

Thus the 'oppositionists' line holds true overall. Aboriginal cricketers were more controlled than in control. In the wider world of colonial Australia, test selection was, by custom not law, open only to white Australians in the years before 1939. It is this situation that is admirably and carefully explained by Bernard Whimpress in a book that will reward and delight interested readers.

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**Janet Cahill**, *Running Towards Sydney 2000: Olympic Flame & Torch*. Walla Walla Press, Sydney, 1999. Illus, pp. 97, \$19.95.

With the countdown to the Sydney 2000 Olympics now being measured in months rather than years, books on the Sydney Olympics are beginning to flood the market. Most of the books appearing in Australian bookshops are devoting themselves to the endless glorification of past Australian sporting achievements whilst others will be jumping on the high-expectation bandwagon that is surrounding many of our current Olympic athletes. Too few books are likely to be concerned with a critical examination of the Olympics in terms of its broader social, cultural, political and economic implications. If the latter type of book is considered to be the front-runner and the former a backmarker, then *'Running Towards Sydney 2000: Olympic Flame & Torch'* by Janet Cahill is a book that sits comfortably midfield.

Cahill's work is modest in scope. With a focus on the Olympic flame and torch as symbols of the Olympic Games, Cahill seeks to provide the reader with insight into the Ancient Olympic origins of the torch and flame as well as its revival in the Modern Olympics in 1928. Cahill, who is currently the Olympic Project Manager at the University of Technology Sydney, has successfully argued that the torch and its associated ceremonies are the most enduring traditions that remain from the ancient Olympics.

The primary shortcoming of the book is its uncritical nature. The best opportunity to adopt such a stance was in her discussion of sponsorship of the torch relay. Unfortunately, there was an apparent reluctance to probe for greater insight within a commercialisation or commodification framework. Reasons for this are not especially difficult to identify given

that the book is a sponsored by AMP, a company that according to the book's back cover, has 'the unmatched privilege of being the sole presenting Partner of the Sydney 2000 Olympic Torch Relay'. For their part, AMP receives a few pages of corporate hyperbole, highlighting their involvement in the 'Ignite the Dream Tour' that travelled throughout Australia in 1999. Regrettably, this section is now already out of date. In addition, AMP's involvement raises the spectre of the book's integrity, just like the torch and the Olympics, being compromised by commercial interests.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter concerned itself with the torch relay for the 1956 Olympics. The chapter is an excellent showcase for those interested in a comparison between Australia's two Olympic-host experiences. This chapter includes a number of first-hand recollections of those who carried the torch in 1956 including one account from the current UNSW vice-chancellor, John Niland.

Scholars who are already well read on the Olympic Games, Olympism and the various rituals and ceremonies that surround the event are not likely to derive tremendous benefits from Cahill's work. Those who do stand to benefit from the book, are those like myself, whose curiosity on matters Olympic exceeds their existing knowledge.

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**Douglas Booth**, *The Race Game: Sport and Politics in South Africa*. Frank Cass, 1998 (250 pp.)

South Africa was the last major sporting nation to end racial discrimination in sports. During the 1950s, when most other countries were making efforts to dismantle 'colour barriers', South Africa's white-supremacist apartheid government intensified them, forcing the black majority into vastly unequal 'separate development' on the basis of pigmentation and culture, and enforcing those dubious distinctions by brutal state repression. In heroic response, the leaders of the oppressed black majority sought international support for the economic, political, cultural and sporting isolation of apartheid South Africa, as a means of bringing pressure for change.

These tactics slowly began to pay off, especially in sports. By the mid-