

**Bill Murray, *The World's Game: A History of Soccer*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana and Chicago, 1996. Illus., index. pp. xix + 218. \$US27.95.**

In 1994 Bill Murray's *Football: A History of the World Game* was published by Scolar Press of Aldershot to cater for those within an international audience who appreciate that association football is not only the world game (the game played in all parts of the world) but also the world's game (the game of the people around the world). With the release of his latest book to an American market the latter understanding of the universally loved game is made explicit in the title. For Americans (and Australians perhaps) association football will always be soccer, merely a code of football and one which remains inferior to the indigenous variety. While Murray does not attempt to counter this perception he must surely impress upon those Americans who read the book why soccer (as they would have it) is 'more than just a game'.

I must admit to assuming, before reading the book, that this new offering would be a revamped version of the 1994 publication with modifications to suit an American readership. While this assumption is partly correct it is necessary to state that this revamp involves substantial rewriting and restructuring. After an opening chapter which tells of the 'very British beginning' of the sport, a second chapter discusses the spreading interest of football 'all around the world' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The subsequent seven chapters present a chronological account of international football across the decades from the 1920s to the present day. Each of these chapters is centred around an historical coverage of the outstanding football tournaments of the respective decades. Sequentially, football at the Olympic Games of 1920 and 1936 and the World Cup finals of 1950, 1966, 1974, 1990 and 1994 provide introductory points from which the chapters proceed. The discussion of the development of football in various national settings, and their particular characteristics, are integrated into the chapters in accordance with the chronology of the chapters. This differs somewhat from *Football* which concentrated chapters on the historical development of football in countries of particular continents and regions. However, it is the additional features to *The World's Game* which most apparently distinguish the two volumes. The book includes an appendix comprising a listing, 'in order of severity', of major disasters at football matches around the world, a list of tragedies involving players, a list of major football grounds around the world, and tables indicating FIFA

membership, details of Olympic Games football before 1930, the World Cup finals and the 'growth of various under-age tournaments'. While some might regard the first two of these features as ghoulish, others interested in events associated with football and not just match results will welcome their inclusion in this very useful set of ready reference tables. Also useful is the glossary which follows the appendix, While brief it is comprehensive, although most of the terms should be familiar to the self-fancying aficionado. The most outstanding post-text feature is the 'Bibliographic Essay' which follows the glossary. This should prove a gold mine for those readers who are inspired by Murray to further investigate the history of the game. The list of material is comprehensive enough to set someone on their way to postgraduate study, let alone satisfy the curiosity of the interested lay reader.

In his review of *Football* Philip Mosely (Sporting Traditions, vol. 11, no. 2), while speaking most favourably of Murray's work, expressed understandable reservations about the publisher's treatment of the volume. Of concern to Mosely were the absence of photographs, the blandness of the dust jacket, the failure to mention Murray's impressive credentials as a sports historian by reference to previous publications, and prohibitive cost. Thankfully the University of Illinois Press have delivered a volume which overcomes these infelicities. The reader is treated to twelve pages of illustrations featuring twenty black-and-white plates. Most have relevance to football pre-World War II although an action shot of Pele and pictures of advertising posters for the 1966 and 1994 World Cup Final also appear. My personal favourite in the collection is captioned 'a clearing in the jungle'. The photo, which comes from an exhibition on African football dated between 1957-87, shows a match in progress somewhere in Africa on a field built in the midst of a mist-covered jungle. The sizeable gathering of spectators provides illustration of football's claim to be the world's game. The jacket of *The World's Game* is attractive. Although not colourful, it is relevant to the subject matter and artistically presented. It features an image of a football travelling across what appears to be a lunar surface. Perhaps football still has horizons to conquer? Unlike *Football*, *The World's Game* provides an appropriate professional biographical note for Dr Murray. We learn not only of his institutional affiliation but also his previous and forthcoming book publications. At \$US27.95 the book, in cloth form, would seem reasonably priced even for a cost-competitive American market.

In picturing the book in the market place I see it on the shelves in the sports sections of quality book stores in American cities. Taking its place alongside the plethora of books on baseball and American football *The World's Game* might struggle to find its way to the sales counter. But sales in large quantities the book certainly deserves. Mosely's assessment of Football applies equally to the current volume, *The World's Game* provides a history of football that ranges across time and place and draws together a wealth of detail in a highly readable prosaic form. While being a history of football around the world, the book is at once concerned with locating football in world history. As such, much of the discussion focuses of the connection between football and socio-historical themes. The chapter titled 'The Decade of The Dictators' is exemplary in this regard. It provides a fascinating account on how football survived its ultimate politicisation under fascist rulers and how Germany emerged from the ashes of Nazism to win the World Cup only some nine years after the end of World War II. This chapter highlights the general theme in the book that football has remained the people's game despite the attempts by dominant forces, both political and economic, to manipulate the game in pursuit of self-interest..

Criticisms of Murray's book are most likely to come from academics who believe it over celebrates the sport of football without adequately engaging a critical analysis. Some sociologists will no doubt associate Murray's claim that 'the great beauty of sport for most people is that it is an escape from the everyday problems of the world' (p. 168) with an unfashionable functionalist perspective. If the book is read strictly as a sociological text this assessment may be justified. However, such a reading would devalue Bill Murray's endeavour. He provides a history of world football which should be accessible to any intelligent reader who is interested enough to open the cover. For this sociologist who spends much time analysing the contemporary social relations and practices associated with Australian football (soccer), but remains relatively uninformed about the history of the 'world game', Murray's book provides an invaluable resource material. Accordingly, for me to appraise his work from the viewpoint of 'critical sociology' would seem churlish.

The ultimate test of success for the book will be the impression it makes on its targeted American readership. Irrespective of the amount of copies sold in the marketplace I am confident that it will be favourably received by those who read it. The inclusion of a final chapter that

discusses the development of football in the United States against the backdrop of the 1994 World Cup finals enhances the prospects of wider appeal. Murray may not be able to convince Americans to stop calling football soccer, but he should surely leave them with the understanding that football is the world's game.

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