

ROBERT A. MECHIKOFF

STEVEN G. ESTES

*A History and
Philosophy of*

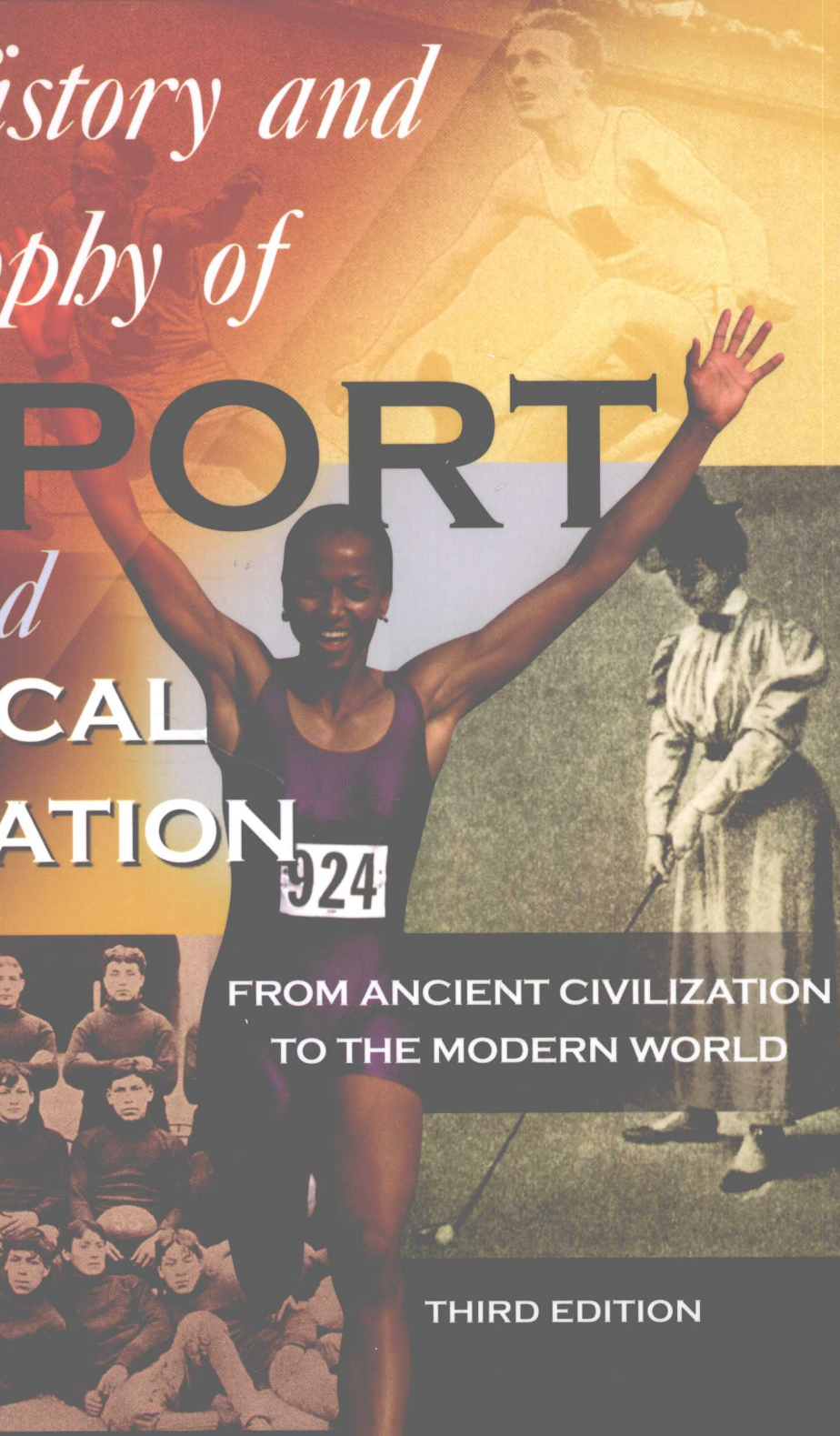
SPORT

and

**PHYSICAL
EDUCATION**

FROM ANCIENT CIVILIZATION
TO THE MODERN WORLD

THIRD EDITION



Third Edition

A HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

*From Ancient Civilizations
to the Modern World*

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THIRD EDITION

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PREFACE

The third edition builds upon the work contained in the two previous editions of this book. The material reflects my journey to improve as a scholar and teacher. This is a never-ending quest and my journey has no end in sight.

There is no question that, historically, sport and physical education enjoyed enormous popularity in the ancient world. Not much has changed. The degree of interest and popularity enjoyed by sport and physical education in the twenty-first century has few, if any, rivals. The historical significance and cultural practices associated with sport and physical education is nothing less than monumental!

INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years people have built huge monuments to sport and established timeless traditions and rituals that are essential to participating in, and understanding sport and physical education. Stories about legendary athletes and coaches have captivated our attention for millenniums. The great athletic contests—the rivalries of antiquity and those that exist today—provide the catalyst for excitement and interest that enthralls and mesmerizes millions of people each day. Apart from the actual competitions and individual participation, modern day sports aficionados can maintain their link to sport and exercise 24 hours a day, seven days a week via visits to the gym, books, films, radio shows, and cable television. In the ancient world, these same people would have probably

gathered at the gymnasium, palestra, baths, or related venues to engage in exercise, athletic competition and to discuss their mutual love for sport and interest in physical education. They would have had access to written records that featured results of athletic competitions. During Roman rule, they would have read graffiti-covered walls that called attention to the sporting figures of the time. Can there be no doubt that sport and physical education have been, and will continue to be, an essential fabric—a primary color—within the context of civilization?

STRATEGY

Within the broad realm of philosophical inquiry, especially as it relates to educational philosophy, the fundamental question “what’s worth knowing?” demands careful consideration and a thoughtful response. In general, one of the benchmarks of an educated citizen is an understanding and appreciation of the profound contributions and mistakes that were the work of mere mortals. Music that lifts the soul, works of art that take your breath away and literature (oral and written) that leads to self-discovery and nourishes the intellect are critical components in the education of the individual. Art and literature enjoy a rich heritage and historical significance that are universal. These areas are certainly “worth knowing about” as is science, religion, and other significant discoveries and social institutions that have shaped the course of history, for better or worse.

Experts study and research events and practices that have a profound impact on civilization. Extraordinary activities and events that transcend civilizations and become a worldwide phenomenon are studied even more closely by a variety of interested groups and individuals.

For example, humans have always admired beauty and inspiration. These two qualities are manifested in the humanities, the arts, and in religion. However, does their exist yet another institution—another human activity that could rival, if not surpass, the arts and humanities in popularity? If we could identify an activity that not only eclipsed the arts and humanities in their ability to provide meaning, beauty, and inspiration to the human race, but also has a rich history and a devoted following that far exceeds the legions of art and music aficionados, would this area be worth knowing about? There are precious few institutions or attendant human activities that are as deeply rooted in the history of civilization as athletic competition and the interest in physical exercise.

Noted scholars in archeology, history, philosophy, classics, anthropology, sociology, art, music, and theology have devoted much of their professional activities to the study of various aspects of sport and physical education. Their research and discoveries contribute significantly to our knowledge about importance of sport and physical education. The fact that so many different academic disciplines study pertinent areas of sport and physical education speaks to its monumental interest and cultural significance. The body of knowledge about sport and physical education is vast and growing. It should come as no surprise that the study of sport, physical education, and physical activity is not the soul province of kinesiology.

The study and appreciation of history and philosophy can be revealing, thought provoking, and enlightening, which are some of the criteria for demonstrating the ability to engage in critical thought. For the student of kinesiology, exercise science, and physical education, there is another important reason to develop a fundamental understanding of our past. Students and other interested individuals will hopefully realize that the study of

history and philosophy is critical to the health and well-being of the future of sport and physical education. The institutional memory of sport and physical education is of paramount importance because when an institution or profession forgets its history and philosophical foundations, it doesn't know where it has been and will have a most difficult time determining where it should go and how to get there. A student of history, a believer in the utility of philosophy, will, in all probability, "rarely have to reinvent the wheel." Those who ignore or forget the lessons of history are bound to repeat it. For these people, progress is limited because they repeat mistakes that have been made earlier and seem to spend their time and energy "reinventing the wheel."

My strategy is to provide the reader with a broad overview—a survey of selected philosophical and historical interpretations of individuals, philosophical schools, social institutions, and groups that impacted the evolution of sport and physical education. Several themes are utilized throughout the book. There is a focus on the philosophical position of the body and the history of the body. Modernization theory, metaphysics, ontology, and epistemology are employed as interpretative devices used to explain how the position of the body and attendant interest in sport and physical education increased or decreased over time.

The impact of Socrates, Plato, and Descartes relative to their use of dualism to philosophically justify the importance of training the mind over that of training the body will serve to introduce Western ideas about the relationship between mind and body. In addition to classic Greek philosophers, distinguished theologians, philosophers, historians, educators, and scientists who discussed and debated the value of a mind and body education and the utility of sport and physical education are discussed and evaluated.

Most of the material focuses on the history and philosophy of sport in the Western World. However, it is very clear that cultures borrow ideas and practices from other cultures, especially in the area of sport and physical education. The Egyptians had a major impact upon the development of

Greek civilization and sport. In turn, the Ancient Greeks had a profound impact upon the development of sport and culture in Europe and the rest of the Western world. Perhaps it is because of their monuments to sport that are still standing and the numerous artifacts and records attesting to their sporting heritage that the athletic achievements of Ancient Greek athletes have become legendary.

The Ancient Greeks elevated the body to a degree that has yet to be replicated. The body had an important religious connection as the Greeks portrayed their major gods as magnificent physical specimens. Mere mortals believed that to develop a “god like” body would endear themselves to the gods. Beauty was a huge component of Greek culture and there was no more beautiful form than the human body. The aesthetic sense that the Greek sculptors used to produce the human form as art continues to inspire us today much as it did when it was first exhibited. The virtues of Arete and Agon demanded athletic excellence and serious physical training. However, physical perfection and athletic supremacy were only one aspect of Greek education. The need for a “mind and body” education was the hallmark of Ancient Greece in the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. The gymnasiums were not only a place to develop the body but also a place for philosophical discussion and other intellectual pursuits.

GOAL

It seems unlikely that modern civilization will ever embrace the philosophical position of the body or embrace the concept of Arete in the same manner as the Ancient Greeks did. As educators, former coaches, and athletes, the authors do believe that it is both interesting and educational to know how previous cultures felt about the development of the mind and body and how these beliefs shaped the development of sport and physical education. Our hope is that the third edition of *A History and Philosophy of Sport and Physical Education* will enable the reader to understand and appreciate the fact that competitive sport and the practice of physical education has achieved a prominent place

in the history of Western civilization. The joy, personal meaning and community bonding that sport can generate is an endearing legacy that was just as evident in the ancient world as it is today. Movies about athletes and teams continue to be made because they inspire and motivate us. Hollywood has given us *Hoosiers*, *A League of Their Own*, *The Natural*, *Field of Dreams*, *Driven*, *Knute Rockne All American*, *The Jim Thorpe Story*, *Remember the Titans*, *Rudy*, and *The Hurricane*, to name but a few of the great films that focus on sport. In addition to the popular films, serious documentaries have been produced about sport. Ken Burns produced a documentary on baseball that has already achieved critical success. Athletes, coaches, physical educators and participants who have preceded us have provided us with a rich heritage that must be preserved and passed on to future generations.

Our field has a glorious past and a most promising future if approached with integrity and professionalism. If it is not, history will most likely repeat itself. Our profession could once again become replete with scandals spawned by unsavory coaches, athletes, and promoters who tarnish our image and discredit our contributions. This could lead to public and professional sentiment against the educational value of physical education in the schools and a jaded and disillusioned attitude toward athletic competition at all levels. The philosopher George Santayana expressed the value of knowing about history when he said, “Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. . . . Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

CHANGES TO THE THIRD EDITION

The first chapter, *History and Philosophy in Sport and Physical Education*, has been expanded by merging this important introductory chapter with the former Chapter 17 titled *Back to the Future: Human Movement as Personal Experience in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*. As a result, the third edition begins with a comprehensive introductory chapter that reflects the breadth and utility

of history and philosophy as a means for discovery, enlightenment, and reflection. This chapter provides the reader with questions and epistemologies that should serve as a catalyst to stimulate critical thought. The material could challenge the reader with ideas and concepts that may call into question the validity of their current belief systems or reinforce those belief systems. The philosophical content of this chapter will provide the student with additional sources of knowledge (philosophical schools and beliefs) that does not lend itself easily to scientific explanation. After all, there are many things that science can't explain but can be discussed and understood in a philosophical sense.

As a result of the merging of Chapters 17 with Chapter 1, there are a total of 16 Chapters organized into five sections or themes. Although the interest in the history and philosophy of sport and physical education remains as strong as ever, the particular area of interest is in the history of the Olympic Games (ancient and modern) and sport and physical education as justified and practiced in the ancient world. The third edition reflects this to some degree. The material on sport and physical education relative to Egypt has been expanded (Chapter 2). Ancient Greece (Chapter 3) has been refined and considerably enhanced especially as it relates to the ancient Olympics, participation in athletics by Greek women, and the virtues of Arete and Agon. Rome (Chapter 4) has new information on Etruscan civilization and Etruscan ritualized combat sport which generally set the stage for what the Romans called *Ludi* or public games. Partly because of the success of the movie *Gladiator* (Oscar winner for Best Picture in 2001) and the fascination students have about the "conspicuous consumption" of the Romans and their perverse use of the Coliseum and related venues throughout the Roman world, this chapter has been significantly expanded.

The reader will find that there are some new timelines and maps. Additional photos have been added and a few old ones removed. The inside of the cover lists websites that reflect the content of the book and other pertinent sites. This new pedagogical aid should stimulate the interest of the

reader to continue his or her search into the vast realm of history, philosophy, sport, physical education, and other related areas.

Section 5—*The Modern Olympic Games*—has been refined and expanded relative to the material in Chapter 14. The origins of the Modern Olympic Games are presented in detail, as are many of the key figures. Baron Pierre de Coubertin is featured along with Dr. William Penny Brooks, Dr. William M. Sloane, the Zappas Family and other Greeks who thought of and brought forward the idea of reestablishing the Olympic Games long before Coubertin did. Chapter 16 contains new material about the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, the Winter Olympics in Nagano in 1998 and the Summer Olympics in Sydney in 2000. The Post Cold War Olympics have been glorious and expensive! The degree to which television viewers must endure commercial after commercial during the Olympics has become so incessant that hundreds of thousands of would-be Olympic Fans simply opted for more traditional programming, sans Olympics. The situation became intolerable during the Sydney Olympics when NBC decided to televise the "tape delayed Olympics" to the American audience. Millions of people living in California and other Western states saw Olympic events 16 hours *after* it had taken place; there was no live coverage. There were some sensational competitions in Sydney, however, there are some decisions that must be critically addressed. This is reflected in the section covering the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games.

The Instructors Manual has been revised to reflect the changes in the third edition. In addition, there are some new questions that have been added at the end of selected chapters to facilitate discussion and debate. Ancillary contributions include some lectures that expand on the material found in the book. This material should provide the instructor with additional information that exceeds that which is generally available.

The third edition is a work in progress. The information on the contributions of non-Western civilizations to the development of sport and physical education in Western Civilization must be acknowledged and expanded. Women and people

of color play key roles in the evolution of sport and physical education. The third edition has increased coverage in this area but much more needs to be done. If this edition provides the reader with a foundation that engenders an appreciation and understanding of the profound impact that sport and physical education have had, and will continue to have, on civilization, this book will have achieved some success. If this edition provides the reader with a sense of history and a revealing look at how past civilizations lived and what they lived to see and do, the book will achieve some of its goals. If the reader discovers that athletes in the ancient world possessed the same drive, devotion, and desire to win that athletes in the modern world do, the book will have shown that athletic competition is a universal construct that has withstood the test of time. Indeed, there are precious few activities that the human race can relate to that is as pervasive and ageless as sport and physical education. It is a subject certainly worth knowing about.

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I am indebted to the following individuals for their assistance and patience. Their help and expertise in assembling and contributing materials from the far reaches of the world was incredible. Their willingness to share their thoughts and discoveries with me has truly enlightened and inspired me. Their ability and assistance in securing scholarly research opportunities in this country and abroad on my behalf has been extraordinary and much appreciated! My eternal thanks and appreciation to:

Faculty of The International Olympic Academy, Ancient Olympia, Greece

There are very few places where scholars and students studying sport history, especially the history of the Olympic Games, can gather and participate in research, discussions, and debates with leading sports authorities from around the world. The International Olympic Academy (IOA) provides such an opportunity. As a result of my participa-

tion as a Guest and Supervising Professor, I have been fortunate to access the superb resources of the IOA. The opportunity to learn and discuss philosophical issues and historical events with gifted students and accomplished scholars at the IOA has enlightened and inspired me. The following individuals have contributed greatly to my understanding of the Olympic Movement and the rich history and philosophy of the Olympic Games. Because of their devotion to international education and the ideals of the Olympic Movement, I have grown as both an individual and as a scholar. My eternal gratitude and sincere appreciation to Mr. Nikos Filaretos, President of the International Olympic Committee, Member of the International Olympic Committee, and Member of the Hellenic Olympic Committee. His leadership of the IOA and vision for the future of Olympic Education is a gift that benefits us all. Dr. Kostas Georgiadis, Dean of the International Olympic Academy and internationally recognized authority has provided a level of scholarship to the IOA that is superb! The IOA attracts great scholars from around the world to educate and inspire students and Olympic officials. I am grateful to the following scholars for taking time after class to answer my questions and generously assist me in my own research endeavors. Dr. Stephen G. Miller of the University of California–Berkeley and world renown archeologist, expert on sport in the ancient world and Director of the Nemea Excavation site in Greece. Dr. Wolfgang Decker, internationally recognized expert of sport and physical education in Ancient Greece and Professor of the German Sports School in Cologne. Dr. Bruce Kidd, Professor and Dean of Physical Education and Athletics at the University of Toronto, internationally recognized authority in sport history. Mr. David Wallechinsky, recognized around the world as an authority on the history of the Modern Olympic Games, Olympic Commentator for NBC Sports, author of *The Complete Book of the Summer Olympics*. Dr. Evaggelos Albanidis, scholar and internationally recognized authority on sport and physical education in Ancient Greece.

I am especially grateful to Dr. John Lucas. He is a true gentleman and superb scholar. His knowledge and critical reviews have been very helpful to me and to the success of this book.

The Olympic Museum and Studies Centre, Lausanne Switzerland

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Robert A. Mechikoff
La Jolla, California

SELECTED WEBSITES

Related to Sport & Physical Education

Amateur Athletic Foundation of L.A.

www.aafla.com

St. Thomas Aquinas

www.catholic-forum.com/saints/saintto3.htm

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

www.olympic.org

National Association for Physical Education in Higher Education

www.napehe.org

Ancient Greek (Hellenic) Sites on the web

www.webcom.com/shownet/medea/grklink.html

Ed Jaggard's Ancient Greek Links

<http://members.tripod.com/ejaggard/greek.html>

The Corinth Computer Project

<http://corinth.sas.upenn.edu/corinth.html>

1936 Berlin Olympics

www.ushmm.org/olympics/fset1.html

The American School of Classical Studies at Athens

www.ascsa.edu.gr/asca_info.html

Archaeological Museum of Ancient Corinth

www.culture.gr/z/21/211/21104m/e211dm02.html

Ancient Olympia

www.dilos.com/region/pelopon/olympia.html

The Ancient Greeks

www.pbs.org/empires/thegreeks/index.html

National Center for History in the Schools

www.sscnet.ucla.edu/nchs

Yahoo Arts and Humanities

http://dir.yahoo.com/Arts/Humanities/Philosophy/History_of_Philosophy

Significant Historians and Philosophers

www.scholiast.org/history/histphil.html

Perseus

www.perseus.tufts.edu

British Society of Sports History

www.umist.ac.uk/UMIST_Sport/index2.html

Center for Olympic Studies—University of New South Wales

www.arts.unsw.edu.au/olympic

Center for the Study of Olympics and Sport in Barcelona, Spain

<http://blues.uab.es/olympic.studies>

Ancient Olympic Games Virtual Museum—Dartmouth

<http://devlab.dartmouth.edu/olympic>

Athens Olympic Organizing Committee for 2004 Olympic Games

www.athens.olympic.org/en

SIRC—bibliographic data base for Sports Information

www.sportquest.com

ESPN Sports Century

<http://espn.go.com/sportscenter/index.html>

North American Society for Sport History (NASSH)

<http://nassh.uwo.ca>

Archeology—Arch Net

www.archnet.asu.edu

Women in the Olympics

www.feminist.org/archive/olympics/intro.html

Argos—Internet Links for Ancient and Medieval History & Philosophy

<http://argos.evansville.edu>

The American Philosophical Association

www.udel.edu/apa

Archaeological Institute of America

www.archaeological.org

American Philological Association

www.apaclassics.org/APA-MENU.html

Plato and his Dialogues by Bernard Suzanne

<http://phd.evansville.edu/plato.html>

CONTENTS

Preface xiii

SECTION

I Ancient Civilizations

1 History and Philosophy in Sport and Physical Education 2

Definitions 3

“Doing” History 4

Modernization 6

Urbanization and Industrialization 7

Metaphysics 8

Philosophical Processes 9

Basic Philosophical Terms 10

Metaphysics and Ontology 11

Metaphysical Dualism 11

Epistemology 12

From Dualism to Monism in the Western World 12

Philosophies of the

Modern World 13

Pragmatism 14

Existentialism 14

Phenomenology 17

Summary 18

Discussion Questions 19

Suggestions for Further Reading 19

Notes 19

2 Sumer, Egypt, and China 22

General Events 22

Introduction 23

Sumer 25

Egypt 28

China 31

Summary 33

Discussion Questions 34

Suggestions for Further Reading 34

Notes 34

3 Greece 36

General Events 36

Introduction 37

The Influence of the Jews and the

Phoenicians upon Greek Culture 37

Philosophical Positions of the Body 39

Dualism 39

Classical Humanism 40

Socrates' and Plato's View of the Body 41

Socrates' and Plato's View of Physical Education 42

Education Through the Physical versus Education of the Physical 45

Aristotle 46

Historical Foundations of Sport and Physical Education 47

Arete and Agon 47

Funeral Games 48

Influence of Crete 48

- Some Historical Perspectives on
the Development of Greek Sport 49
- Athens and Sparta: A Tale of
Two Cities 50
- Fitness Assessment in Sparta* 52
- Athenian Education* 52
- Athenian Physical Education* 52
- Athletic Participation of
Greek Women* 53
- The Ancient Olympic Games 55
- Summary 60
- Discussion Questions 61
- Suggestions for Further
Reading 61
- Notes 62

4 Rome 64

- General Events 64
- Introduction 65
- The Etruscans 65
- Nero 68
- Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Greeks
and Romans 69
- Philosophical Orientation 69
- The Cynics* 70
- The Stoics* 71
- The Epicureans* 71
- Marcus Tullius Cicero* 71
- Antiochus* 72
- Sport and Physical Education 72
- Military Training 73
- Claudius Galen 73
- Greek Athletics 74
- Women and Sport 75
- Games and Spectacles 75
- Sport and Christianity 81
- Greek Reaction to the Introduction
of Roman Sport 82
- Summary 82
- Discussion Questions 82
- Suggestions for Further
Reading 83
- Notes 83

SECTION

II

From the Spiritual World to the Secular World: Changing Concepts of the Body

5 Philosophy, Sport, and Physical Education During the Middle Ages: 900–1400 86

- General Events 86
- Introduction 87
- The Impact of Christianity 87
- Christianity and Greek Philosophy 89
- Philosophical Position of the Body in the
Middle Ages 89
- The Body and Physical Fitness According
to St. Thomas Aquinas 91
- Moses Maimonides and St. Bonaventure 92
- Linking the Spiritual with Secular Sport 93
- Holidays and Ball Games 94
- Rugged Ball Games, Equestrian Events,
and English Football 94
- Medieval Social Structure: Knights, Nobles,
and Worthy Pursuits 95
- Sport of the Aristocracy 96
- Medieval Tournaments* 97
- Hawking, Hunting, and Other
Pastimes* 97
- Medieval Concepts of Health and Hygiene:
Galen Revisited 98
- Summary 99
- Discussion Questions 100
- Suggestions for Further
Reading 100
- Notes 101

6 The Renaissance and the Reformation 103

- General Events 103
- Introduction 104
- Cultural Changes of the Renaissance 104
- The Reformation 106

- The Philosophers and Educators of the Renaissance 107
Petrus Paulus Vergerius 109
Vittorino da Feltre 109
Aeneas Silvio Piccolomini 110
Baldassare Castiglione 111
- The Philosophers and Educators of the Reformation 111
William of Ockham 113
Desiderius Erasmus 114
Martin Luther 114
John Calvin 116
Thomas Elyot 117
Roger Ascham 118
- Summary 119
 Discussion Questions 120
 Suggestions for Further Reading 120
 Notes 120
- 7 The Age of Science and the Enlightenment 122**
- General Events 122
 Introduction: From Heaven to Humanity—The Age of Science and the Enlightenment 123
The Age of Science: 1560–1688 123
The Enlightenment: 1688–1789 125
- Philosophers of Science 126
Galileo Galilei 126
Francis Bacon 127
Isaac Newton 128
- The Philosophers 128
Thomas Hobbes 129
Rene Descartes 130
George Berkeley 131
- The Educators 132
Francois Rabelais 132
Richard Mulcaster 132
Michel de Montaigne 133
John Comenius 134
John Milton 134
John Locke 134
- Philosophes and Physical Educators 135
Jean Jacques Rousseau 136
Johann Bernhard Basedow 139
Johann Friedrich GutsMuths 140
- Summary 141
 Discussion Questions 141
 Suggestions for Further Reading 142
 Notes 142
- 8 Philosophical Positions of the Body and the Development of Physical Education: Contributions of the Germans, Swedes, and Danes in Nineteenth-Century Europe 144**
- General Events 144
 Introduction 145
 Idealism 145
The Self 146
On Knowledge 146
- The German Idealists: Kant, Fichte, and Hegel 147
Immanuel Kant 148
Johann Fichte 150
Georg Hegel 150
- The Application of Idealism to Physical Education 151
Student 152
Values 152
Objectives 152
Curriculum 152
Evaluation 153
- The Educators 153
Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi 153
Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel 155
Friedrich Ludwig Jahn 156
Charles Follen 160
Charles Beck 161
Francis Lieber 161
Franz Nachtgall 162
Per Henrik Ling 164
- Summary 166
 Discussion Questions 166
 Suggestions for Further Reading 167
 Notes 167

SECTION

III

The Theoretical and Professional Development of American Physical Education

9 Science, Medicine, and the Concept of Health: The Theoretical and Professional Development of Physical Education, 1885–1930 170

- General Events 170
- Introduction to the Nineteenth-Century
 - Concept of Health 171
 - Orthodox Medicine* 172
 - The Preeminence of Biological Science* 173
- Social and Institutional Change in Nineteenth-Century America 174
- The Theoretical Basis of American Physical Education 175
 - Three Distinct Periods* 177
 - Biological and Philosophical Issues* 178
 - Evolution* 179
- The Disease—Neurasthenia:
 - The Cure—Exercise! 180
- Exercise Builds Brain Power 180
- Women: Mothers of the Race 181
- Women, Higher Education, and Physical Education 182
- The Golden Age of Anthropometric Measurement: 1885–1900 182
- Defining the Scope of the Discipline 184
- The Contributions of German Gymnastics, Dio Lewis, and the Swedish System to Teacher Training 185
- Physical Education the American Way 187
- Changing Concepts of Health 187
- A Changing Profession 187
- The Professional Preparation of Teachers 188
- Summary 192

- Discussion Questions 193
- Suggestions for Further Reading 193
- Notes 194

10 Toward the Reform of Physical Education: 1900–1939 197

- General Events 197
- The Transformation of Physical Education and the Adoption of Sports Programs 198
- The Development of Play Theory:
 - 1900–1915 201
 - Herbert Spencer* 201
 - Karl Groos* 202
 - G. Stanley Hall* 202
 - Luther Halsey Gulick* 202
 - John Dewey* 203
- Advocates and Adversaries: The Promotion of Play 203
- Play and Popular Culture 204
- Play versus Gymnastics 204
- Play in Physical Education: 1900–1915 205
- The Paradigmatic Basis of the New Physical Education: 1916–1930 206
 - The Architects of the New Physical Education: Clark Hetherington, Thomas D. Wood, and Rosalind Cassidy* 206
 - Components and Goals of Physical Education* 206
- Promotion of Physical Education 207
- Physical Education Literature in the Early Twentieth Century 207
- Science and the Quantification of Physical Education 208
 - Tests and Measurements* 208
 - The Relationship Between Physical Ability and Mental Ability* 208
 - Physical Fitness Assessment* 209
- Summary 210
- Discussion Questions 211
- Suggestions for Further Reading 211
- Notes 212

SECTION

IV

Historical and Philosophical Development of Sport in America

11 Sport in the Colonial Period 216

- General Events 216
- Sport in the Colonial Period 217
- Sport in England: A Tale of Two Cultures 217
- Sport in New England: The Puritans 219
- Amusements in New England 221
- Sport in the Mid-Atlantic Region 221
- Sport in the South 221
- Summary 224
- Discussion Questions 225
- Suggestions for Further Reading 225
- Notes 225

12 Changing Concepts of the Body: Sport and Play in Nineteenth-Century America 227

- General Events 227
- A Changing America 228
- Early Technological Innovations and Their Impact on Sport 228
- Nineteenth-Century American Philosophy: Transcendentalism and Pragmatism 229
 - Ralph Waldo Emerson* 230
 - Henry David Thoreau* 230
 - Pragmatism* 231
- The Influence of Charles Darwin 231
- The Pragmatists 232
 - Charles Sanders Peirce* 232
 - William James* 233
- Sport in the Nineteenth Century 233
- Justifying Sport in the Nineteenth Century 234
 - Religion as an Argument for Sport* 234
 - Other Arguments That Justified Sport Participation* 235

- Sport Develops in the Nineteenth Century 235
- Sport and Play in Nineteenth-Century America 237
 - Horse and Harness Racing* 237
 - Ball Games: Cricket, Baseball, and Football* 240
 - "Amateur" Sports* 245
- Summary 248
- Discussion Questions 248
- Suggestions for Further Reading 248
- Notes 249

13 Sport in the Twentieth Century 251

- General Events 251
- Introduction 252
- College Football 252
- Professional Football 256
- Basketball 258
- Volleyball 260
- Women and Sport 260
- Summary 265
- Discussion Questions 265
- Suggestions for Further Reading 266
- Notes 266

SECTION

V

Modern Olympic Games

14 A Selected Political and Social History of the Modern Olympic Games, 1896–1936 268

- Introduction 269
- The Architects of the modern Olympic Games: Dr. William Penny Brooks and Baron Pierre de Frey de Coubertin 270
- The Ist Olympiad: Athens, 1896 273
- The IInd Olympiad: Paris, 1900 274
- The IIIrd Olympiad: St. Louis, 1904 275
- The IVth Olympiad: London, 1908 276

- The Vth Olympiad: Stockholm, 1912 278
- The VIIth Olympiad: Antwerp, 1920 280
- The VIIIth Olympiad: Paris, 1924 281
- The Ist Winter Olympics: Chamonix,
1924 282
- The IXth Olympiad: Amsterdam, 1928 283
- The IInd Winter Olympics: St. Moritz,
1928 283
- The Issue of Amateurism 284
- The Xth Olympiad: Los Angeles, 1932 284
- The IIIrd Winter Olympics: Lake Placid,
1932 285
- The Political Nature of the Olympic
Games 285
- The XIth Olympiad: Berlin, 1936 286
*Sport and Physical Education in Nazi
Germany* 286
- The IVth Winter Olympics:
Garmisch–Partenkirchen, 1936 290
- Discussion Questions 291
- Notes 291
- 15 A Selected Political and Social
History of the Modern Olympic
Games, 1948–1968 293**
- Introduction 294
- The XIVth Olympiad: London, 1948 294
Political Atmosphere 295
- The Vth Winter Olympics:
St. Moritz, 1948 297
- The XVth Olympiad: Helsinki, 1952 298
Cold War of Sports 299
Propaganda War 300
- The VIth Winter Olympics: Oslo,
1952 302
- The XVIth Olympiad: Melbourne, 1956 302
The Aussie Olympics 303
Olympic Boycott 304
- The VIIth Winter Olympics:
Cortina, 1956 306
- The XVIIth Olympiad: Rome, 1960 306
Roman Holiday 307
East versus West 307
- The VIIIth Winter Olympics: Squaw Valley,
1960 309
- The XVIIIth Olympiad: Tokyo, 1964 310
The Perfect Olympiad 310
Olympic Politics 310
Defections 312
Notables 312
- The IXth Winter Olympics: Innsbruck,
1964 313
- The XIXth Olympiad: Mexico City,
1968 313
Student Demonstrations 314
Olympic Politics 314
- The Xth Winter Olympics: Grenoble,
1968 316
- Summary 317
- Discussion Questions 317
- Notes 318
- 16 A Selected Political and Social History
of the Modern Olympic Games,
1972–2000**
- The XXth Olympiad: Munich, 1972 321
World View 321
Olympic Politics 321
The Munich Massacre 323
Notables 324
- The XIth Winter Olympics: Sapporo,
1972 325
- The XXIst Olympiad: Montreal, 1976 326
The Taiwan Issue 326
The Boycott 328
Security Concerns 329
*Political Defections and
Propaganda* 329
Notables 330
- The XIIth Winter Olympics: Innsbruck,
1976 330
- The XXIIInd Olympiad: Moscow, 1980 331
*What Led to the U.S. Boycott?: The Soviet
Invasion of Afghanistan* 331
Athletes as Political Pawns 333
Presidential Pressure and Promises 334
- Epilogue 335
Notables 336
- The XIIIth Winter Olympics: Lake Placid,
1980 336

- The XXIIIrd Olympiad: Los Angeles,
1984 337
Political Atmosphere 337
*What Goes Around, Comes Around:
The Soviet Boycott of the XXIIIrd
Olympiad* 338
Security Concerns 339
Notables 339
- The XIVth Winter Olympics: Sarajevo,
1984 340
- The XXIVth Olympiad: Seoul, 1988 340
*Security Concerns and Olympic
Politics* 341
Nationalism 341
NBC versus South Korea 341
*Banning Performance Enhancing
Drugs and Other Illicit Drugs at the
Olympics* 341
The Ultimate Incentive 342
Notables 342
Prologue 343
- The XVth Winter Olympics:
Calgary, 1988 343
Economics 343
Atmosphere 344
Notables 344
- The XXVth Olympiad: Barcelona,
1992 345
- The XVIth Winter Olympics:
Albertville/Savoie, 1992 346
Economics 347
Atmosphere 347
Notables 347
- The XVIIth Winter Olympics:
Lillehammer, 1994 348
Atmosphere 348
Notables 348
- The Centennial Olympiad: Atlanta,
1996 349
Notables 352
- The XVIIIth Winter Olympics: Nagano,
1998 355
Milestones 355
Goals and Outcomes 355
Notables 356
- Scandals and Ill-Gotten Gains 356
- The XXVIIth Olympiad: Sydney,
2000 358
Social Protests 358
Terrorist Threats 359
Politics 360
*The Tape-Delayed Olympics—Thank you,
NBC!* 360
*Economics and Attendant Social
Issues* 361
Technology 364
Doping 364
Notables 365
- Summary 367
Discussion Questions 369
Suggestions for Further Reading 369
Notes 369
- Index 372**