

WALL, Karen L. – *Game Plan: A Social History of Sport in Alberta*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2012. Pp. 534.

This book on the history of sport in the province of Alberta fills a significant gap in Canada's sport history scholarship. As Wall notes, while there is a plethora of works that focus on specific aspects of Alberta's sporting past, there are no books that survey this history and tie much of this rich literature together. In addition, this book extends these isolated histories by suggesting new areas of research that demand the attention of critical sport scholars and historians. The level and style of writing make the book very accessible to a general audience and the prose communicates central arguments with notable economy. The author avoids jargon, which makes the text more appealing. The research displays familiarity with the history of the region and, to a more limited extent, the literatures on national sport history and ruling theoretical perspectives.

The author draws from an extensive and diverse archival resource base that includes several local and regional newspapers, government documents, personal collections and photographic archives. It would have been very effective to complement these archival sources with rich oral history evidence that would enliven narratives, but that was obviously one of the limitations established by Wall during her research. The secondary literature reviewed in the book is also sound as the author connects with multiple disciplines. However, the review of literature in the sub-discipline of sport history was not as comprehensive as expected. The scholarship of several sport historians, working in the context of Alberta, were altogether absent from the book and others were only peripherally sourced. Despite this limitation, the book draws from a wealth of primary and secondary evidence.

One of the most significant aspects of the book was the author's particular attention to histories on the margins. Her focus on the experiences of women, minorities, new immigrants and Aboriginal peoples is one of the defining features and notable contributions of this book. Some of the most interesting aspects that were particularly engaging include: 1) situating the history of rodeo within global economic forces and the production of regional masculinities; 2) the deep and undeniable connections between political conservatism, the commodification of provincial sport and "normalized" sporting identities; 3) the institutionalization of sport in the province; 4) and the urban/rural divides that formed in sporting cultures as Alberta became increasingly urbanized. The author also links the past with more contemporary issues in sport: discussions on violence, injury and risk; performance enhancing drugs; debates over public investment in elite and professional sport; private sector control of sporting bodies, institutions and facilities; and, sport tourism. In addition, the book is chocked full of captivating images that reflect the quotidian lives of athletes in both urban and rural settings throughout the province's history.

While the book certainly has a number of strengths, scholars may also be critical of some aspects. Unfortunately, the book suffers from a lack of methodological rigour or fails to effectively communicate some of the processes

associated with the analyses of historical evidence. The author clearly uses a form of discourse analysis of texts, but without connecting the specific methods utilized and defining the methodological approaches, how this evidence intersects with the methodological framework, is not apparent. A general description of how the author navigated archives and what methodology guided the systematic review of documents would have been very informative for historians and sport historians to assess what Wall examined and how she examined it. Additionally, in a few sections, the book lacks a critical lens on some subjects as not enough space was allocated to assessing the forms of patriarchy, racism and classism that were endemic throughout the province particularly during the late 19th and early 20th century. Histories of division and conflict were at times deemphasized. For example, Wall struggles at first to establish an Aboriginal presence in the early sporting histories of the province and how the forces of cultural repression in a colonial context impacted Aboriginal sporting experiences. However, I was impressed by the author's nuanced readings of the complex factors that influenced First Nations participation in rodeo competition, which is explored in the later stages of the book. Moreover, it was also not clear how sport in Alberta was linked with similar structures in central Canada. For example, what were the relationships between sporting organizations and institutions in Alberta with those that emerged much earlier in central and Eastern Canada? Lastly, Wall makes a few attempts to incorporate social theory, for example Bourdieu's perspectives of social capital and cultural production. These applications of theory were peripheral or limited and they did not really enhance the analysis.

Despite these shortcomings, the flow and organization of the book make it easy to follow for diverse readers. Although chronologically presented, the themes developed by Wall are informative and thought provoking. The author uses organization to enhance the transparency and effectiveness of her analysis. The result is a very approachable text that is suitable for general audiences and scholars alike. While the book will also be of interest to some undergraduate and graduate classes, it is less likely to be adopted as a course text. By synthesizing diverse sporting histories and uncovering some of the unique experiences situated on the margins of Alberta's past, this book makes a significant contribution to the literature on the province's sporting, cultural and social history.

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WHITE, Bonnie – *The Women's Land Army in First World War Britain*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2014, 207 p.

Jusqu'à tout récemment, les historiens qui se sont intéressés à la Women's Land Army (WLA) ont surtout cherché à voir si la participation des femmes britanniques dans le secteur agricole pendant la Grande Guerre a mené à un