



The Sporting Life: Victorian Sports and Games (Victorian Life and Times)

Nancy Fix Anderson

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Just as our own games have a lot to say about modern American culture, so sports are a prism through which we can gain valuable insights into Victorian society. *The Sporting Life: Victorian Sports and Games* is an engaging and perceptive account of how sport developed during Britain's heyday, who played (and who wasn't allowed to play), and what it all conveys about gender, race, imperialism, and national pride.

Drawing extensively on 19th-century writings, *The Sporting Life* begins with a survey of sports in pre-Victorian England and the impact of industrialism in the early 19th century. We read of the effects of evangelicalism and utilitarianism, both of which first opposed sport, then used it for their own purposes. We learn of the association of sports with masculinity, an identification women challenged late in the century. Finally we learn how English sports became part of the imperial game, used to promote—and resist—the spread of Victoria's vast empire.

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