

David A Klatell and Norman Marcus, *Inside Big Time Sports: Television, Money and the Fans*. MasterMedia, New York, 1996. Index. pp. 267. \$US13.95.

David A Klatell and Norman Marcus were directors of the, as the blurb suggests, 'distinguished Center for the Study of the Relationship between the Sports Industry and the Electronic Media', Boston University's Institute in Broadcast Sports. One hopes that the output of this Centre was more successful than this often simplistic and disjointed volume. To be fair, this book was not aimed at an academic audience, but rather was intended to serve everyone 'from the rabid, blue-collar hometown fanatic to the sophisticated ad agency executive', as noted by the review on the back of the book. Indeed, all recommendations on the cover are written by either media representatives or US network executives, so from the outset, one has good reason to be concerned about the critical nature of this book.

The material is presented in twelve chapters including the conclusion, each roughly focussing on one aspect of the (primarily televised) sports/media phenomenon. Each chapter is divided into numerous sub-sections that interrupt the flow of the chapter and leave innumerable disjointed anecdotes and examples with no coherent argument. The volume gives a very broad overview of the development of media sports in the United States, though its claim to present a 'history' of this relationship must be disputed, because it neglects to consider even a few examples from other national contexts.

Irritating for the academic reader is the lack of substantiated claims or a bibliography for further reading, however, the most grating problem was the constant reference to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), as the IOOC! As a result, one wonders whether the authors have consulted

the myriad of recent writing on sport and media at all, as they seem to have a very tenuous grasp on the issues of the media and sport relationship. In particular, the authors make scant reference to issues such as race, class and gender, which must be considered in any overview of the sports/media relationship. One scenario discussed was particularly disturbing. When describing the relationships between sports journalists and athletes, the authors referred to the Lisa Olsen incident, one of the only times that women were mentioned in the book at all! The authors write that when Olsen tried to interview a New England Patriot football player 'she encountered an episode of sexual harassment, which had rarely been seen in professional sports'. Recent research in sports sociology has demonstrated that the incidence of sexual harassment in professional sports is commonplace, and such flippant regard to such an important issue must be condemned.

This book lacks a critical dimension, has limited use — even in terms of looking up dates and statistics — and really introduces nothing new. As a result, it cannot be recommended either as a reference or as a text for students, particularly outside of the USA.

Tara Magdalinski
Arts Program
Sunshine Coast University College