

Tony McCarthy, *War Games: The Story of Sport in World War Two*. McDonald, London, 1989. Bibliog., illus., index, tables, pp. 192.

Tony McCarthy adds to the growing list of social histories that examine sport during *war* time. *War Games* has ten chapters that trace the historical link between sport and politics, the impact of World War II on domestic and international sport in Britain, the debate regarding the value of sport during the great conflagration, sport for the troops on home soil, abroad and as prisoners-of-war, and the legacy of the hostilities on future generations of athletic talent. The sections on sport in Britain are quite comprehensive and summarise a wide range of activities with emphasis on soccer, cricket and horse racing. Both sides of the argument regarding the value of sporting events are adequately canvassed with the recognition that continuance for spectators and participants alike provided recreation, relaxation and catharsis. Sport for the troops was equally valued. It promoted cohesiveness and fitness, and it entertained, alleviated stress and numbed the effects of the terror, torment and tragedy of battle. For British prisoners in war camps, sport maintained their sanity while their captors condoned activities to reduce the desire for escape. Comparative evaluations of German prisoners-of-war in England - their athletic pursuits and their motivations - could have been beneficial. Finally, McCarthy closes by explaining subsequent poor international performances of British sports people as a consequence of six years of global conflict.

This well illustrated, coherent and organised book will appeal to many, but not to all. Economic historians will be disappointed with the under utilisation of quantitative techniques and the lack of detail in those used, feminist historians will be annoyed at the lack of consideration given to women's sport even though the impact on British women is well documented, labour historians will be frustrated at the exclusion of social class in explaining several key issues, comparative historians will detect missed opportunities in not considering sport in other belligerent nations, and those who have examined propaganda and war will feel an

interesting issue remains untouched, The author, however, will not be overly concerned about these comments as the book achieved as much as promised in its early pages. For readers with a general interest in social history, War Games is a lively appraisal of the effect of World War II on the British and their sport.

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