



by Martin Krauß
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Non-Fiction

Taking Part would Be Everything

Dabei sein wäre alles

review

Experienced sports journalist and author, Martin Krauß, has written an accessible history of modern sport. 'Taking Part would Be Everything' analyses the social and political significance of sport, including the long tradition of using sport to include or exclude particular groups of people.

The book's seven chapters consider the impact of a range of different factors on sporting participation, including: class and politics; race and ethnicity; sex; disability; religion; gender; and nationality. These thematic chapters make it easy for readers to dip in and out as they please, and do not stop Krauß from addressing intersectionality, for instance in the impact of gender, race, and class in the story of the Williams sisters. Krauß's thematic rather than chronological treatment of the subject is also a recognition that trends in modern sport are not necessarily linear. In this regard, the author highlights that the very first modern sports teams in the USA were mixed teams, with the segregation and exclusion of Black athletes only coming later. Moreover, he highlights how attitudes that we might consider outdated are still very much present in sport and society today, such as athletes of colour being held to different standards than their white peers.

'Taking Part would Be Everything' is a balanced and self-aware work, which is well-written and researched. Krauß acknowledges the limitations of relying solely on written history as a source

of information about the history of sport, particularly in the context of the systematic eradication of pre-colonial history in European-controlled colonies, which led to modern sport being incorrectly perceived as a European export. His account includes profiles of groundbreaking sporting figures, such as Alfonsina Strada, the first woman to take part in the Giro d'Italia, and Battling Siki, the first African-born boxing world champion.

'Taking Part would Be Everything' stands out among recent publications on this enduringly popular subject for the scope of its approach, and will therefore appeal to a correspondingly broad readership. Readers of titles such as *Good for a Girl* by Lauren Fleshman and *Up to Speed* by Christine Yu, that focus on women in sport, as well as *More Than a Game* by David Horspool, which considers sport in a specifically British context, will find much to enjoy in Krauß's book. In contrast to *Rebound* by Perry King, a wider look at the social impact of sport, that focuses largely on grassroots sport, Krauß addresses both community and professional-level sport. 'Taking Part would Be Everything' challenges and enriches our perception of sporting history.

about the author



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Martin Krauß, born in 1964, is a journalist and author. He studied political science in Berlin, has been co-editor of *Sportkritik* and Sports Editor at Berlin weekly *Jungle World*. He has been writing articles and books on football, swimming, boxing and doping since 1997. He also campaigns against antisemitism and right-wing extremism, teaches at a media academy and is a regular contributor to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, *taz* and *Jüdische Allgemeine*. He lives in Berlin.

Previous works: *Der Träger war immer schon vorher da*, Nagel & Kimche (2013); *Israelisch kochen. Aus der Reihe Gerichte und ihre Geschichte*, Verlag Die Werkstatt (2012); *Muhammad Ali. Ein Leben*, Argon Verlag (2009); *Wer macht den Sport*

kaputt? Doping, Kontrolle und Menschenwürde, Verbrecher Verlag (2008); Schmeling. Die Karriere eines Jahrhundertdeutschen, Verlag Die Werkstatt (2005); Schwimmen. Geschichte, Kultur, Praxis, Verlag Die Werkstatt (2002); Triathlon. Geschichte, Kultur, Praxis, Verlag Die Werkstatt (2001); Kampftage. Die Geschichte des deutschen Berufsboxens, Verlag Die Werkstatt (2000); Doping, Europäische Verlagsanstalt (eva), Rotbuch 3000, (2000).

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