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**London**

I first heard of the OUP idea at the 1989 ASSH Conference: another in their Companion Series, this time on Australian Sport. What was being suggested was vast, far too much for me to contemplate.

Back in 1912, Gordon Inglis had published *Sport and Pastime in Australia* but in the intervening years there were few quality works on Australian sport. There had been a number of 'pot-boilers' in the post-war years which had attractive covers and little else and all in their own way perpetuated much of the mythology which dog the history of Australian Sport.

Therefore, OUP had to look for a group of people who not only knew their individual subjects but who could put it down in a coherent way. ASSH was their only choice.

Wray Vamplew then set to work. Four co-editors joined him: Richard Cashman, Ian Jobling, Katharine Moore and John O'Hara, and by the time they had finished their task three years later so had 223 other contributors. The list is a veritable Who's Who of noted Australian sports historians and authors. There was also considerable help from the Australian Sports Commission.

*OCAS*, as it has already come to be known, is an authoritative and encyclopaedic reference on sport in Australia and provides a cohesive overview of the temper and development of the innumerable codes which constitute the country's sporting character. There are over one thousand entries with all sports, major as well as minor, covered in some detail. These are not only on individuals but also on significant institutions, competitions and venues.

*OCAS* offers important thematic essays on crucial aspects of the history, proliferation and increasing professionalism of sport on the continent. The growth areas of sports medicine and sports management are taken into consideration as is the cultural influence of sport as represented in art and literature.

Vamplew's main research topic of violence in sport is detailed at length with the essay on crowd disorder being particularly moot. There is also a section on obsessiveness, although one cannot help feeling that the Australian's obsession is more narrow in content than, say, in Britain, in that it is more focused on sport, club and even on the individual participant.

Errors do occur in a number of entries but *OCAS* has exposed some common errors and myths not least that on cricketer Victor Trumper (p. 361). Others include Lawrence Adamson (p. 5) who became a sportsmaster par excellence at Melbourne's Wesley College and Colden Harrison (p. 174) who is prominently remembered for developing the guidelines for Australian Rules Football. However, there could, and in some cases should, have been more lengthy essays on, for example, Percy Beames (p. 55) who enjoyed the rare distinction of captaining his state, Victoria, in both football and cricket and James Giltinan (p. 156) the first president of the New South Wales Rugby League.

For all its relatively minor faults (FA Cup instead of League Cup p. 194) and occasional opinionated comment (South Africa p. 209) the choice of subjects have been chosen well and reported upon with clarity. Six authors stand out from the pack: Braham Dabscheck, Richard Cashman, Chris Cunneen, Rob Lynch, J Neville Turner and Wray Vamplew.

As could be expected the Bibliography (p. 391-421) is extensive as well as being a researcher's dream.