



Athlete First: A History of the Paralympic Movement

Bailey, S. (2007)

Wiley-Blackwell

Cost: £61.75 (paperback from Amazon)

Bailey provides a detailed history of the origins and development of the Paralympic movement. Yet whilst the text provides a unique narrative based on a wide range of resources there are some issues with regards to the accessibility of the text. Firstly I believe the title is misleading. I was excited at the prospect of an 'athlete' focused text but this is certainly not the case, a more representative title would be "A History of the Paralympic Movement". Whilst the content is relevant I wouldn't recommend this as a student text mainly due to the lack of student- or indeed lecturer-friendly resources. From a researcher or general interest perspective the book contains a lot of new and relevant data such as participation information and details of when and how new sports were introduced to the Paralympic Games. However, with regards to using this book as a resource I found it frustrating that this level of factual information wasn't consistently present for all Games. If read cover to cover this text provides an interesting narrative relating to the history of the development of the Paralympic Games but it is not a resource to easy dip in and out of.

Rating 5/10

Reviewed by Donna de Haan, Hogeschool van Amsterdam/ University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands



An Introduction to Drugs in Sport: Addicted to Winning?

Waddington, L. & Smith, A. (2008)

Routledge

Cost: £4.78 (paperback from Amazon)

The book considers the issue of drug use in elite sports through the critical lens of process-sociology. One of the strengths of this book and the sociological framework employed is an emphasis on approaching drug use in sports and in wider society from a critical historical perspective. This means that it is not only a snapshot of current regulations and practices, but due consideration is also given to specific and wider socio-historical processes that have contributed to and influenced our contemporary perception of illicit performance enhancement. In addition, by discussing a wide range of socio-cultural factors that have been instrumental in changing social attitudes to and, in turn, social policies regarding drug taking practices in sports, the authors move away from a mono-causalistic view and provide a more reality-congruent picture of the subject at hand. This book includes a broad range of historical and contemporary examples of illicit performance enhancement. In sports and would be an essential resource to anyone who has an interest in exploring the socio-historical connections between sports and drugs. I would recommend it to more advanced undergraduate students (level 6) and postgraduate students who would wish to further their knowledge in the subject covered.

Rating 8/10

Reviewed by Dr Gyrozo Molnar, University of Worcester



Living in the Sweet Spot: Preparing for Performance in Sport and Life

Baltzell, A.L. (2011)

Fitness Information Technology

Cost: £13.59 (paperback from Amazon)

It's official: there is no further need to distinguish between the choice of being happy or achieving your goals. With the help of this book, you can realistically achieve both. A fully digestible feast of positively focused research communicated articulately in a logical user-friendly fashion means that this book could be either devoured whole, or used for reference. Brimming with personal experiences both as an elite athlete and a sport psychologist Baltzell presents innovative solutions to common everyday performance psychology challenges. The fitting undertones of Positive Psychology are the basis upon which numerous practical exercises are proposed to aid the acquisition of the key mental skills required to live in the Sweet Spot. This is a highly recommended read for athletes, psychologists and a wider audience looking for the low down on performance optimisation. The book contains beautifully written, engaging accounts of laying the foundations of a successful mindset, preparing for performance and competing on the day. Particularly informative and borderline revelatory is the insight into how to train, maintain and adapt our motivational orientation during competition to secure optimal performance levels. This book has the potential to be a performance bible for all of us pursuing that last 2%.

Rating 9/10

Reviewed by Claire-Marie Roberts, University of Glamorgan



Racing Through the Dark: The Fall and Rise of David Millar

Millar, D. (2011)

Orion

Cost: £6.29 (paperback from Amazon)

£9.99 (Kindle ebook from Amazon)

The fervour surrounding British Cycling continues with another incredible Tour de France this year, not to mention wins for Cavendish on the Olympic course at the London test event and at the World Road Race Championships – supported by what has been hailed as an exceptional team effort. And so another cycling biography, David Millar was banned from the sport for two years following the highly-publicised Team Cafédits case in 2004. Millar's story is an open and honest account of his journey from a position of dogged determination to succeed as a clean athlete to one of capitulation to the pressures of the sport ... and back again. The reader glimpses a fascinating insight into the world of pro cycling, revealing some of the attitudes and organization of the sport, which at times appear surprisingly amateurish compared to those in many of today's Olympic programmes. Despite still serving a lifetime ban from Olympic competition, Millar is zealous in his approach and his commitment to changing the sport and the attitude of its young riders. This book is of obvious appeal to the cycling fan, but more than that, it's a fascinating insight into the world of professional sport, doping and redemption.

Rating 8/10

Reviewed by Dr Ken van Someren FBASES, English Institute of Sport

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