



DAVID ROWE

GLOBAL

# MEDIA SPORT

FLOWS, FORMS AND FUTURES

B L O O M S B U R Y

GLOBALIZING  
SPORT  
STUDIES

# Global Media Sport

Flows, Forms and Futures

David Rowe



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*To Kenneth Charles Rowe (1920–2004)  
and Margaret Jean Rowe*

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# Globalizing Sport Studies

## Series Editor's Preface

There is now a considerable amount of expertise nationally and internationally in the social scientific and cultural analysis of sport in relation to the economy and society more generally. Contemporary research topics, such as sport and social justice, science and technology and sport, global social movements and sport, sports mega-events, sports participation and engagement and the role of sport in social development, suggest that sport and social relations need to be understood in non-Western developing economies, as well as European, North American and other advanced capitalist societies. The current high global visibility of sport makes this an excellent time to launch a major new book series that takes sport seriously, and makes this research accessible to a wide readership.

The series *Globalizing Sport Studies* is thus in line with a massive growth of academic expertise, research output and public interest in sport worldwide. At the same time it seeks to use the latest developments in technology and the economics of publishing to reflect the most innovative research into sport in society currently underway in the world. The series is multi-disciplinary, although primarily based on the social sciences and cultural studies approaches to sport.

The broad aims of the series are to: *act* as a knowledge hub for social scientific and cultural studies research in sport, including, but not exclusively, anthropological, economic, geographic, historical, political science and sociological studies; *contribute* to the expanding field of research on sport in society in the United Kingdom and internationally by focussing on sport at regional, national and international levels; *create* a series for both senior and more junior researchers that will become synonymous with cutting edge research, scholarly opportunities and academic development; *promote* innovative discipline-based, multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary theoretical and methodological approaches to researching sport in society; *provide* an English language outlet for high quality non-English writing on sport in society; *publish* broad overviews, original empirical research studies and classic studies from non-English sources; and thus attempt to *realise* the potential for *globalizing* sport studies through open content licensing with 'Creative Commons'.

The relationship between the mass media and sport has always been an important one, and the media have helped to construct what is meant by sport. In the early part of the nineteenth century 'sport' was a word restricted to describing field sport (hunting, shooting and fishing) and what later became known as 'cruel' sports, such as bull and bear baiting and cock fighting. At the end of the nineteenth century the newly forming modern press assisted in boundary marking and boundary shifting of what was defined as sport, and even what a champion was. During the twentieth century commercial leisure

expanded in many ways, but the mass media, especially television, has been a central factor and formulator of sporting culture from the mid-1950s onward. The philosophical question – ‘what is, and what is not, sport?’ – has been decided pragmatically by what appears in the sport sections of newspapers or in radio or television broadcasts.

Whilst a good case can be made for maintaining a distinction between the mass mediated form of spectacular sport and sport as a form of cultural life outside of its purely symbolic representation, in the past twenty years there has been an enormous increase in the amount of sport on television and covered in the press, radio and other forms of media throughout developing economies as well as the advanced capitalist economies. In these circumstances it becomes necessary to think about media sport as a global and globalizing phenomenon.

It is with great delight therefore that I write this preface to David Rowe's book on *Global Media Sport*. It is a very engagingly written and accomplished work that covers a lot of ground and makes many insightful analytical observations along the way. This is a book that is exceptionally rich in detail and provides a careful examination of many of the issues relating to media and globalisation that many other writers overlook – such as the economics of media sport, contestation over sports content, and the growth of (new) media sport audiences in light of the impact of new media technologies. The book is full of excellent, and at times humorous, contemporary examples that follow how sports change. This is a sociological and scholarly piece of work that at the same time will be attractive to a broad audience.

John Horne, Preston and Edinburgh 2011

# Acknowledgements

Of all the difficult tasks in writing a book, none is more searching than selecting for mention those people and organizations that have contributed most to it. I thank first my estimable academic colleagues at the Centre for Cultural Research (soon to be members of a shiny new Institute for Culture and Society), which since 2006 has been a most hospitable and highly stimulating place to work – a rare combination. In particular, I acknowledge Founding Director Ien Ang's extraordinary institution-building capacity and her persuasiveness in getting me on the bus. Amongst the team of splendid research support staff, Maree O'Neill and Reena Dobson kept me afloat with unstinting support and eventide humour, especially during my action-packed, three-year term as director, while Tulika Dubey has combined calming efficiency with handy *vox pops* on Indian cricket sentiment. The research assistants who devoted their skills and talent to different aspects of this work – Callum Gilmour, Kylie Brass, Stephanie Alice Baker and Vibha Bhattarai Upadhyay – were valuable collaborators and way more than hired hands.

The Australian Research Council funded two Discovery grants that were crucial to the book: 'Handling the "Battering Ram": Rupert Murdoch, News Corporation and the Global Contest for Dominance in Sports Television' (DP0556973) and 'Struggling for Possession: The Control and Use of Online Media Sport' (DP0877777, with Brett Hutchins).

I also thank the amiably encouraging Series Editor John Horne for pitching the idea, and Emily Salz for helping to realize it, as well as the anonymous readers for constructive suggestions aimed at improving the final book. Only too painfully aware of its limitations, I resort to that classical sociological defence as articulated by Monty Python: 'It's a fair cop, but society is to blame'. Among those who contributed in diverse, unimpeachable ways to my professional and personal sustainability I mention this time, on this page: Alina Bernstein, Andy Billings, Raymond Boyle, Brett Hutchins, Geoff Lawrence, Jim McKay, Toby Miller, Luo Qing, Andy Ruddock, Jay Scherer, Larry Wenner and Garry Whannel. Sounding board and psyche repair duties were performed with distinction by Deborah Stevenson. There are many others who have, lamentably, gone unacknowledged here. Daniel and Madeleine Rowe were, as ever, deserving of completely objective parental pride, and the Rows, Henders and Hurleys of the United Kingdom (with the lovely addition of Francesca) kept authorial feet on the ground as only families can.



# Arrivals Hall Message

## Global media, global sport

### Touching the World of Screens

Towards the end of the last century, the faintly glimpsed idea of global media sport began to take shape. Of course, the media had, following the development of satellite technology in the era following the 1964 Tokyo Olympics (Tagsold 2009), been carrying real-time moving images of sport around the world for some time. But *global* carried other connotations when discussing media and sport that went far beyond the idea of the merely *international*. A global media sport suggests such qualities as omnipresence, inescapability and universal accessibility and, consequently, the substantial erosion of the particularities and peculiarities of the local. As satellite transmission became routine and, in particular, the *fin de siècle* Internet matured as a multidirectional, multimedia vector of sport, the possibility of global media sport emerged. It is important to say possibility rather than reality here, in resisting the tendency among many Western commentators to forget that broadcasting, telephony and computing still remain unavailable to the domestic dwellings and other inhabited spaces of billions of this planet's citizens (*Sociological Inquiry* 2010). Nonetheless, for many other people, not all of whom are Western or affluent, the cultural forms and experiences surrounding media sport have become so familiar that engagement with them are now demanded as of right (Scherer and Whitson 2009).

Thus, free-to-air television viewing of major media sports events like the Olympic Games and the World Cup of Association Football is now widely regarded as a sign of membership of the 'human family' (Scherer and Rowe 2012). Their respective governing bodies, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), both emphasize the importance of taking a global role on behalf of both sports participants and spectators. In FIFA's (2010a) mission statement there is a pledge to '[d]evelop the game, touch the world, build a better future' in using the sport of football as a tool of social progress across the globe:

We see it as our mission to contribute towards building a better future for the world by using the power and popularity of football. This mission gives meaning and direction to each and every activity that FIFA is involved in – football being an integrated part of our society ...

Touch the world. Take world-class football action and passion at all levels to every corner of the planet through our 208 member associations. The broad

range of competitions shows the many faces of football, spearheaded by the FIFA World Cup™.

There is, it will be noted, some irony in the placement of such edifying sentiments alongside the legally enforceable trademark protection of the competition name and in the light of some of the critical literature on FIFA's structure and operations (e.g. Jennings 2006; Sugden and Tomlinson 1999a, 2003). Nonetheless, it is a clear indication of global ambition and scope in taking the action to every corner of planet earth – and by a body with more member associations than the United Nations – through both physical practice and media representation.

Similarly, the IOC stakes a grand claim for its global reach. Section 49(1) of the current Olympic Charter (which came into force on 11 February 2010), 'Media Coverage of the Olympic Games', declares that '[t]he IOC takes all necessary steps in order to ensure the fullest coverage by the different media and the widest possible audience in the world for the Olympic Games' (IOC 2010: 96). However, the IOC's enthusiastic patrolling of its lucrative broadcast (and other media) rights, and tight control over media representation of the Olympics, may be clearly in conflict with the 'fullest coverage' as indicated by the following law and bye-laws of its Charter:

2. All decisions concerning the coverage of the Olympic Games by the media rest within the competence of the IOC.

### *Bye-law to Rule 49*

- 1 It is an objective of the Olympic Movement that, through its contents, the media coverage of the Olympic Games should spread and promote the principles and values of Olympism.
- 2 The IOC Executive Board establishes all technical regulations and requirements regarding media coverage of the Olympic Games in an IOC Media Guide, which forms an integral part of the Host City Contract. The contents of the IOC Media Guide, and all other instructions of the IOC Executive Board, are binding for any and all persons involved in media coverage of the Olympic Games.
- 3 Only those persons accredited as media may act as journalists, reporters or in any other media capacity. Under no circumstances, throughout the duration of the Olympic Games, may any athlete, coach, official, press attaché or any other accredited participant act as a journalist or in any other media capacity. (IOC 2010: 96–7)

Claiming absolute 'competence' over Olympic media matters, including enforcing a binding contract and guide, and determining who can be accredited as a journalist are practices of questionable consistency with the 'principles and values of Olympism' and are in various ways at odds with the maximization of media coverage across the globe. But, as with FIFA (another keen seller of massive broadcast and other media rights), it is important that the IOC signals its commitment to broad access to coverage of its major sports events. Here it can be seen how the globalization of sport through the media creates dynamic tensions between rights and rewards, informal

pleasures and organized production. The passage of sport under modernity from village green (Elias and Dunning 1986) to global village (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007; Maguire 1999) has not only involved the mutation of sport but also profoundly affected the societies and cultures that have housed and received it.

As it has become more global, media sport has become both increasingly familiar and more difficult to grasp. Acknowledgements of spectacular global media sport audiences, while rather breathlessly announced, have become almost routine. Media research companies and sports organizations are quick to inform the world of the latest records in TV sport viewing. For example, soon after the end of the Beijing Olympics, Neilsen (2008) declared,

The 2008 Beijing Olympics set many world records, with the latest being the Most Watched Games ever. According to latest intelligence from The Nielsen Company, the Beijing Olympic Games attracted the cumulative eyeballs of 4.7 billion viewers over the 17 days from August 8 to August 24, 'out-viewing' the 3.9 billion who followed the Athens 2004 Games by 21 percent, and the 3.6 billion who tuned in to the Sydney Games in 2000 by 31 percent, or 1.1 billion additional viewers.

The 4.7 billion viewers who accessed television coverage of the Beijing Olympics officially translates into approximately 70 percent of the world's population, or more than two in every three people globally.

In the competition for the biggest television sport audience both in terms of earlier World Cups and other sports events, FIFA subsequently estimated after South Africa 2010 that 'around 700 million people watched the final live. If that is correct, the match would beat out the estimated 600 million that caught the opening ceremony at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and would be on par, or slightly above, the 700 million that watched the World Cup final four years ago' (Reuters 2010). But broadcast television is now only a part (albeit still a – probably the – pivotal one) of the media sport landscape, and FIFA (2010b) has also emphasized this:

Multimedia platforms proved central to fans' enjoyment of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™ as FIFA – through its web and Twitter feeds – successfully delivered a range of complementary digital experiences to football enthusiasts around the world.

In addition to the many millions of fans watching the matches on TV, over 220,000 people followed FIFA's official tweets on Twitter, while members of the five million-strong FIFA.com Club swapped 120 million virtual stickers and made over one million comments on the website as they debated the finer points of the tournament.

With its wide variety of content and interactivity over the course of the tournament's 31 days, FIFA.com attracted over 250 million visits – approximately 150 million unique users, triggering seven billion page views: 410 million of those page views were recorded in a single day. When England and the USA played

simultaneously, FIFA.com technicians reported a throughput of 1,000,000 hits per second at the height of the activity.

The level of demand for FIFA's online content has surpassed FIFA's expectations. FIFA.com welcomed three times more unique users than in 2006, serving pages to 150 million people over the course of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™. FIFA exceeded forecasts for page impressions by 1.5 billion. The 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™ has witnessed a new level of digital engagement from fans across the globe.

Thus, simple 'eyeball on TV screen' count is now complemented by new, rather esoteric measures of global media attention, such as 'unique views' and 'page impressions'. It is indicative of the growth of the 'media sports cultural complex', a concept that I have developed previously (Rowe 2004a) to describe the profound, systematic and dynamic integration of media and sport over the past century. This sociocultural formation, like sport itself, first emerged in Western societies and spread across the world as imperialism, colonialism, trade, capitalist expansion and cultural diffusion fostered international sporting competition, media communication and sport industry development. In the twenty-first century, globalization of media sport is supplanting the predominantly uni-directional process of internationalization and Western cultural exportation that preceded it, creating complex flows of sports, competitions, teams, athletes, genres, images, fan communities, audience formations and mediated messages (Rowe and Gilmour 2009). As media sport has globalized, it occupies increasing sociocultural space not only in the sphere of physical activity and popular entertainment but also in the domains of intercultural relations, politics and diplomacy. It is, therefore, a phenomenon that demands critical analytical attention that goes well beyond the rather banal shibboleths in common currency, such as 'sport is now a business', 'the media have taken over sport' or 'sport is a vehicle for greater understanding between nations'. Global media sport, it should be acknowledged, is paradoxically both prone and resistant to grand summations of its arrival and nature.

I have also in other places (solely and with co-authors) addressed in greater detail the phenomenon of global media sport as it is related, in turn, to three major sociocultural processes: 'globalization', 'mediatization' and 'sportification' (Miller *et al.* 2001; Rowe 2004a, 2011a). In this book I will try to avoid replaying or unnecessarily elaborating on them – academic books on media sport should not resemble many of the sport texts that they are meant to analyse. Instead, I will seek to tease out various dimensions of them in the ensuing chapters, describing and analysing their flows, forms and futures in a manner intended to allow readers to match and build on their interests and orientations in the interdisciplinary field of the social sciences and humanities. This is, therefore, a research-driven work that sets out to foster more informed, reflexive research and scholarship. The simultaneously enduring and evanescent phenomenon of global media sport can be approached as if it is predictable and known (or even the now infamous 'unknown unknowns' – Horne 2007) or as so ever-changing and fragmented as to be permanently elusive. Certainly, there

are apparent continuities and discontinuities, the strategic balance of which can be difficult to discern. My aim here is to demonstrate their coexistence in a manner that tries to avoid both complacency and exaggeration, but also *a priori* judgment and *post hoc* rationalization.

To put it very briefly at this point, a book with the primary title *Global Media Sport* connects an adjective with two nouns. 'Global' expresses both reach and circumstance, whereby spaces, jurisdictions, institutions, protocols and practices have intermeshed in a variety of ways (Anheier and Isar 2010). 'Media' refer to means of communication, the vehicles through which sociocultural phenomena are symbolically 'carried' across space, time and the barriers of historical and social circumstance (Curran 2010). 'Sport' here is the constellation of structures, practices, values and sentiments that passes in and through the global by means of the media (Bernstein and Blain 2003). But these are not stable entities that interact in predictable ways as just so many collisions and points of contact. What we understand by the global cannot be neatly distinguished from the vectors (including media) and cultural constituents (sport) that comprise it, any more than media and sport can be insulated from the globalizing processes that are constantly working on them, both voluntarily and as disruptive forces to be, with variable degrees of success, resisted or countered (Miller *et al.* 2001). These complex relationships lead us to the subtitle, which seeks to capture the 'flows' across global media sport terrains, the 'forms' that are manifest and in a constant state of reconfiguration and renewal, and the 'futures' that many try to predict and prepare for but which are so difficult to anticipate (e.g. few if any media sport futurists 'picked' the impact of social networking on sport communication (Hutchins 2011)) and which rely on highly contested histories and projections (Whannel 2008).

An additional difficulty, as in all social science, is that the analyst is both inside and outside what is being analysed and so is affected by the global media sport that they would like, magisterially, to appraise from afar. By way of illustrative anecdote, I cite the case of a conversation with the proprietor of isolated holiday cabins prior to the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Each could have been booked several times over, I was informed, as her customers sought refuge from the Games in a place that received no television, radio, fixed or mobile telephone communication. Others had decided to leave the country for the duration. To be required to go to such lengths to avoid mega media sports events strikingly demonstrates how difficult it is to hide from them – while many more people will enthusiastically immerse themselves in media sport coverage or be routinely exposed to it as a 'natural' part of their life world. This book, then, is dedicated to the task of unravelling some of the mysteries and exposing several unwarranted certainties about a global media sports cultural complex that is increasingly taking on the appearance of now being forever with us – and, for those born into it, perhaps as having always been so. In so doing, it exposes the preposterous nature of the claim to command the field of global media sport. It is impossible to do justice to its sprawling canvas, wild complexity and ever-changing terrain. I have concentrated mainly on areas that I know to some degree (with all attendant limitations), rather than touching on lightly acquainted subjects before passing through as if engaged in some virtual sport

tourism simulation of a visit to World Expo, acquiring the passport stamp of each pavilion while barely pausing to absorb the surroundings. There is, then, no claim to comprehensiveness here, but it is hoped that *Global Media Sport: Flows, Forms and Futures* will offer something for readers and researchers to bounce off, filling in the gaps, highlighting counter-examples, challenging perspectives and conclusions. Its impulse is dialogical rather than categorical, intending to open up an interdisciplinary space that will suggest new avenues of inquiry. But, to use one of many available sporting metaphors, how can pole and grid positions be determined among contending analytical starters?

### Unfolding *Global Media Sport*

Deciding where to start in analysing global media sport does not so much demand a search for origins as a point of entry into an object that won't stay still, a little analogous to getting onto a moving carousel. An orthodox Marxist approach or, indeed, one dedicated to the celebration of a capitalist ethic, would begin with its economics – its material production and consumption. To begin by addressing 'filthy lucre' isn't very romantic, but the world of sport is given over enough already to romantic mythology without any unnecessary encouragement. More importantly, it is argued in this book that for all the many pleasures surrounding sport and the sociable uses to which it can be put – attractions to which this author is by no means immune – it is undeniable that the organized, competitive physical play that in the nineteenth century became what we call sport (Elias and Dunning 1986) was given enormous impetus by material forces beyond any potential intrinsic popular appeal. The ready compatibility of sport with the emerging leisure, media and advertising industries (Horne 2006) saw, eventually, a flood of capital into sport and a powerful platform of visibility that conferred very considerable developmental advantages on it (Clarke and Critcher 1985), not least through sport's key role in globalization.

As noted above, the media sport spectacle is so compelling for many – and in other respects unavoidable by all – that its economic substructure is incompletely understood by many sports fans and even some critical sports theorists. There is a common complaint that 'sport is now just a business' but widespread uncertainty as to who or what actually owns and controls it. International sports organizations, individual clubs, media and communications corporations, sponsors and advertisers, investment companies, entrepreneurs, national governments and fan groups can all claim some economic (as well as affective) stake in sport. The development of the global media sports cultural complex has made the economics of sport more complicated and difficult to isolate from other areas of industrial and financial activity. For this reason, it is useful to start with the 'economic base', not because it is argued that sport is primarily economic accumulation 'dressed up' as culture but because it is impossible to consider its global development in mediated form without acknowledging the direct and indirect impingement of economic forces that



accelerated its global cultural availability. In Chapter 2, 'Markets in Movement: Economic Dimensions of the Media Sport Spectacle', then, I seek to provide the political economic underpinning of the book by critically analysing the material dynamics of a contemporary sport terrain in which capital is generated, exchanged and transformed in diverse, multidimensional ways, enriching some but exploiting many others. Global media sport is shown to be a significant 'player' in current processes and debates surrounding such key economic issues as the commodification of physical culture, the circulation of labour and the distribution of wealth.

It is apparent in addressing the economics of global media sport that despite frequent (though disputed) claims that television in general, and as a consequence broadcast television sport in particular, is in terminal decline given the growth of non-broadcast digital technologies such as the Internet and mobile telephony (Katz and Scannell 2009), television remains unquestionably the most important sport medium in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Having for over half a century underwritten sport's economy and established its global audience, there is as yet no convincing sign that, judging by both the massive audience figures cited above and the escalating broadcast rights fees that key sports can command (Klayman 2008), television is being marginalized in sport. Broadcast television is, though, sharing the audio-visual coverage of sport with new(er) media with which it is becoming increasingly integrated rather than alienated (Hutchins and Rowe 2009a, 2012). Chapter 3 'Television: Wider Screens, Narrower Visions?', then, addresses the condition of sports television, in particular contestation over sports content and audience access. It examines the relationship between sports television as a national cultural resource and as an internationally traded commodity, and also questions its role as a dominant twentieth-century technology that both distributes and seeks to ration premium sports content on a regional/national basis in a post-millennial era of global, networked, digital, mobile media communication. The implications of these changes for rights of cultural (as opposed to more traditionally conceived political or economic) citizenship (Miller 2006) pertaining to media sport are interrogated, alongside a critical appraisal of the sport TV viewing experiences of audiences in different *milieux* across the globe.

Having pondered – though displayed some scepticism towards – the imminent end of the hegemony of sports television in the previous chapter, Chapter 4, 'Digital Media, Networking and Executive Fandom', considers in greater detail the new, converged media technologies that facilitate both the globalization of sport and the transformation of media sport reception and audience relations. Here there is a focus on the consequences of a move from the one-to-many, single medium framework of sport reception traditionally offered by television to the many-to-many possibilities of Internet-enabled sport viewing 'participation'. This chapter considers the positive possibilities and pitfalls of a post-broadcast era of media sport, including the significance of a 'digital divide' that may exacerbate existing inequalities of cultural citizenship regarding access to media sport that were already extant in a predominantly analogue broadcast environment and became more so as subscription television displaced free-to-air broadcasting in many national sports contexts. The emergence of information and communication

technology-facilitated active global fandom is discussed here, using the recent example of MyFootballClub (MYFC 2011), which claims to be the 'world's first and only web-community owned football club'. In so doing, the relationship of media sport audiences and fan bases to new forms of space and place is considered, and its implications for contemporary sport reassessed.

After appraising the contemporary position of television, new media technologies and modes of what I call 'executive' fandom in global sport, the discussion turns to the exchange of media sport texts and affiliations in different directions across the globe. Chapter 5, 'From West to East – and Back Again', is concerned with the ways in which media sport has 'broken out' of nations in some respects and become a regular part of everyday media consumption in new territories. The first cases examined present a fairly traditional export model of media sport from West to East in the form of English Premier League Football and American basketball, and the response from the 'receiving' context in those sports. The focus then turns to countervailing trends through linked case studies of Indian Premier League cricket and the dominant role of India in world cricket and also the staging of global mega media sports events like the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 World Cup of association football in South Africa. In these instances, current power within media sport is both reproduced and challenged. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the 'balance of power' in the global media sports cultural complex, seeking to establish the extent to which Western and Northern hemispheric media sport power has been strengthened, maintained, challenged or eroded in the face of developments in the global East and South.

The book then engages in a closer analysis of the sociocultural and political implications of these developments. In Chapter 6, 'Tactical Manoeuvres, Public Relations Disasters and the Global Sport Scandal', the globalization of media sport described and analysed in the previous chapters is shown to resonate far beyond the sporting sphere *per se*. Sport, it is demonstrated, is routinely harnessed as a popular political force, both in the interests of international cooperation and friendship and in the fostering of nationalism and, on occasions, national chauvinism and xenophobia. It has been used as a vehicle for international relations (as, famously, in the case of the US Nixon administration's 'ping-pong diplomacy' in the early 1970s) and as a means of signalling arrival on the global 'stage' (as occurred with the 1988 Seoul and 2008 Beijing Olympics). But the global media sports cultural complex can be unpredictable and confound well-laid plans of those who seek to use it to their advantage. For example, global media coverage of Tibet protests against China during the torch relay in the lead up to the 2008 Beijing Olympics demonstrates how nation state aspirations can go awry. Regarding a commercial corporation, the persistent use of various media to criticize Nike's (and its subcontractors') treatment of its Asian workers in leisurewear factories can turn slogans such as 'Just Do It' on their head. For sport celebrities who have become their own corporations, such as Tiger Woods, global visibility can turn quickly from celebration to notoriety through off-field misconduct, while on-field transgressions (e.g. Zinedine Zidane's head butt of Marco Materazzi during the 2006 World Cup Final) can precipitate global debates about the politics of 'race' (*New Formations* 2007). It is argued that such volatile incidents highlight the



ways in which media sport can operate as an instant vehicle for global political discourse of a particularly intense and sometimes deeply resonant kind.

*Global Media Sport: Flows, Forms and Futures* then concludes with 'Departure Lounge Note: Convulsions, Continuities and Campaigns' (Chapter 7) in reflecting on the condition of the contemporary global media sports cultural complex and attempting to discern its principal trends and developments. This discussion makes a case for a more sophisticated analytical understanding of globalizing and localizing forces in sport that takes appropriate account of its histories, political economic processes and sociocultural dynamics. It then briefly canvasses sites of intervention in the global cultural politics of media sport in the defence and promotion of existing and emerging rights of cultural citizenship.

It is important to emphasize continually matters of power and equality because there is a danger that, as noted earlier, global media sport can seem to be so familiar through omnipresence, and remorseless in its development, as to encourage blasé responses to it. By this I mean that, in the affluent West and increasingly in the burgeoning Asia-Pacific region, citizens have become increasingly accustomed to sport as a compulsorily installed feature of the cultural furniture. This does not mean that it is universally approved of, but its presence is mainly treated with a combination of enthusiasm and resignation. As a result, it becomes harder to problematize global media sport in any thoroughgoing, critically reflective and socially interventionist way. Ironically, therefore, one of the most rapidly changing aspects of contemporary global culture can be treated as immovable and dismissed with the comfortingly passive response that 'it was ever thus'. But it is important to deconstruct rather than parrot such shibboleths. The idea that the global is a single, irreversible, consistent process is disempowering, just as the notion that there is a single entity going under the rubric of 'the media' that acts in a predictable, preordained way is profoundly misleading and deters legitimate demands for improvement and reform. The familiar suggestion that there is a single set of physical practices called sport handed down in an unbroken line from the Ancient Greeks misunderstands how historically contingent and mutable physical culture can be and certainly fails to recognize the arbitrariness of sporting classification and the structural processes that privilege some sporting forms at the expense of others. Such 'distinctions' (Bourdieu 1978, 1984) are not merely questions of and for sport – they range across the social spectrum and up and down its hierarchies, deeply intertwined with matters of power and the social as they apply to class, gender, 'race', ethnicity, sexuality, age, the body and so on. Global media sport, then, both in terms of individual constituent parts and elements in constant interplay, can never be, whatever the heuristic temptations, taken for granted as a unitary, predictable phenomenon. In the following pages it is hoped that this voyage around the global media sports cultural complex, and search for passages between its continental masses, will provide not just some useful maps but also a companionate guide to a subject that, by turns, exhilarates and infuriates.

The metaphors of space and mobility deployed above chime with the subject of the book in a range of ways. Sports contests are always 'emplaced' but where they are held and in what kinds of spatial context are subjects of