

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

The United Kingdom

The USA

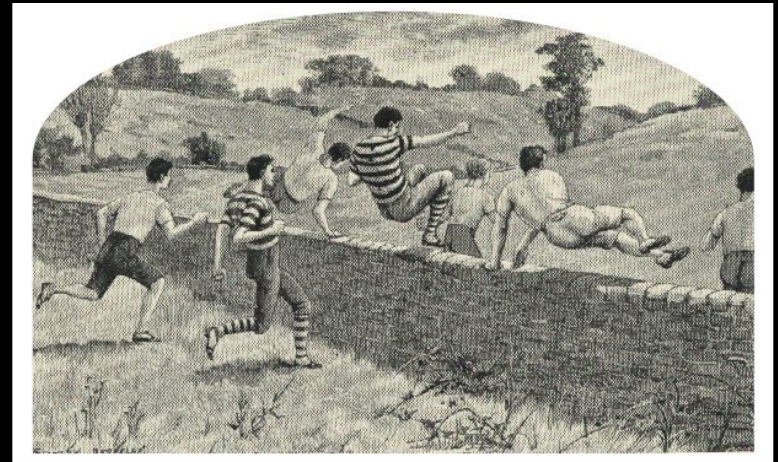
Australia

# 19<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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....



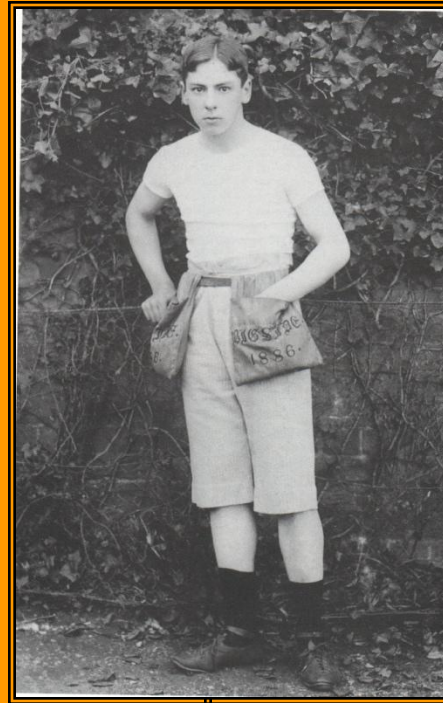
Vicars / priests

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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
<b>Population</b>	Less than 61 million	300 million	21 million
<b>Size</b>	small	Very large	Almost as big as USA
<b>Colonialism</b>	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
<b>Economic system</b>	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.