

DISORDER ON THE SIDELINES OF AUSTRALIAN SPORT

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Within sporting arenas, the main event on centre field proceeds under the watchful gaze of the crowd. Standing on the sidelines, so to speak, spectators come to sporting events to follow, to support, to cheer on their team or competitor, to be entertained and to enter into the collective rise and fall of emotion that accompanies the game's moments of passion. There are also occasions when crowd members generate their own moments of passion in the form of riots, pitch invasions, disruptions to play, brawls in the stands, physical clashes between opposing groups and occasionally conflict between crowd members and players. On the international sporting arena, such kind of disorder has resulted in several catastrophic instances of mass death and destruction to property. In England the phenomenon of soccer hooliganism became institutionalised and reached serious proportions during the 1970s and 1980s.

Within Australia crowd disorder is not so commonplace however, it has occurred with some regularity in sports such as cricket, soccer and motorcycle racing. This paper addresses the phenomenon of crowd disorder in Australian sport and develops an argument in three parts: (i) that there is a history of crowd disorder in Australian sport dating back to the nineteenth century; (ii) notwithstanding this history, sports crowd disorder exists at a comparatively low level of intensity in Australia and in only a few notable cases has it been institutionalised, and; (iii) that the roots of Australian sports crowd disorder lie predominantly in the wider society rather than being located within the sport in such processes as

on-field violence or overly aggressive player behaviour. The argument begins with a focus on historical examples of sporting crowd disorder.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There are examples of disorder on the sidelines of Australian sporting matches dating back to the first half of the nineteenth century. During this period sport lacked both the organisation and larger scale that were to evolve in later years. Given the small amount of sport played before 1850 there was a relatively high incidence of disorder in forms such as disputes over gambling, fights over umpiring and one case of a riot at Petersham racecourse in 1844.¹ A later nineteenth century incident is reported by Cashman in his history of Australian cricket crowds.² Following the controversial dismissal of a local batsman during a cricket match between New South Wales and England at the Sydney Cricket Ground, some 2000 spectators jumped the fences to invade the pitch and mob the umpires. Play was abandoned for the day and it took police about ninety minutes to restore order and disperse the crowd from the field. There are further reports of less dramatic incidents at inter-colonial cricket matches dating back to 1857. Gambling, alcohol, inter-colonial rivalry and on-field incidents are cited as the precipitating factors in these.³

In the boxing arena an 1883 report exists of spectators invading the ring after forty rounds of a contest, preventing the completion of a fight between Larry Foley, a great Australian boxer of the time, and a 'Professor' William Miller. In another boxing incident in 1884, spectators rushed the ring and started brawling during a fight between the Australian champion and his challenger. Police intervention was necessitated on this occasion. Three years later a similar invasion took place during another Larry Foley fight in which Foley was being beaten.⁴

During the 1890s and early in the twentieth century a small number of crowd disturbances occurred at soccer, Australian Football, Rugby League (post 1907) and Rugby matches⁵ In NSW, the 1896 Gardner Cup soccer final was abandoned when fighting on the field between a Pymont Rangers' player and an opponent from Balmain saw an inrush of spectators. The fighting followed Balmain missing a penalty. Also in soccer, 'troublesome elements in a large crowd' forced the abandonment of an 1897 match between Balmain and Pymont Rangers.⁶

In 1897 the Victorian Football League (VFL) introduced rule changes which made the game of Australian Rules Football faster and more open and as the pace of the game quickened the physical clashes increased. An escalation in on-field violence was accompanied by 'mob' pitch invasions and off-field disorder between 1900 and 1910 when 'hoodlums, barrackers and larrikin pushes' were drawn to the Melbourne grounds. Commentators at the time referred to this part of the crowd as an 'unruly horde' obeying 'primitive impulses'.⁷ Crowd disorder in Australian Rules Football occurred again in the post World War I era of the early 1920s with reports of crowd brawls, policemen being knocked unconscious, spectators hitting players, and brawls between players and crowd.⁸ During this period, umpires called for police protection in response to frequent invasions of the playing field by spectators. Police encountered some 'legal' resistance in the face of culprits invading the pitch who reportedly proclaimed themselves ratepayers and therefore being entitled to wander about the public parts of their municipality.⁹ Drunkenness was suggested as being directly related to the crowd violence of the day.

By the end of the 1920s several football clubs had begun building new stands which had the effect of separating spectators from players and officials. By 1929 'physical barriers in grandstands, fences and barbed wire, along with increased police vigilance, separated spectators from the spectacle'. According to McConville the riots and invasions of the immediate post-war years faded during the 1920s.¹⁰

In the sport of Rugby League Sharp reports an incident at a match between Australia and a Maori team in July 1909. A disallowed try towards the end of the game cost the home team victory. When the Maoris jubilantly took possession of their trophy and danced a Haka, 5-6000 spectators pulled down fences and invaded the pitch with cries of 'we were cheated'. Sharp reports another incident in 1911 at a minor league game. At the end of the match with the feelings running high, several hundred spectators surged towards the players leaving the field. In a few moments 'a free fight had started in which fists, sticks, umbrellas and feet all played their respective parts.'¹¹

This incident, and the Australia-Maori game pitch invasion were the only two examples of crowd disorder uncovered by Sharp for the period up until 1912 suggesting a relatively orderly beginning to Rugby League spectating in Australia. In Rugby Union during this same, pre-war era, Sharp reports extreme barracking and crowd violence directed against the referee.

In the post-war era, there is another isolated report of crowd disruption during a Rugby League match between Balmain and St George on 7 July, 1928 at Earl Park, Arncliffe. A crowd of 9000 was watching the game on the Saints' former home ground when early in the second half the St George centre Carstairs, knocked down the Balmain half back, badly splitting his eye. Not long after this incident, Carstairs elbowed another Balmain player, Tony Russell. A few scrums later Russell 'got square' by knocking Carstairs down and then stepping on his head. The partisan St George crowd was incensed, thinking Russell had kicked Carstairs in the head. The crowd was tense at full time and as both teams walked off the field a St George player, Bishop, threw a punch at the Balmain hooker. This 'got the partisan crowd going'. They came over the fences, tearing palings off as they came, and sought Balmain blood, particularly that of Russell who received a 'thumping' on the way to the dressing sheds. Police were called in and swung their handcuffs to force the crowd back. The following week, Russell and Bishop were

summonsed to appear in Kogarah Court charged with 'causing a riot on a public recreation ground'. The charges were later dropped. St George won the match 21-12.¹²

Barracking is a particular form of Australian crowd behaviour which stands on the boundary between order and disorder. The term was used in Melbourne as early as the 1880s, perhaps associated with football. At that time, newspaper journalists referred to barracking as spectators giving 'somewhat unpleasant expression to their sympathies and prejudices such as hooting, hissing, rowdyism and calling out insults'.¹³

Following the definition of disorder adopted in this paper, crowd behaviour becomes disorderly when violent or unruly behaviour noticeably interrupts either the flow of the game in progress or the usual modes of spectating. Both Cashman and Sharp report such interruptions from barracking.¹⁴ Such was the impact of the jeering and taunting during the 1897-98 tour of Australia, that the English captain Stoddart complained publicly about the adverse influence that the barracking had on his players. 'The practice usually emanated from the outer spectator areas and was associated with slow, dull play, controversial decisions by umpires, and spectators blocking the view of their fellow spectators'.¹⁵

The examples reported above provide a background to Australian sports crowd disorder. While it is possible to find historical examples of disorder across several sports, it would be erroneous to conclude that crowd disorder has ever reached overly dramatic proportions in Australian sport. More recently Holton and Fletcher's study of public disorder in Australia helps to put the issue into a wider social context. These researchers located 568 reports of public disorder in Australia between 1969 and 1984. Of these, only forty-three, or 7.5 per cent of reported incidents of disorder occurred at sport and leisure events.¹⁶ Thus while there is a long tradition of crowd disorder in Australia, recent data suggests that such disorder is not endemic nor, with a few notable exceptions has it been institutionalised.¹⁷

What appears to be a fundamental difference between English soccer ‘hooliganism’ and Australian sports crowd disorder should also be noted here. In England Dunning et al refer to rivalry between supporters of opposing teams and to relatively well organised groups of soccer hooligans engaging in violent and other disorderly action both in and outside of sports stadium.¹⁸ Thus far in Australia, crowd disorder has been largely contained within individual sports stadia, has been relatively spontaneous and lacking in organisation, and with the possible exception of soccer has not been characterised by rivalry between opposing supporter groups. The case of soccer is taken up later in the paper.

CONTEMPORARY CROWD DISORDER

While Australian sport has not generally been associated with violent crowd behaviour, there are four areas where repeated occurrences of the same type of crowd violence or conflict has occurred and where authorities have been prompted to implement regulatory measures. First, from the 1960s to the mid-1980s crowd disorder and riots occurred almost yearly at the Australian Grand Prix Motorcycle Races, formerly held at Bathurst, New South Wales. Second, from mid nineteenth century to the present, crowd disorder has occurred at major cricket grounds, particularly The Hill at the Sydney Cricket Ground and the former Bay 13 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Third, during the 1890s and again since 1953, conflict and violence have been present among soccer crowds across Australia. The fourth site of recurring disorder is on the sidelines of junior sport. Each of these areas is discussed in further detail below.

The Bathurst ‘Bike Races Riots

Motorcycle Races were held at the Mount Panorama race circuit in Bathurst between 1931 and 1989 attracting crowds of up to 30,000 for

the Easter weekend meeting. In the early 1960s conflict between youth and police was reported in local and national press outlets. This conflict escalated during the 1970s to the point of being institutionalised to become an almost yearly riot in the 1980s. Riots involving spectators and police took place in 1980, 1981, 1983 and 1985, each occurring on Easter Saturday, after sunset, outside the police compound on the Mount Panorama race circuit and each involving conflict between police and spectators. In the course of these riots, between ninety and 160 persons were arrested yearly and in the eight hour riot of 1985, some ninety police and a similar number of civilians were treated for fractures, lacerations, bruising, burns and other injuries. Major court actions involving charges of riotous assembly followed the 1985 conflict.

The Bathurst riots have been researched by Cunneen et al who have argued that a dynamic interaction of historical and contemporary factors lie at the roots of the conflict. The researchers examined some 1500 records of persons who were brought before the Courts between 1960 and 1985 on charges relating to the Easter race meeting. Those who came before the Court were overwhelmingly from manual working-class backgrounds, overwhelmingly male and had a median age of twenty-two years.¹⁹

From their entry into the riots as participant-observers the researchers found them to be essentially anti-police in nature with the sentiment being expressed in a ritual form that moved between play and seriousness. The argument was put forward that the anti-police sentiment being expressed had its origins in the following sources: a perception of police harassment within the motorcycle subculture from the 1930s onwards; the traditionally difficult relationship between working-class youth and police and; the resentment of some Bathurst racegoers to the construction in 1979, of a police compound on an area previously used for camping and informal games.

From the 1960s onwards, the conflict gradually became institutionalised and escalated, with between 300 and 400 police present

at the races each year during the 1980s. The numbers of spectators fell dramatically in the years after the eight-hour riot of 1985 and the races were abandoned following 1989. However, Cunneen et al have argued that while the conflict was forcefully suppressed after 1985, the actual roots of the disorder were not addressed in official responses and therefore that the processes which led to the Bathurst riots remain ongoing.²⁰

The Hill, Bay 13 and other Cricket Ground Outers

The disorder referred to here has been localised to specific outer areas of sports stadia and largely, although not exclusively, associated with cricket. Various sites in Australian sporting stadia have evolved a culture of license in which crowd disorder has come to be anticipated. Up until 1990 when it was demolished, Bay 13 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) was one such site. Crofts has proposed that the crowd in Bay 13 was largely comprised of young working-class men who engaged in rowdy behaviour and consumed excessive amounts of alcohol, despite alcohol restrictions at the ground.²¹ While the behaviour in Bay 13 was rowdy, and arrests and ejections from the ground were commonplace, the disorder at this site has not been reported as violent. Sydney's main cricket ground, the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) has evolved a similar area to Bay 13 in its Hill, a sloping grassy terrace which used to be without individual seating. This area has always been the least expensive point of entry to the ground since its nineteenth century origins and as such it has attracted a working-class patronage and evolved a male-dominated culture to match.

The culture of The Hill gave rise to colourful barracking and barrackers such as Stephen 'Yabba' Gascoigne in the 1920s and 1930s. Yabba became a legend of The Hill for his witty and colourful comments that kept the crowd amused, regardless of the dullness of the game in progress. Rowdy behaviour rubbed shoulders with wit and humour up to the era of the 1960s which saw an escalation of drunkenness and abusive

behaviour on The Hill. The invention of the beer can and its companion, the portable cooler in the early 1960s, added to the consumption of alcohol at Australia's cricket grounds.²²

In 1971, a new kind of disorder emerged on The Hill and also at other sporting grounds across Australia. This was the disorder of political protest directed against the tour of the South African rugby union team. The participants in the SCG anti-apartheid protests may have come from different backgrounds to those of the usual inhabitants of The Hill. However there was apparently no doubt in the minds of the protesters, or the police, that The Hill would be the site of the major anti-apartheid statement at the SCG. It was The Hill which was 'surrounded' with scores of police, and The Hill, not the Members or Noble Stands, that was temporarily fenced off with barbed wire for the Australia-Springboks rugby game. And it was on The Hill that the majority of arrests were made on the day. The culture of license that prevailed on The Hill, its open space and convenience, were in this case, transformed for the purposes of political protest.

In 1977, the commercial winds of change were directed upon cricket as World Series Cricket (WSC), a new one-day game, was introduced to Australia. The traditional game of cricket was transformed and so too were cricket crowds as youth, women and other spectators lacking knowledge of the art of cricket were drawn to the spectacle and excitement of the new 'cricket-as-entertainment'. Corresponding to these changes was an increase in the frequency of disorder on The Hill after 1978. There was an increased number of arrests, a reported increase in the amount of drunken and disorderly behaviour, an increase in reports of brawling behaviour and an escalation in regulatory measures being enacted around the new one-day game.²³

The explanation for the new face of disorder arguably lies in the intersection of several processes. First, the historical tradition of unruly behaviour that is embedded in the working-class culture of The Hill. Second the emergence of World Series Cricket as a commercially

packaged and aggressively promoted form of mass entertainment. Third the entry of new kinds of spectators into the Cricket Ground, apparently drawn by the spectacle, entertainment and star focus of the revamped game. The advent of watching cricket under night lights in the relative anonymity of semi-darkness may also have been an incentive to disorder. Finally, it is possible that some spectators have reacted aggressively to the progressive whittling away of The Hill's grassy slope and attempts to make it a place of individual seating. Throughout the 1980s and into the nineties, crowd disorder has continued to be a problem at WSC cricket and a variety of regulatory measures (see below) have been introduced in an attempt to resolve the problem. After the regulations and architectural changes that have been made, what remains of The Hill is a symbolic patch of grass surrounded by electronic, concrete and plastic icons of the late twentieth century SCG.

Soccer Crowd Violence

Crowd disorder at soccer matches is a relatively well known phenomenon across the world, but particularly in European, Central and South American soccer playing nations. In Australia there have been two distinct eras of soccer crowd disorder. The first in the 1890s, referred to earlier in the paper, and the second in the post-World War II era from the 1950s to the present. In the case of European and English soccer hooliganism, as it has come to be known, there is an abundance of research into the phenomenon.²⁴ However, in the Australian case, apart from press reports, there are but a handful of serious commentaries on this recurrent problem. Mosely's thesis on the history of soccer in New South Wales, is a major contribution to the area.²⁵

Following several disturbances on the sidelines of soccer (and other football codes) during the 1890s Mosely reports no further such incidents at NSW soccer matches until 1953. During the season of this year, there is a report of players resorting to continuous rough play and fighting in a reserve grade match in the Sydney League between Europe

United and Hollandia. The match degenerated and the referee, having lost control, abandoned the game ten minutes from full time. As he left the ground, spectators rushed to join the players in an all in brawl.

Two years later a match between Sydney Austral and Hakoah became particularly heated, with players from both sides being sent from the field. An attack by an Austral player on a Hakoah supporter precipitated an invasion of the field by many of the nine hundred spectators. Four carloads of police were summoned to re-establish order. Another incident occurred in 1956, when Balkan played close rivals Wistula in Canberra's first grade competition. With the score drawn, a Balkan player punched the Wistula centre half and as the unconscious player was being 'stretchered off, two hundred spectators invaded the playing field.²⁶

In the period from the 1950s until the present, soccer crowd disturbances have received ongoing reportage in the press. Holton and Fletcher note twelve instances of soccer disorder in the period from 1969 to 1984.²⁷ There are other incidents that have occurred since then. In July of 1987 a referee was attacked by the crowd at a Sydney match and in Western Australia during the 1989 season, a twenty minute brawl was reported between Yanchep supporters and those of a visiting Vietnamese team.²⁸

The following 1990 report under the headline 'Bloody Brawl As Soccer Fans Go Berserk' points to the historical continuity of the phenomenon.

Hundreds of rival soccer fans brawled yesterday in a riot sparked by one of their teams scoring a goal. Witnesses said that at one point more than 400 fans, some wielding wooden stakes and knives, took part in a pitched battle.

More than 200 riot police in 60 cars were called to St. George Stadium in Rockdale when the trouble erupted during the National Soccer League game between Melbourne team Preston Macedonian and Sydney Olympic. . . . Fans last night blamed a centuries-old rivalry between Macedonians and Greeks over land rights as the cause of the trouble.²⁹

In searching for an explanation of post-war soccer crowd disorder a clear example emerges of the way in which sport is firmly embedded in the wider society, reflecting its tensions and cultural complexity, recreating and contributing to some of its social divisions. The explanation offered below draws extensively from that offered by Mosely.³⁰

By the end of the 1930s, players from Austria, Italy and Hungary had begun to migrate to Australia in attempts to avoid the Nazis. Prior to this, British immigrants had played a major role in shaping Australian soccer but the late-1930s saw the emergence of a strong European influence in the Australian game. This influence was to expand following the massive influx of European migrants in the period after the second world war. These migrants were to enter a relatively hostile Australian culture, one which was openly more sympathetic to an English speaking, British presence than a non-English speaking, European one.

The European soccer players and fans came from a region of the world which itself had a tradition of football violence where during the mid to late-1930s European soccer was marred by fascist versus anti-fascist confrontations. 'The highly charged atmosphere of Europe in the 1930s was such as to establish, even in football, excessive patterns of aggression and tension'.³¹

As international football developed in the 1940s it afforded a more expanded arena than club football to play out political, ethnic and nationalist conflicts. Thus, argues Mosely 'it is not surprising . . . that Europeans arriving in Australia after 1945 found it difficult to divorce football from the chance to vent their aggression'. It had become the norm in Europe throughout the period from the 1930s to the 1950s.³²

Another element in the explanation of soccer disorder is the degree of commitment which so many fans have to soccer - passion,

fervour and fanaticism for player, team or nation were commonly present in supporters. This passion was sometimes expressed in aggressive, violent form.

Many of the migrants to Australia who had suffered traumatic experiences in the war, including loss of country, relatives, friends and belief systems, were found to be 'filled with anger and vindictiveness'.³³ In Australia this 'internal rage' found good reasons for being maintained in a society of the 1950s and 1960s where immigrants had little power or position in politics, the work place or church. Because of language difficulties many immigrants were confined to work in semi or unskilled labouring positions and so bore a considerable weight of oppression arising from Australia's post-war class structure. These factors, combined with an institutionalised racism in Australia, left many immigrants with 'problems of personal and collective frustration'.

When this frustration was manifested it was more likely to emerge in sport, and soccer in particular, than in politics, the workplace or the church. Within soccer the immigrants' qualifications were recognised and admired. A lack of the English language was not serious. There was freedom to compete on equal terms with anyone, and win in both the literal and metaphoric sense. The game provided the European male immigrant with the rare opportunity for expressing himself. He could stake out an area in society in which his voice bore weight and in which he had the chance to dominate. As such there was freedom to release pent-up emotions, be they ambition, passion, frustration or aggression.³⁴

In the post-war history of Australian soccer, nationalistic loyalty also played a part. This was one principal reason for immigrants to support a club and so soccer offered ethnic groups the chance to preserve their cultural roots and traditions; to create cultural enclaves in an alien society and draw warmth and support from like-cultured people. Victory of a club took on the stature of 'victory' for a homeland just as defeat was also somewhat about loss of national face. For some European immigrants, soccer was also a handy forum in which to settle old scores.³⁵

Murray argues a similar case for soccer in his paper on football violence.³⁶

Mosely also points to two different philosophies of sport as leading to physical clashes. The earlier British-Australian approach to soccer was based on strength, stamina and speed. The Australians who adopted this philosophy evolved an even more robust approach to the game than their British forebears, partly to compensate for a lack of basic skill. Opposed to the direct, robustness of the British-Australian players stood the style, elegance, balance and precision of the central Europeans. 'As grit and determination typified the British, so artistic expression typified the Europeans'. These two opposing philosophies of sport led to ill feeling and violence.³⁷

European players progressed from complaining to the referee, to retaliating, to being sent off, even to assaulting the opposition and/or the game's officials. Supporters of the European teams were no less incensed by what they saw and this resulted in crowd invasions of the pitch and open season on the referee.³⁸

In addition to the factors referred to above, delays in play, unfair refereeing, gambling, drinking and overcrowding at games have played some part in generating instances of crowd disorder. At a deeper level however, crowd disorder at soccer matches appears to be closely entangled with cultural tensions and historical processes of the wider national and international context. The cultural, historical, social and sporting processes referred to above have intersected within soccer to produce a phenomenon of disorder which almost certainly cannot be resolved by actions taken within the game and its immediate context.

On the Sidelines of Junior Sport

Junior sport as football, hockey; cricket and tennis expanded in the post second world war era. While more historical research is needed in the area of pre-war junior sport, the behaviour of spectators and

players of junior sport in the post-war period emerged as a source of concern for sports authorities, and more recently, state governments.

Murray reports an incident where an entire South Melbourne Hellas Under-14 soccer team was banned for three years following an attack on a referee.³⁹ In Sydney during the 1989 winter, four rugby league officials were attacked at an Under 15 match at Cabramatta in the western suburbs⁴⁰ and in Melbourne there is a 1988 report of four umpires being attacked during an Under 19s Australian rules football match.⁴¹ Verbal abuse among spectators, from spectator to referee, and spectator to player is a common form of junior sport crowd disorder.

The problem of crowd disorder in this context appears to be associated with an elevated emphasis on competition, and zealous parents becoming overly involved in the successes and failures of their children. As the problem grew in magnitude, a Council of all Sport and Recreation Ministers in the Commonwealth met in 1985 to declare that violence on and off the field was unacceptable. Part of the strategy to reduce off-field violence was the development of Codes of Behaviour for administrators, officials, parents, spectators, coaches, teachers, media and players. These codes, directed mainly at junior sport, have been accompanied by the modification of rules and entire games in an attempt to provide all children with an even chance to become involved. Modified games in sports, such as football and cricket, also place a greater emphasis on enjoyment rather than winning.

Other Incidents

Apart from the four major areas of crowd disorder referred to above, there have been other isolated incidents of violence in the contemporary Australian sporting arena. In May 1971, NSW met Queensland at Lang Park Brisbane in an interstate Rugby League game. During a torrid match, referee Keith Holman sent three Queenslanders and one NSW player from the field four minutes from full time. Bottles and cans were hurled onto the field and one spectator jumped the fence

but was thrown back over by others who intervened. At the end of the match, the referee was shielded off the field by a ring of NSW players.⁴² In another interstate Rugby League 'State of Origin' match between NSW and Queensland in 1988, again at Lang Park, a similar incident occurred. A brawl began amongst several opposing players. Three players were subsequently sent from the field including Queensland Captain, Wally Lewis who claimed that he did not throw a punch, but had run in to stop the fight. As Lewis left the ground:

. . . beer cans began to rain on the field from the Hale Street terraces. Linesmen, television cameramen and newspaper photographers ducked the cans. Lang Park was in an uproar. Stone (the referee) stopped play, three policemen moved around the fence perimeter and the players cleared about forty cans from the field.⁸

Horse racing is another sport that has a sporadic association with crowd disorder. The main site of disorder has been the enclosure following out-of-form performances such as a loss by a heavily backed favourite or a win by a rank outsider. Decisions of the judges perceived to be unfair have also prompted crowd protests. Another incident of disorder was reported at the Adelaide Grand Prix in 1988 when 60 persons were arrested for disorderly behaviour. Easter 1988 also saw some forty arrests at Wagga Wagga, NSW after three thousand people were reported as rioting at a car drag racing event.⁴⁴ In Melbourne during April 1988, two policemen were bashed by football fans during a VFL game.⁴⁵ There are also examples of mild non-physical forms of crowd disorder at tennis competitions in Australia as new crowds, drawn to the star-studded entertainment, have introduced booing, whistling and 'cat calls' to the previously sedate art of viewing tennis. While this is not an overly dramatic form of disorder, it has caused disruption to tennis matches and therefore constitutes a form of crowd disorder.⁴⁶

THE RESPONSES OF AUTHORITIES

In examining the measures which have been adopted in attempts to overcome problems of crowd disorder it is apparent that a large number of authorities are involved, and that the lines of authority and responsibility for regulating behaviour are rather ill defined. To take the example of crowd violence at soccer matches, the phenomenon occurs nationally and has a history dating back to the 1890s. In 1990, in response to what was reported to be ethnically rooted violence at soccer matches, the NSW Government acted to ban national flags and emblems, and to implement a 'Sports Watch' programme where officials acted to detect and eject troublemakers in the crowd. Police numbers at games were increased and sports ground managers employed private security guards. At the club level, some officials reacted angrily to the NSW Government initiatives while the referees associations met to consider withdrawing their services from particular clubs whose supporters had threatened their colleagues. In this instance the disorder was addressed at several, sometimes conflicting levels ranging from state down to club. An illustration of the labyrinth of agencies involved in securing crowd order can be gained from Table 1.

TABLE 1

AGENCIES AND MEASURES OF CONTROL IN SPORTS CROWD DISORDER

Agency implementing control measures Level of Crowd Control Action	Government Bodies	Police/ Security	Sporting Bodies	Referees Associations	Sports Ground Controlling Body	Miscellaneous
Federal/ National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy formulation by State Sport and Recreation Minister's council • Development of a Code of Spectator Behaviour by the Australian Sports Commission • Promotion of community education program 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imposition of penalties on clubs associated with offending supporters • Ban on bringing flares and fireworks to soccer matches 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research into instances, causes and policing of sports crowd disorder (Criminology Research Council and individual universities)
State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased penalties under law • "Sports Watch" program similar to Neighbourhood Watch (NSW) • Request to soccer clubs to "de-ethnicise" (NSW) • Ban on national flags and emblems at club level soccer games (NSW) • Mass media campaign against sports hooliganism (NSW and Auto Cycle Union) • User payment for police used in crowd control (NSW). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation and use of specialist riot police - TRG in NSW (used at Motorcycle races and SCG cricket) • Alternate policing strategies • Increased police presence • Use of Random Breath Testing Units at Bathurst "Bike Races and SCG 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spot searches of patrons at soccer and motorcycle races • Gathering of statistics. • Staging of "Think Tanks" to find solutions to crowd disorder • Rule changes and penalties to reduce onfield violence which might make off field violence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of referees associations to increase standard of refereeing (1890s onwards) • Abandoning of matches in face of crowd disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police facilities on site • Improved layout of facilities • Reductions in ground capacities. • Lock out of excess crowds • Installation of surveillance cameras • Improved catering • Alcohol restrictions • Searches of bags. • No alcohol areas 	
Local/Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol restrictions. • Implementing codes of behaviour • Designation of no alcohol areas • Authorisation for searches of patrons entering grounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of private security guards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ban on gambling and bookmakers following 1879 riot at SCG 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved sound systems • Architectural changes and barriers • Individual seating • Use of video for crowd messages • Own security guards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of media to urge patrons to arrive early to avoid crushes • The self policing of sporting patrons which occurs at the vast majority of sports events

In terms of action towards securing crowd control, the sporting clubs associated with instances of disorder play a relatively minor role, arguably because of the difficulty of establishing a legal connection between an officially constituted club and its supporters. The major responsibility for securing crowd control has then fallen to state governments and their police forces along with the controlling bodies of sporting grounds. State governments have the power, resources and responsibility to make laws and implement these through their police forces. On the other hand, the controlling bodies of sporting grounds have some access to finance, a legal responsibility and a vested interest in their stadia to implement crowd control policies aimed at securing orderly spectating at sport. Overall, whenever order prevails over disorder at sporting events it can be put down to a combination of factors, not the least of which is a history of relative orderliness on the sidelines, stands and terraces of European-Australia's sporting arenas.

EXPLANATIONS FOR AUSTRALIAN SPORTS CROWD DISORDER

Explanations for disorder have been canvassed above in referring to specific instances of disorder. Here the arguments of various commentators are further considered. In what is admittedly an oversimplification, two categories of explanation are treated. First those which focus on factors within, or closely related to the sport in question. For example, violent on-field behaviour falls within this category. Second those which explain disorder by moving outside the sport to the wider social and cultural context. For example, those explanations which consider the influence of the class structure, or ethnic groupings in crowd disorder.

To begin with explanations inside the sport, Mosely and Cashman have pointed to historical examples of poor standard refereeing contributing to sporting crowd violence in soccer and cricket.⁴⁷ Wenn proposes that poor standard refereeing is still associated with disorder

as are instances of on-field violence between players. It has been argued that such on-field activity has the effect of spilling over onto the sidelines and inciting violent behaviour among spectators.⁴⁸

Related to this is the legally 'violent' nature of body contact sport which has a potential to influence crowd behaviour. Low scoring games are, according to Wenn more likely to provoke crowd violence because much more is at stake when for example a goal is disallowed in a drawn game. Such is less likely to be the case in a high scoring game of Australian Rules for example.⁴⁹ Mosely has argued that differing philosophies of sport that existed between Britain and Europe, clashed when they came into contact in post-World War II Australian soccer. The outcome of this clash was violent protests first by players against referees, then among players but also among spectators as frustrations spilled over into the crowd.⁵⁰

As sport in Australia evolved after the war, commercialism was drawn further into the playing fields to take sports like cricket, various football codes and tennis into the realm of spectacular commercial entertainment. New crowds, unknowledgeable in the finer and historical aspects of the games they were watching were drawn to sport and in the cases of cricket and tennis, contributed to a new wave of disorder in the 1980s.⁵¹ Poor physical conditions such as sub-standard toilets, overcrowding and inadequate seating have also been cited as factors contributing to frustration and violence among crowds.⁵²

In considering factors external to sport, but which enter into and find expression in sports disorder, Cashman refers to an increased number of unruly 'yobbos', 'ockers' and 'hoons' entering cricket grounds in the past two decades.⁵³ Vamplew refers to young, unaccompanied males at sport being the main source of trouble world wide and Cashman notes an increased attendance of youth at sporting events.⁵⁴

Several researchers argue that sports crowd disorder results from deep rooted social strains and structural tensions within society such as

unemployment, economic deprivation, low status, a decline in social standards and accepted conventions.⁵⁵ Sharp argues that crowd disorder at early twentieth century Rugby League matches was likely a release of frustration which was built up in work and other contexts, but which could not be released there.⁵⁶

Within the sport of soccer various commentators and researchers have referred to cultural and racial tensions being associated with crowd violence.⁵⁷ Mosely offers an account of the multiple factors involved here. Murray also argues that some sporting crowd 'hooliganism' has been imported from overseas.⁵⁸

Other researchers have argued that the violence expressed on the sidelines of sport reflects various tensions and conflicts in the wider society.⁵⁹ Mosely for example traces the history of British and European influences on Australian soccer and the tensions which have resulted from ethnic and nationalist rivalries as well as differing philosophies of sport.⁶⁰ Cunneen et al, in researching riots at the Bathurst motorcycle races argued for a dynamic intersection of class, sub-cultural, youth and masculine forces as factors contributing to riots there. They also argued that policing strategies were both provocative and part of the process of institutionalising conflict between police and spectators.⁶¹

There are some commentators who propose that the media plays at least some contributing role in sports crowd violence by unnecessarily highlighting violent incidents and over-reporting crowd violence.⁶² Cunneen et al also provide evidence that the Bathurst riots were used to create a favourable climate for the introduction of a specialist riot squad - the Tactical Response Group - in NSW. In this case, sports crowd disorder was used as the justification to legitimate a certain kind of state violence.⁶³

Several commentators have proposed 'overwhelming evidence that alcohol is a major contributing factor to crowd disturbances'.⁶⁴ Cunneen et al (1989) have argued along with Dunning et al that while alcohol is a contributing factor it should be seen as a superficial rather

than a deep rooted cause of crowd disorder.⁶⁵ Finally, Cashman and Mosely both cite historical evidence of crowd disorder being associated with gambling.⁶⁶ The action taken to address the problem in the 1890s was to ban bookmakers from attendance at the games.

In reflecting upon various explanations applicable to different sports, it is apparent that each form of disorder is relatively unique in its origins. Alcohol, which I have proposed should be treated as a superficial cause only, is the most widespread explanation. However, alcohol is absent from the early 1950s and 1960s explanations of soccer disorder and therefore should not at this stage be universally associated with the phenomenon in question. Each Australian sport then, which has attracted crowd disorder, has its own relatively unique explanation for the phenomenon.

This being the case, and to the extent that the roots of sports crowd disorder lie largely in the wider society (rather than in the sport itself), it is possible to look into the phenomenon in question as through a window onto a variety of social and historical processes. For example, soccer crowd disorder offers a commentary on post-war immigration processes while the Bathurst 'bike races riots illuminate a tense and difficult historical relationship between police and working class youth. Cricket disorder of the 1980s allows some insight into the emergence of a new wave of commercial popular culture and the conflict that can arise when new, perhaps 'sportingly-unknowledgeable' audiences are enticed into the stands by sport-as-spectacle. All of the sports that have histories of crowd disorder also offer a telling commentary on a particular trend of masculinity in Australia, given that one universal feature of the phenomenon (largely overlooked in literature) is the predominance of men involved.

Sports crowd disorder not only reflects and is influenced by events in the wider society it also acts back on that society with sometimes profound effects. The riot squad (Tactical Response Group) in NSW was created following the 1981 Bathurst 'bike riot with the disorder there

used as justification for its formation. The formation of this police squad radically altered policing in the state.⁶⁷ The Bathurst riots were also used as justification to re-introduce a Summary Offences Act in NSW and create a new statutory offence of riot.⁶⁸ It is also likely that exaggerated press and television coverage given to crowd disorder at sport, paves the way for conservative calls for crackdowns on law and order. If television captures only the violent event, and not that which precedes it, then the most likely response of viewers is to call for a 'crackdown' on what appears to be unprovoked violence.⁶⁹

To restate the argument of this paper, Australia does have a history of sports crowd disorder dating back to the first half of the nineteenth century. While there is no denying this history Australian crowd disorder remains at relatively low level when considered alongside historical examples of institutionalised crowd disorder in England for example. The argument also concerns the roots of Australian sports crowd disorder. In considering the major examples of the phenomenon in question - among soccer, motorcycle racing and cricket crowds - external factors seem to predominate the explanations of disorder. These external factors include the class structure of the society, cultural and ethnic differences connected to Australian immigration patterns, policing practices, commercial developments, new audiences and media coverage of sport and disorder. These factors appear to have greater explanatory power for crowd disorder than do those more intimately connected to a particular sport such as on-field violence or clashes in philosophies of sport. It also follows that crowd disorder which results from the intrusion of outside factors into sport is the more difficult category of disorder to manage and resolve because of the necessity to address social conflicts and tensions in the wider society.

Explanations of crowd disorder across various sports point to a variety of casual processes at work. Sports crowd disorder has arguably resulted from a mixture of factors within various sports and external to them, with the external factors having the greater explanatory power.

Sport and wider social, cultural and historical processes have intersected in unique ways in soccer, cricket and motorcycle racing for example. While adequate explanations remain embedded in the wider social contexts surrounding sports, then the relatively low-level impetus towards sports crowd disorder that exists in Australian sport will arguably remain, regardless of the regulatory measures that might be adopted within the confines of particular sports.

NOTES

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1. R Cashman 'Violence in Sport in Sydney before 1850', J. O'Hara, (ed) *Crowd Violence at Australian Sport*, (ASSH Studies in Sports History, No.7, 1991).
2. R Cashman, '*Ave a Go Yer Mug!*' *Australian Cricket Crowds from Larrikin to Ocker*, (Sydney: Collins, 1984), pp. 30-31.
3. *ibid.*, pp. 26-31.
4. W Vamplew, 'Violence in Australian Sport: An Historical Perspective' (Paper presented to the International Conference on the History and Leisure, University of Queensland, Brisbane, June 1988) p.1.
5. Given the argument of this paper the social processes outside of sport enter into and influence crowd behaviour, it seems reasonable to speculate that the disorder of the 1890s at soccer, Australian football and rugby matches was in some ways a reflection of the social tensions that preceded Australian federation in 1901. The 1890s was a time when intense nationalism was being expressed in *The Bulletin* and other magazines by writers such as Henry Lawson. A tension existed between the nationalists who preferred a break from 'Mother' England towards a republican Australia, and those who wanted to preserve English traditions, such as the monarchy in the new Constitution. If the argument of this paper holds, the tensions of the 1890s, visible in such places as *The Bulletin* could have been expressed in part in the unruly behaviour reported on the sidelines of soccer, Australian football and rugby.
6. P. Mosely, 'A Social History of Soccer in New South Wales, 1880-1957' (Unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Department of History, University of Sydney, 1987) p. 239.
7. L. Sandercock and I. Turner, *Up Where Cazali? The Great Australian Game*, (London: Granada, 1981) p. 65.
8. C. McConville, 'Football, Liquor and Gambling in the 1920s', *Sporting Traditions*, 1.1, (1984), pp. 39-41.
9. *ibid.*, p. 40.
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12. G. Lester, *The Story of Australian Rugby League*, (Sydney: Lester-Townsend Publications, 1988), p. 135.
13. Sharp, *op. cit.*, p. 139.
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15. Sharp, *op. cit.*, p. 141.
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17. C. Cunneen and R Lynch 'The Social Meanings of Conflict in Riots at the Australian Grand Prix Motorcycle Race' *Leisure Studies*, 7.1., (1988).
18. E. Dunning, P. Murphy and J. Williams, 'Spectator Violence and Football Matches: Towards a Sociological Explanation', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 27.2, (1986); E. Dunning, P. Murphy and J. Williams, *The Roots of Football Hooliganism: An Historical and Sociological Study*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988).
19. C. Cunneen, M. Findlay, R Lynch and V. Tupper, *Dynamics of Collective Conflict: Riots at the Bathurst Bike Races*, (North Ryde, The Law Book Company, 1989).
20. *ibid.*, p. 184.
21. M. Crofts, 'Crowd Behaviour at the World Series One-Day Internationals' *Pelops*, 5, (1984), p. 20.
22. Cashman, '*Ave a Go Yer Mug!*, *op.cit.*
23. R Lynch, 'A Symbolic Patch of Grass: Crowd Disorder and Regulation on the Sydney Cricket Ground Hill' in J. O'Hara, (ed) *Crowd Violence at Australian Sport*, (ASSH Studies in Sports History, No. 7, 1991).
24. Dunning, Murphy and Williams, *The Roots of Football Hooliganism*, *op.cit.*, provides a review of some of this research.
25. Mosely, *op.cit.*
26. *ibid.*, pp. 306-7.
27. Holton and Fletcher, *op.cit.* p. 42.
28. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 1989, p. 8.
29. *Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 1990, p. 5.
30. Mosely, *op.cit.*
31. *ibid.*, pp. 309-310.
32. *ibid.*, p. 311.
33. *ibid.*, p. 312.
34. *ibid.*, pp. 313-14.
35. *ibid.*, p. 314, 316.
36. B. Murray, 'Football Violence: On the Field and Off the Ball' *Sporting Traditions*, 2.1, (1985), pp. 117-18.
37. Moseley, *op. cit.*, p. 316.
28. *ibid.*, pp. 318-19.
39. Murray, *op.cit.*, p. 112.
40. B. Wenn, 'Violence in Sport', (Canberra: National Committee on Violence, Australian Institute of Criminology, Paper No. 4., 1990) p. 2.
41. *Melbourne Age*, 22 August 1988.
42. *Sydney, Morning Herald*, 2 June 1988, p. 54.

43. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 April 1989, p. 76.
44. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 April 1988, p. 1.
45. *Melbourne Age*, 22 August 1988.
46. R Lynch, 'A New Face of Crowd Disorder in Australia with the Emergence of Sport as Mass Entertainment' in Botterill, D. and Tomlinson, A. (eds) *Ideology, Leisure Policy and Practice*, (Eastbourne U.K. : Leisure Studies Association Publications; 1991), pp. 107-122.
47. Mosely, *op.cit.*; Cashman, 'Ave a Go Yer Mug!', *op.cit.*
48. Wenn, *op.cit.*, p. 3.
49. *ibid.*, p. 3.
50. Mosely, *op.cit.*
51. Lynch, 'A New Face...' *op.cit.*
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54. Vamplew, 'Violence in Australian Sport:', *op.cit.*, p. 5.; Cashman, 'Some Reflections...', *op.cit.*, p. 2.
55. Vamplew, 'Violence in Australian Sport:', *op.cit.*, p. 27; Cashman, 'Ave a Go Yer Mug!', p. 135.
56. Sharp, *op.cit.*, p. 144.
57. Wenn, *op.cit.*, p. 2.; Murray, *op.cit.*, p. 117., Mosely, *op.cit.*
58. Murray, *op.cit.*, p. 119.
59. Mosely, *op.cit.*; Cunneen et al, *op.cit.*
60. Mosely, *op.cit.*
61. Cunneen et al., 1989.
62. Wenn, *op.cit.*, p. 3.; Cashman, 'Some Reflections...', *op.cit.*, p. 3; Cunneen et al., *op.cit.*; C. Cunneen and R Lynch, 'Television news and Myth in the Development of Public Policy on Collective Disorder' Unpublished Manuscript (1991).
63. Cunneen et al., *op.cit.*
64. Vamplew, *op.cit.*, 'Violence in Australian Sport:' p. 28.; Wenn, *op.cit.*, p. 3.; Cashman 'Some Reflections...' , *op.cit.*, p. 2.
65. Cunneen et al., *op.cit.*; Dunning et al., 'Spectator Violence...', *op.cit.*
66. Cashman, 'Ave a Go Yer Mug!', *op.cit.*, p. 32.; Mosely, *op.cit.*
67. Cunneen et al., *op.cit.*, pp. 120-3.
68. *ibid.*, pp. 185-6.
69. Cunneen and Lynch, 'Television News...', *op.cit.*