesis stresses the timing and character of the settlement of Sydney and Melbourne. Organised sport was slow to get off the ground in the penal settlement of Sydney whereas it was a matter of immediate concern in the freer settlement of Melbourne. The latter city also benefited because organised sport, and particularly the team games of cricket and football and supporting ideologies, were beginning to emerge by the 1830s.

The character and timing of early settlement in Sydney and Melbourne did play an important role both in the development and timetable of sporting institutions in both places. The first formally organised sporting event in Sydney - the Hyde Park races - dated from 1810 and properly constituted clubs, such as the Sydney Turf Club and the Australian Cricket Club, did not emerge until 1825 and 1826 respectively. By contrast equivalent sporting institutions appeared in Melbourne within a matter of a few years.

However, it is unlikely that the differing timetable provides an explanation of divergent sporting cultures in general though the time lag between the establishment of organised football in Sydney may be one factor in the preferred codes of the two cities. Despite the slow beginning of organised sport in Sydney, the growth of free settlement, the development of local industry and the rise of a freer press all

stimulated the growth of sporting institutions in the 1820s and 1830s. In a sense Sydney's sporting culture paralleled that of Melbourne in the 1830s and 1840s.

Education

Next there is an education explanation, aired by Mark Connellan, which stresses the fact that there was a larger network of public schools at an earlier stage in Melbourne than in Sydney. Certainly there were more public schools in Melbourne than in Sydney in 1860: Scotch (1851), Geelong Grammar (1855), St. Patrick's (which became Xavier's) (1855), and Melbourne Grammar (1858) had all been founded whereas in Sydney there was only The King's School (established in 1831, closed in 1864 and reopened in 1869) and Sydney Grammar (1857) of the great public schools which continued into the 20th century. The initial games of 'Australian football' in Melbourne were between public schools in 1858. Public schools such as King's and Newington College (1863) played an important role in the rise of Sydney rugby.

This approach is supported by a recently-published history of boys' and girls' corporate secondary schools in Australia. An appendix, which lists corporate schools founded in various colonies, suggests that Victoria had about twice as many as New South Wales by 1872. A key factor, as the authors put it, was 'Melbourne was rich and calling out for corporate schools after the gold rush began'.¹⁷

Research on the early history of Sydney rugby has established how important the public schools were in the rise of football in Sydney. Delegates from the King's School and Newington were present when the first control board, the Southern Rugby Union was established in 1874. Public school teams played in the first inter-club competition. Some of the other clubs, such as the Wallaroo, consisted mainly of old boys of King's. Some of the dominant rugby administrators, such as

William Munnings Montague Arnold (1851-1919) were old boys of King's as well.

The earlier development of a network of public schools in Melbourne in the 1850s was a fillip for organised sport and was a factor in the rise of Australian Rules football. However, education may not be a crucial factor explaining divergent cultures. While the famous games involving St. Kilda, Melbourne, Grammar and Scotch College of 1858 feature in Geoffrey Blainey's book on the origins of Australian football, educational institutions as a whole are not prominent in the emergence of the code in Melbourne.¹⁸

Blainey also concluded that the University of Melbourne club played a minor role. For while it took the field in 1860 and challenged Melbourne for the Caledonian Society's Challenge Cup in 1862, the club 'seems to have dropped out of senior football to return again as a member of the Victorian Football League in 1909'.¹⁹ This was in stark contrast to the dominant role played by the University of Sydney along with King's and Newington in football's development in Sydney.²⁰

Informal suburban teams²¹ provided the chief impetus for the growth of football in Melbourne. Some of these clubs came and went, and others were reformed in later years. The Victorian Rules of 1866 were, not surprisingly, drafted by the delegates' of Carlton, Melbourne, Royal Park and South Yarra Clubs, and when they were revised in 1874, the delegates who attended were from clubs representing Albert Park, Carlton, Geelong, Melbourne, Hotham (North Melbourne) and St. Kilda.²² There was not a delegate from the University Club or from a private school.

Money

Although Andrew Lemon does not subscribe solely to the argument that money alone elevated Victorian horseracing to

pre-eminence, he clearly sees it as the crucial factor and what we will define as the fifth explanation:

Gold changed everything. In all the other colonies the gold rushes of the early 1850s were a setback to racing. In Victoria, where the richest gold fields were discovered, the result was very different. In the space of just one decade racing developed from an amateur enthusiasm and a rustic sport into a flourishing industry. In that one decade, racing in Victoria soon rivalled and then surpassed that of New South Wales.²³

The existence of greater wealth in Melbourne, and the growth of a middle class, undoubtedly helped support an expanded public school system from the 1850s. Money also obviously contributed to the rise of the sporting product: more finance produced larger stakes and more capital to devote to breeding along with a larger investment in the allied industries of bookmaking and gambling. Gold also was responsible for a spectacular surge in the population of Melbourne in the 1850s and subsequent decades. Sydney's population growth rate was slower and it did not catch up with Melbourne until after 1900.²⁴

Money was certainly an important factor in the rise of Melbourne horseracing to pre-eminence by 1860 by which time it had eclipsed Sydney as the capital of Australian horseracing. By 1860 Melbourne had the best racecourse, could boast of the largest crowds - an estimated 40,000 turned up to a race meeting at Flemington in 1859 - and had the largest entry for races and the greatest stake money. Gold discoveries had the opposite effect on horseracing in Sydney which slumped dramatically by 1854 when it seemed that the Australian Jockey Club and the premier course at Homebush might be on the verge of extinction. The fortunes of Sydney horseracing did improve from 1855. To catch up with Melbourne was one factor which influenced Sydney horseracing officials and was one reason why an improved course at Randwick - to rival Flemington - was opened on 29 May 1860.

Money, as Lemon has noted, was not the only factor in Melbourne's rise to horseracing pre-eminence. Melbourne's superior course had been chosen long before gold was discovered. Large crowds at Flemington were also a reflection of the growth of a public transport network in Melbourne: some of the large crowd of 40,000 in 1859 came by train and others by steamers. Many who attended the first Melbourne Cup travelled on a new branch line to the course which had been opened by the Essendon Railway Company on 26 February 1861. Money seems to have been less of a direct factor in the growth of others sports in Melbourne, such as cricket and football.²⁵

Geography

Rob Hess stated the case for geographical differences at the 1987 ASSH Conference: arguing that Melbourne has plenty of flat ground whereas much of Sydney is hilly. It is far more difficult to travel from one suburb to another because Sydney's immediate hinterland is intersected by rivers, coves and bays. This constitutes the sixth hypothesis. Geography may have contributed to divergent cultures in two senses. With plenty of flat space available in Melbourne, carving out recreational facilities such as ovals and racecourses was less of a problem than it was in Sydney. The size of most Melbourne ovals, which are almost invariably larger than equivalent grounds in Sydney, provides an illustration of this point. The flatter terrain of Melbourne also was a factor in the development of a superior transport network. It was and always has been easier to get around in Melbourne than in Sydney. Certainly, easier transport access in Melbourne, both public and private, has contributed to larger sporting crowds there.

Geography is obviously a factor in Melbourne's sporting pre-eminence, particularly its ability to attract large crowds. The Melbourne Cricket Ground is at the hub of Melbourne's transport

network, whereas the Sydney Cricket Ground is far less accessible for much of the Sydney population. The same is true for those travelling to the respective grounds by private vehicle: it is easier to travel to and from the Melbourne Cricket Ground than the Sydney Cricket Ground. Sydney is a more hilly city than Melbourne and it is likely that there was a greater amount of potential flat land for sport than there was in Sydney.

However, the geography of the respective cities does not provide a complete explanation for different patterns of land use for sport in the two cities. Such a conclusion emerges from an examination of the evidence presented before an 1861 Select Committee on the State and Management of the Sydney Domain.

A central issue before the Committee related to the recent erection of a permanent fence around a portion of the Domain. A permanent fence in question enclosed that area of the Domain which was used for club and intercolonial cricket. Cricket officials preferred a permanent fence rather than more temporary hurdles which were placed in position before and removed after each match. This was a costly exercise. A smaller amount of revenue was collected from matches with temporary fencing as it was easier for the public to evade gate entry. There was also the continuing problem of damage to the cricket area by cows and horses, which grazed on the unprotected cricket ground.

One of the cricketing persons interviewed by the Select Committee was Captain E.M.W. Ward, who was prominent in cricketing circles both as a player and official and was also a Trustee of the Domain. Ward was asked whether cricketers were aware that a piece of Government land near the Victoria Barracks [virtually where the Sydney Cricket Ground now stands] was unoccupied. He gave a revealing answer to this government overture for cricketers to take advantage of this vacant flat land:

Yes, I am aware of that; and I am also aware that Mr. Robertson [Secretary for Lands] offered us land both

at Randwick and elsewhere for the cricketers; but the Cricketers' Association said very justly that you could not possibly expect the large number of persons who live in Sydney and wish to have a little recreation at cricket in the afternoon to walk out that distance after their days work is over; and in fact that giving them a piece of ground at Randwick would stop cricket altogether, except among those living near there. But in the Domain, not only the cricketers, but a very large number of the people of Sydney lounge every Saturday afternoon.²⁶

Town Planning

Such a comment points to the final explanation of divergence to be discussed here, a town planning one. Flat land was available in Sydney but it was deemed too far away to be desirable. The cricketers were reluctant to move to the Moore Park/Randwick area because Sydney's public transport infrastructure was in its infancy. *The* decision also underlined the fact that suburbanisation in Sydney proceeded more slowly than in Melbourne.

This hypothesis emanates from the work of Melbourne economist Lionel Frost, *Australian Cities in Comparative View*.²⁷ Frost argues that Sydney, along with two other convict settlements at Brisbane and Hobart, developed densely-developed haphazardly-planned 'walking cities', along the lines of typical European preindustrial cities. Melbourne by contrast, along with Adelaide and Perth, was developed along novel lines - dubbed 'New Urban Frontier' cities - which were popular in the Americas. Cities of this type avoided urban congestion by spreading outwards 'through the replication of suburbs of single-family houses'.²⁸

Frost argues that there were a number of important differences between 'walking cities' and those of the 'New Urban Frontier' type. The latter cities were dependent from inception on the development of an effective public transport system. They also encouraged earlier

suburbanisation - both for the middle and working classes - from an earlier stage than in the 'walking cities'. Finally, because the urban core was far less densely settled urban space was at less of a premium.

Drawing on this approach Melbourne had a number of crucial advantages over Sydney in terms of the development of sporting culture. The city of Melbourne was much less densely developed hence there was more available space for recreation in the immediate vicinity of the city. The early development of a suburban network, supported by an efficient and well organised public transport system, provided an incentive for locality-based clubs to emerge.

Inner-city land in Sydney was always at a premium because the town site was in close proximity both to its harbour and water supply. Sydney was a compact and densely-developed city. This remained true throughout the 19th century. By 1890 the population of the two cities was roughly equivalent but Melbourne covered twice the area of Sydney.²⁹ Sydney's cumbersome and unplanned public transport system was slow to develop.

Within Sydney there was always a heavy demand placed on recreational land within walking distance of the city centre. Hyde Park, formally established in 1810, was the city's first recreational field but it also served as a type of city common. It was initially the site of a race course, and then included a cricket ground. The Park was also a drilling ground for the military, a site for sports such as quoits, while the general public promenaded through the park, and cattle, sheep and even goats grazed there. During the 1840s and 1850s it also became something of a public garden when trees and shrubs were planted and walkways established. The condition of Hyde Park was a continuing problem for the cricket fraternity and was the subject of regular complaint. The public cut across the cricket field and established paths on the ground, animals made their way on to the cricket area as the fence was frequently in a state of bad repair, and quoit players practised near the pitch area and cut up the ground badly. The move to the Domain alleviated the situation to some extent

but cricket again had the problem of sharing this area with the public, the military, other sports and grazing animals.

Melbourne from the start developed along different lines. The separation of the port from the site of fresh water and the city by a distance of ten kilometres provided an incentive for the early development of an efficient public transport system. Suburbanisation also proceeded at a greater pace than Sydney and 'the working classes shared in suburbanization from the outset'.³⁰ Town planning provided Melbourne with two great advantages over Sydney in terms of the availability of recreational land. Since the inner core of the city was less densely developed there was more land available within walking distance of the city. The earlier development of suburban communities encouraged the establishment of clubs and the creation of recreational territory further away from the city.

Differences of geography coupled with town planning (the two factors are obviously related) then appear to have been and continue to be the more important factors in explaining the historical development of divergent sporting cultures in Sydney and Melbourne. Other factors clearly had some impact as well: the amount of money available for sport, the role played by individual administrators and educators and possibly the different football timetable of the two cities.

Conclusions

This preliminary investigation of differences between two sporting cultures has suggested the importance of the notion of sport and space. We can thank geographers, such as John Bale, for making us more aware of this dimension of sport.³¹ There is much fruitful work yet to be done on the issue of the availability of recreational land in urban, suburban and rural communities. While government officials were willing to make land available for sport in Sydney, it was on different terms than it was initially in Melbourne. The land in

Sydney was shared with different sports and interests. Geography and town planning concerns provided the citizens of Melbourne with an abundance of recreational space in convenient locations.

Availability of, access to, and the control of land all influence the particular shape of a sport, its financial status and its support base. Sports which gain access to conveniently-located and suitably-developed land have much greater potential to prosper than others which either have to put up with less suitable land or have an unsatisfactory and uncertain tenure over this space. The particular location of a sports field will enhance or diminish its significance to a suburban or city community.

Availability of space ties in directly with political power because it was (and is) colonial (and state), municipal and educational authorities who determined which sports had access to their sporting space and on what terms. Access to preferred space has helped shape the hierarchy of Australian sport, from those who are the preferred and privileged sports to those who have to fight to secure suitable grounds.

Contests over sporting space have been a continuing but under- documented theme of Australian sporting history. Gaining regular access to major stadiums, such as the Sydney and Melbourne cricket grounds, or the best established municipal ovals, such as Sydney's Wentworth Park, were issues over which the various codes fought in the late 19th century. The more recent history of rugby in Sydney in fact provides many fascinating examples of differing notions of the location of the best sporting space for the code. The question of the control over and access to the Sydney Cricket Ground has continued to spark controversy during the past two decades.

NOTES

1. The authors wish to thank Mark Connellan, Rex Harcourt, John O'Hara and Richard Stremski for their comments.

2. Jas Scott, 'Early Cricket in Sydney', vol. 2, p.29, unpublished manuscript, NSWCA Library.
3. NSWLA, 'State and Management of the Sydney Domain': *Report of the Select Committee on the State and Management of the Sydney Domain...*, NSWPP, 1861-3 pp. 1,001-48.
4. Philip Derriman, *True to the Blue: A History of the New South Wales Cricket Association* (Sydney: Richard Smart, 1985), p. 36.
5. Jack Pollard, *Australian Rugby Union: The Game and the Players* (North Ryde: Angus and Robertson, 1984), pp. 480, 502. Another date, 1864, is suggested on p. 34.
6. Premiers in the Sydney First Grade competition from 1874-93 (according to the records of the NSWRU) were: University (9 times), Wallaroo (6), Balmain (1), Burwood (1), Gordon (1), Redfern (1), Waratah (1). The premiers from 1894-99 were: Randwick (1894-7), Pirates (1898), Wallaroo (1899).
7. Martin Sharp, 'Sporting Spectacles: Cricket and Football in Sydney, 1890-1912', (Ph.D. thesis, Australian National University, 1986).
8. Geoffrey Blainey, *A Game of Our Own: The Origins of Australian Football* (Melbourne: Information Australia, 1990), is one of the latest attempts to develop some explanations for this development. Blainey has introduced some novel arguments claiming, among other things, that the weather - which could be an eighth explanation - was a vital factor softening the rougher rules of rugby. This explanation has been disputed by Richard Stremeski in a forthcoming review of Blainey in the *International Journal of the History of Sport*.
9. (Melbourne: Classic Reproductions, 1987), p. 121.
10. *Good Weekend*, 19 May 1990, p. 46.
11. Paul de Serville, *Port Phillip Gentleman and the Good Society in Melbourne before the Gold Rushes* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 58.
12. *ADB*, vol. 2.
13. Tom Hickie's research on the rise of rugby in Sydney has revealed that by the 1860s there was an overlap between cricket and football administration in Sydney. The Albert Cricket Club, for instance, played an important role in the rise of rugby.
14. R. Cashman, 'The Rise and Fall of the Australian Cricket Club 1826-68', *Sporting Traditions* 5.1, pp. 112-30.
15. *ADB*, vol. 4.
16. Francis Stephen and G.R. Nicholls were joint editors of the *Australian* from 1833 before it was taken over by another cricketer J.R. Hardy who became editor and proprietor from 1835-7. George Cavenagh was joint editor (1836-7) and sole editor (1837-9) of the *Sydney Gazette*.
17. Geoffrey Sherington, R.C. Petersen, Ian Brice, *Learning to Lead: A History of Girls' and Boys' Corporate Secondary Schools in Australia* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1987), p. 26.
18. Blainey, *op.cit.*
19. *ibid*, p. 65.
20. Pollard, *op.cit.*, pp. 480-1, 502-4.
21. Mark Connellan has cautioned that it is difficult to isolate the impact of schools on sporting culture as a whole. Schools were involved in non-school competition playing against business houses, occupational and suburban teams. Inter-school competitions were a rarity until the late 19th century.
22. Blainey, *op.cit.*, p. 104.

23. Lemon, *op.cit.*, p. 221.

24. Year	Sydney's Population	Melbourne's Population
1856/7	69,173	76,560
1861	95,789	139,916
1871	137,776	206,780
1881	224,939	282,942
1891	383,283	490,896
1901	481,830	496,079
1911	636,355	593,237

25. The size of crowds which attended major football and cricket matches in the two cities were comparable in the 19th century. See Richard Cashman, *Australian Cricket Crowds: The Attendance Cycle* (Kensington: History Project, 1984).
26. 'State and Management of the Sydney Domain', p. 1034.
27. Lionel Frost, *Australian Cities in Comparative View* (Ringwood: McPhee Gribble, 1990).
28. *ibid*, p. 40.
29. *ibid*, p. 41
30. *ibid*, p. 42.
31. John Bale, *Sport and Place* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1982); John Bale, (ed.), *Sports Geography* (London: E & F Spon, 1989). Bale is also the European editor of an international magazine of sport, *Sport and Place*, which began a few years ago.