

Sport + Physical Activity as a reflection of the culture in which it exists

The United Kingdom

The USA

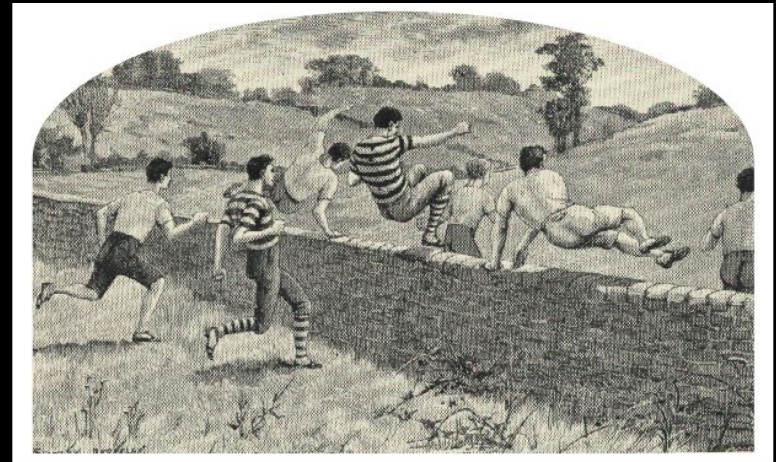
Australia

19th Century public schools – background info

- In society – in Victorian Britain there was a shift from rural to urban society, which gradually became more civilised
- Public baths built in cities to counter cholera, + working hours reduced for working class (so more free time)
- RSPCA formed, hastening ban on cruel bating and blood sports eg dog fighting
- Improved transport + communications meant that distant teams (eg football) could play each other
- Increased literacy = people could read about successes + football became a massive spectator sport

Public Schools

- Public schools – private, independent, fee paying school.
- Gentry (upper class)
- Highly prestigious (very sought after + respected)
- The 'elite' of society
- Key role in promoting + organising sport in UK
- Boys attended these schools
- Public schools under pressure to improve boys' behaviour
- Clarendon Commission report (1864) supported the teaching of games for their educational value



- Free time was largely unsupervised, allowing them to poach, trespass + gamble
- Authorities disapproved because these had no moral value + brought the schools in to disrepute

Their role in promoting and organising sports and games

- Boys brought mob games from their villages
- Mob games were violent + disorderly – usually played by working classes + had few rules
- The Masters (teachers) saw potential of these games for channeling the boys' energy + keeping them on the school grounds
- They supported these games but only if they had rules + were organised
- In early versions the boys organised the games themselves (good for organisational skills) Team lists were put on house boards daily
- The 6th form organised the games for the younger years, causing a form of 'social control'
- Social control – process where society seeks to ensure conformity to the dominant norms + values of that society
- In later years they recruited staff to teach + coach sports
- 'Games cult' became important + headmasters used sporting success to impress future parents
- The 'character building aspect' to team games was seen as important – eg courage, leadership, endurance, self-reliance, self control

Athleticism

- Physical effort + moral integrity / sportsmanship
- Team games valued for character-building qualities
- Became a cult / obsession
- Games afternoons introduced, + inter-house + inter-school
- Expensive specialist facilities built, eg sports fields
- Sport occupied much of the boys' free time in evenings + weekends
 - regular games
 - Boundaries + player numbers reduced
 - Equipment + facilities became more sophisticated
 - Positional roles emerging
 - Tactics + strategies began to be used
 - Competition structure devised through inter-house + later among schools
 - Codification – national rule structure
 - Conforming to rules, sportsmanship, fair play became important – playing honourably became more important than winning
- So where did they go after school....



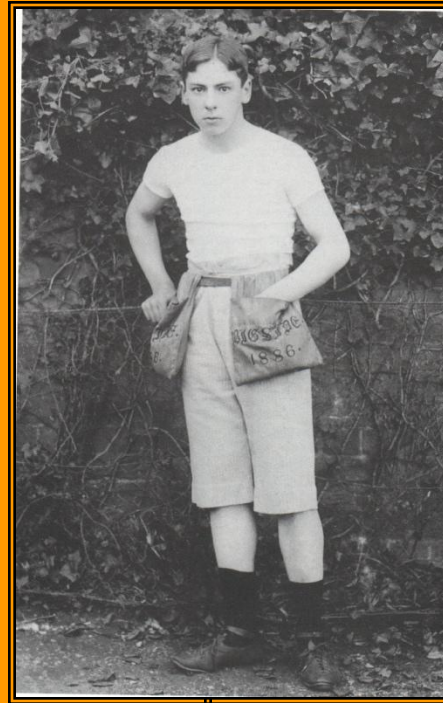
Vicars / priests

Teachers

Army
Officers

Industrialists

Community
members



Community
Leaders

Parents

Move from the amateur approach to professional approach

- Traditionally sport in UK organised by volunteers, unpaid coaches + administrators
- So amateur approach + lack of expertise = inconsistency + ineffectiveness
- Recently, there is a shift towards more business-like approach
- Support + interest from government increased towards end of 20th Century, especially since the 2012 bid
- Government set up Department of Culture, Media + Sport. They appointed a Minister for Sport + give grants to UK Sport + home country Sports Councils.

- Government wants international sporting success, so employed full-time, paid administrators in NGBs, especially well-funded sports like football, cricket + rugby
- Performance is related to funding, filtering through UK Sport to NGBs + performers
- Some NGBs now have performance directors, concentrating on excellence, world titles + gold medals
- UK Sport is responsible for sporting excellence

Sport as a reflection of US culture



- Sport in USA most technically advanced in world
- Sports stars richest in world
- American football + baseball – USA leading nation, maybe because not many others play them at a high level
- USA sport is multi-million dollar industry, committed to entertainment market + motivated by profit

USA's sport – 3 categories

- Adaptations – modifications to existing games, eg American football to rugby
- Adoptions – games taken directly from European cultures, eg tennis
- Inventions – new sports to suit the 'New World' culture, eg basketball
- USA needed sports which were high scoring + action packed

Population + geographical factors

- *Population of 300million, drawn from wide range of cultures (people arrived from several places, eg European Jews fleeing persecution, Irish escaping famine – all looking for the ‘land of opportunity’)*
- *Capitalism developed from individuals’ farms + factories producing more than any other country, building wealth*
- *In densely populated areas, NY + LA, urban sports developed, eg American football, baseball + basketball*

Nature of sport in USA

- Reflects US culture of win ethic
- Mainstream competitive culture has acquired the term Lombardianism, after American football coach Vince Lombardi who said, “Winning isn’t everything – it’s the only thing.” Failure in sport is not an option



- 100% commitment needed – even when injured / drug use – win at all costs

Nature of sport in USA cont....

- Sport is big business, driven by commercialism
 - Professional sport dominates, reflecting the country's competitive, capitalist nature
 - Private + corporate businesses use sport to promote their products + achieve good will
 - Commercialism starts at high school – high profile, with large amounts of sponsorship
 - Huge crowds for high school sport, with marching bands, cheerleading etc
 - Athletic scholarships for college / university, where they receive top-level coaching + support with increased pressure to win
 - Massive media coverage – can hail young players as heroes or villains
 - College sport commercialised, funded by sponsorship + TV deals
 - Best college athletes go into professional sport (called the pro-draft system), which is funded by TV + advertising.



- American sporting culture demands high-scoring, action packed, short bursts of activity; followed by commercial breaks to keep TV sponsors happy.
- Top professionals earn millions of dollars + more from advertising + sponsorship deals
- <http://www.t-mobilenba.com/>

Positive and Negative Outcomes of Commercialism



Negatives –

- Performers become mobile adverts
- Money determines the location, timings and nature of events + rules in some cases
- Sporting Values can be lost
- Only high profit sports and the most successful performers benefit
- Enormous pressure to win

Positives –

- Funding gives athletes a better chance of success
- Commercial sponsorship leads to events which otherwise might not happen
- It matches the 'win ethic' of US culture



'American Dream'

- The 'American Dream' assumes that anyone can be a success in society, irrespective of class, age, gender, or ethnic background and sport is a particularly useful vehicle for success.
- Through sport, stereotypical views can be defied, the restricting glass ceiling of opportunity can be smashed and role models for future generations can be created.
- The dream of success – rags to riches / zero to hero!
- Sport is a vehicle – a way to get an education, a way to become a professional

Compare American Football + Aussie Rules Football

American Football

- Origins
- Nature of the sport
- Violence

Australian Rules Football

- Origins
- Factors shaping its development
- Commercialism + impact of the media

Comparison

	UK	USA	Australia
Population	Less than 61 million	300 million	21 million
Size	small	Very large	Almost as big as USA
Colonialism	Britain colonised large parts of the world to build the British Empire	Fought for + won independence from Britain in 1783	Independence from UK in 1901 – but remained part of Commonwealth with English Queen as Monarch
Economic system	Mixed economy	Capitalism	Prosperous, mixed economy

Sport and Politics – the ‘Shop Window’

- ‘Where sporting success equates with political success and positive role models promote the country’s status.’
- Sport can be used for political motives with both good and bad outcomes.
- In Communist countries sport is controlled by the State and encouraged in order to increase political prestige and morale among the workforce.
- Russia used sport to promote their country and political system on the worldwide stage of the Olympic games.
- Chosen athletes were given the best facilities, coaching, diet time to devote themselves to sport in order to achieve international success.
- The drive for success and political superiority can be seen in China and other advanced eastern cultures today.

Shop window effect

- When countries compete internationally they want to succeed. International sporting success gives status to a country in the eyes of the rest of the world. Sport success can unify citizens and create national pride, and at a blanket level it can increase the nation's health.