

Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation

Kicking Off a New Era



Editors

FAN HONG

J. A. MANGAN

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Series Editor's Foreword

The American Sue Sally Hale disguised herself as a man and played professional polo from 1950 to 1965 at a time when women were banned from playing the game professionally. Her ruse was comic – and effective: she tucked her hair into her helmet, flattened her breasts with tape, wore a baggy shirt and sported a false moustache. She was never found out! To add insult to injury, after games she ‘became a woman again’ and partied with the players as an impressed female admirer.¹ Her dexterity reinforced her deception on the polo ground: ‘She could ride a horse like a Comanche and hit a ball like a Mack truck’, a sports commentator later observed when she eventually became the first woman to be allowed to join the US Polo Association.²

If many women soccer players of 2003 do not ‘have everything’ as, allegedly in the view of some, befits the modern woman, many now have a great deal more in many countries than she had in the USA in 1950. Sue Sally Hale lived up to Jacobean playwright Ben Jonson’s assertion that ‘If women have a will they do it against all the watches of the world.’³ She is a sportswoman for all sportswomen.

It is hoped that *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation* will help their cause at least on soccer pitches. It reveals that many women soccer players of the world have some way to go to ‘have something’, never mind ‘have everything’. If ‘the future is feminine’, as Sepp Blatter has boldly proclaimed, then FIFA’s priority should be to ensure that women everywhere have the fullest opportunity to play soccer – recreationally and occupationally. That is a task well worth undertaking.

A note of caution – Nawal El Moutawakel, the first African, Muslim and Arab woman to win an Olympic gold medal, after watching a Moroccan girls’ soccer game on wretched cactus-strewn scrub on the edge of a Berber village in the Atlas mountains, remarked: ‘I knew how easy it was for me because of the support of my [middle-class] family. But I know there are millions of little Nawals out there who do not have the courage or the necessary support to go out and jog and feel the beauty of sport.’⁴

She makes the strongest of points, revealed so tellingly in an earlier Sport in the Global Society collection, *Freeing the Female Body: Inspirational Icons*,⁵ namely, the advantages middle-class women have in the world of modern sport. Writers on women and sport should never ‘be blinded by illusions of sisterly solidarity and so neglect destructive class differences associated with modern sport’.⁶

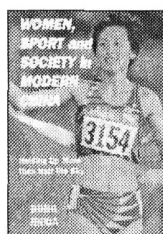
FIFA could do no finer thing than to set as its *top* priority women’s classless access to soccer all over the world.

J. A. MANGAN
Director

International Centre for Socialization, Sport, Society
De Montfort University (Bedford) July 2003

NOTES

1. See her obituary in *The Daily Telegraph*, 3 May 2003, 29.
2. Ibid.
3. Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (Corvino), Act II, Sc.III quoted in Colonel Phillip Hugn Dalbiac, *A Dictionary of Quotations* (London: Nelson, n.d.), p.123.
4. See Tom Knight, 'Foundations Laid for A Better Future', *The Daily Telegraph* (sports section), 20 May 2002, S7.
5. J. A. Mangan and Fan Hong (eds.), *Freeing the Female Body: Inspirational icons* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), passim.
6. See Katherine McCrone, 'Class, Gender and English Women's Sport, c1890-1914', *Journal of Sports History*, Vol.18, No.1 (Spring, 1991), 161.



Women, Sport and Society in Modern China

Holding Up More than Half the Sky

Dong Jinxia, University of Beijing

'Women hold up half the sky' and 'Women can do what men can do' are not just popular slogans peddled by Chairman Mao, but recent actualities of China's elite sport. In every Olympics since 1988 women have increased their representation over men. Their extraordinary performances have thrust Chinese women into the global limelight and sparked considerable interest, not to mention controversy with accusations of drug violations, and yet there remains a paucity of analytical literature on Chinese elite women's sport not only in China but throughout the world.

Drawing on Chinese sources hitherto unavailable in the West, official documents and interviews with top athletes, Dong Jinxia explores the rise of the Chinese super-sportswomen and their relationship with politics, culture and society before and during the Cultural Revolution and through China's transition to a market economy. This evenhanded and readable work will appeal to students of sports studies, journalists and general readers fascinated by the rise of the Chinese women superathletes.

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Cricket and England

A Cultural and Social History of the Inter-war Years

Jack Williams, John Moores University, Liverpool

'Jack Williams's excellent book ... tightly focused, well-written and adept at putting cricket into a broader cultural framework.'

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'Thorough and searching, this is a valuable book.'

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In the 1920s and 1930s, cricket had a vital role in how the English imagined themselves and their social world. Assumptions attached to the high level of sportsmanship within cricket and the associations of cricket with the Church, respect for tradition, the Empire, the public schools and reverence for pastoralism meant that cricket was represented as expressing a distinctively English form of moral worth. This study by Jack Williams shows that the images of cricket, and how far the world of cricket conformed to them are essential for understanding English culture and society between the wars.

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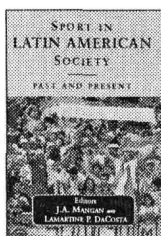
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Sport in Latin American Society

Past and Present

J A Mangan, University of Strathclyde and Lamartine P DaCosta, Gama Filho University (Eds)

Modern sport is important to the lives of countless millions in Latin America as it is the world over. It offers an ecstasy as potent as any religion, an escapism as real as any cinema, an enjoyment as intense as any carnival. It is the tool of governments, the toy of oligarchs and the passion of peoples. Sport in Latin American Society celebrates the infancy, adolescence and maturity of modern sport on the sub-continent. It explains the ways in which sport illuminates cultural migration and emigration, indigenous assimilation and adaptation, and shows how sport indicates and reflects social, political and economic change.

Contributors: J A Mangan, J Arbena, Cesar R Torres, Vic Duke, Liz Crolley, Thomas Carter, Cesar Gordon, Ronaldo Helal, Robert Chappell and Lamartine P DaCosta.

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Football, Europe and the Press

Liz Crolley and David Hand, both at Manchester Metropolitan University

Is the stereotype of the French as a nation producing stylish, elegant football reflected in all European countries? Are there differences in the reconstruction of the traditional image of the Germans being efficient and technically competent? How and why are such stereotypes constructed? Can football journalism be seen as a last bastion where simplistic views on a nation's identity can be aired, or does it reflect the same sort of complexity as other sections of the media when it comes to a nation's identity? This lively, cross-cultural examination of image and identity attempts to answer all these questions by comparing the football journalism of five European countries: France, England, Germany, Italy and Spain. It shows what the language of football writing says about perceptions of identity in Europe.

The book is based on detailed studies of the language used in football match reports and related articles appearing in a representative sample of quality daily newspapers including The Times, Le Monde, Süddeutsche Zeitung and El País. The result is a unique, lively and timely analysis of image and identity in European football writing which will appeal to a wide audience.

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PROLOGUE

Managing Monsters

J.A. MANGAN

Women's advance in modern sport has been too frequently characterized by condescension and confrontation, denial and defiance, proscription and persistence, and too often, by necessary forced entry and grudging accommodation. This is strikingly apparent from the evidence set out in *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation* by women (and men) who have closely examined Africa, America (North and South), Asia and Europe.

There is more than a grain of truth in the assertion that behind the lengthy history of women's slow advance onto global football fields lies attempts at what has been termed 'Managing Monsters'. Any attempted metamorphosis from allocated feminine role to asserted feminine role has provoked ridicule, anger and anxiety – and not just from men!

Women's historical social role has recently been well described:

The familiar categories of wife, mother and virgin represent traditional roles for women in patriarchal societies. Within their typically subjugated roles, women found ways to project power and to be exemplars of socially sanctioned ideals of womanhood. By contrast, sexually assertive women, who rejected traditional constraints imposed on women, were viewed as dangerous to society.¹

This lucid observation, written about women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe, has more recent world applications.

Marina Warner, in her 1994 Reith Lectures 'Managing Monsters: Six Myths of Our Time', considered the threat of the 'serpentine metamorphosis of the monstrous female'² and, allegorically, directed her listeners to some overlooked scientific data about the infamous insect – the female praying mantis:

Eckehard Liske and W. Jackson Davis of Santa Cruz California ...videotaped the mantises' courtship while the insects thought they were in private and found a pleasant ritual dance in place of cannibalism – and with both partners surviving. The researchers say that until now scientists have distracted the insects by their presence and by watching them under bright lights – and that they didn't give them enough to eat.³

Warner remarked, 'This most loved creature in the surrealist bestiary of

misogynist folklore famous for devouring her mate alive after mating, has been vindicated. Let them alone, give them enough to eat and look! They fall into peaceful mutual post-coital slumber.⁴

The pleasing outcome of mutually satisfying intercourse apart, Warner's related point, on a human level, is well made: 'Sovereignty over self – not over others; the right to govern one's own person, not the right to govern others ... emancipation through understanding',⁵ and she adds for good measure, 'monsters are made, not given and if monsters are made not given, they can be unmade too'.⁶

The struggles of women footballers across the world has involved the persistent 'unmaking' of laughable pseudo-logic, crude stereotype and malicious myth. Illustrations abound in *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation*.

Optimism regarding the future is justified. Nevertheless caution is needed in this optimism. One message to be found in *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation* is that in a world economy undergoing revolutionary change in many areas, 'regardless of the country examined and regardless of whether per capita income has increased, stagnated or decreased, women have been over-represented among the losers or under-represented among the winners ... economic transformation has led to fewer gains or greater losses for women. The outcome of economic transformation, therefore, does not appear to be random.'⁷ In the countries considered in *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation*, this analysis holds true. In China – originally host to the 2003 Women's Football World Cup – economic transformation and associated rapid economic growth, post Mao, have had 'two contradictory consequences for the position of women ...'.⁸ On the one hand, increased employment opportunities have strengthened the bargaining power of women; on the other hand, gender discrimination in hiring and firing has reduced the status of women ...'.⁹ As *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation* reveals, this also holds true for Chinese women in football – inside and outside the immediate family. Any solution to pernicious and persistent inequality in society, and in football, will depend on economic growth, government policies and the effectiveness of women's organizations. As in the past so in the future, to a significant extent: 'Only if women organize to voice their needs through labour unions, political office and women's organizations will they be able to become equal players in the transformed world economy of the future'¹⁰ and in the transformed world of global football: economic progress, gender influence and 'a level (football) playing field' all go together! Progress will ensue but it will not be easy; gender certainties and uncertainties, commercial conservatism, governmental priorities could all bar the way. Certainly, 'in a dynamic capitalist world the rules keep changing'¹¹ – but, as yet, neither sufficiently fast nor sufficiently advantageous to adequately benefit women. One reason is clear enough. 'As long as the governing ideology of the sports business is determined by the demands of commercialization, athletic activity at all levels will continue to be more reactionary than progressive, even as women make gains'¹² (emphasis added). To commercialization, as already made clear, should be added gender resistance and political inertia.

There is, of course, as already stated, some room for optimism. An earlier collection in *Sport in the Global Society* revealed how some courageous women in recent times, 'through a re-evaluation, reconstruction and rehabilitation of their "bodies" and women's bodies in general, have influenced and determined, directly and indirectly and to a lesser or greater extent, the status of many modern women of the modern "global village"'.¹³

Within the narrower framework of women's football, *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation* has added other women to this iconic pantheon – and in many cases, their contributions are far from complete.

One crucial issue, incidentally, to be confronted in the future with regard to women's football, to a greater extent beyond Europe and North America than within them, is the role government – national and local – will need to play in the twenty-first century: Both state and public sector organizations have an obligation to ensure essential social services including educational and leisure opportunities for involvement in sport. This obligation should be both proactive and reactive. In the latter case because 'its policies, programmes and services compensate for the shortcomings of the private sector. In the former case because it has a civic responsibility to improve health, well-being and the quality of life of those it caters for – in partnership with commercial concerns or independently in its own right'.¹⁴ *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation* reveals disquieting tendencies in both Northern and Southern hemispheres to abrogate these responsibilities – in total and in part. It is equally clear that action to halt this tendency will only be adequately made when women obtain a voice – individually and collectively – on state and public sector decision – and have a presence at local and national levels.¹⁵ This must be a priority for the future.

Finally, the rest of the world, as in so many other things, will follow America in the creation of an increasingly symbiotic relationship between culture, sport and commerce. Women must be to the fore in this process. And American women lead the way – the USA Women's Football World Cup is evidence of this.¹⁶

The so-called 'consciousness industries', it has been noted, now add to the value – economic and cultural – of finished commercial products. Nike Air Jordan shoes furnish a perfect illustration. Their exorbitant price owes much to innovative advertising campaigns that have 'both capitalised on, and indeed, accentuated Michael Jordan's cultural prominence'.¹⁷ With the result that, 'Air Jordan Shoes ... furnished with a symbolic value ... effectively transformed a gaudy concoction of leather, nylon and rubber into a prized cultural commodity'.¹⁸

The importance of this phenomenon to women's football is obvious and is made abundantly clear in *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation*. Absorption into the 'consciousness industries' should be an ambition of modern sportswomen, their agents, promoters and sponsors. This will result in increasing wealth, power and influence. For women it could occur more slowly than in the case of men, but it will occur. At the centre of the now intrinsically linked culture, commerce and