

Three Books on Sports

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60 Years of Hockey, Brian McFarlane. McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976. 269 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 0-07-082464-9.

Soccer Practice: A Guide for Adult Coaches and Young Players, Gerry Redmond. Photos, John LeBel. J.M. LeBel Enterprises Ltd., 1978. 111 pp. \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-920008-4-6.

Safety on Ice, Lois Kalchman. Collins, 1979. 153 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-00-216604-6.

Three rather different books on sports are considered here: all three will be of interest to younger readers, and the two books on soccer and hockey safety will also interest parents.

Although the McFarlane book is about hockey, I have separated it from the other two because of its emphasis on hockey and statistics. McFarlane's name should be familiar to readers of *CCL* – Leslie McFarlane is the present author's father, and the story has it that it was the young Brian's appreciation of the Hardy Boys series, written under a pseudonym, which encouraged his father to publicize, late in life, his involvement with the books.

And for admirers of hockey trivia, McFarlane has another qualification. He helped compose "Clear the Track (Here Comes Shack)" – a 1960's novelty hit record that deserves a replay. More seriously, McFarlane is a knowledgeable hockey commentator and a prolific publisher of hockey annuals and the like.

All this said, it must be admitted *60 Years of Hockey* is an exhausting, rather than exhaustive book. While it may be unfair to do so, we may judge this book by its cover. McFarlane is pictured, looking pensive, on the NBC Sports set, while Bobby Clarke, gap-toothed captain of the Philadelphia Flyers, is in full action-photo flight on the other half of the cover.

But, you say, McFarlane should look pensive because a) NBC no longer broadcasts hockey and b) Bobby Clarke is no longer captain of the Flyers. Exactly. The book is a sound summary of a subject that probably demands about ten books, but it is already dated. The NHL and hockey have changed direction again in the late 1970's and McFarlane's account is

already an historical study and no longer the latest word on the game. Still, the book can be recommended as a reference source, though it may be best to wait until McFarlane publishes "75 Years of Hockey," due on the shelves about 1991. One hopes a little of the "Clear the Track" spirit will enliven that anniversary edition.

The excellent range of photographs in McFarlane's books make one wish the illustrations in *Soccer Practice* were clearer. Redmond's aim is substantially different from McFarlane's, of course. But the brown and blurred prints illustrating his points about soccer are so difficult to see, one wonders why illustrations or diagrams were not substituted.

Redmond wants to familiarize Canadians, young players and their prospective adult coaches alike, with a game he loves and which he realizes is about to achieve the recognition throughout North America it has been denied so far. All to the good, although fans of English soccer will perhaps smile at the number of times Malcolm Allison (beleaguered manager of Manchester City in the English First Division as this is written) is used as a touchstone.

Redmond, a professor in the department of physical education at the University of Alberta and a director of the Edmonton Minor Soccer Association, writes that the book is not for experts, but is designed to give novice coaches and players some fundamentals and drills, in the hope they will proceed to "a deeper understanding of the game." The chapter on goalkeeping might serve as a model of his approach. Redmond assesses the importance of goaltending in hockey - a good way to introduce the concept to Canadian youngsters - and goes on to point out that, as in hockey, the goal is tended by a youngster who has been shunted to that position because he or she is "no good" elsewhere. This human touch should make the chapter attractive to any novice.

Unfortunately, he does not always use this Canadianized method of introducing soccer, and many of the inspirational players Redmond mentions are only names to Canadians, unfair as this may seem. The book is useful, however, in the technical ways Redmond intends, and one hopes he will collaborate with LeBel on a revised edition developing the concepts used in the goalkeeping chapters.

Safety on Ice boasts the production values missing from Redmond's text and Kalchman has also managed a nice balance between the technical and the personal in her writing. In fact, the best sections of *Safety on Ice* - a lively Brian McFarlane introduction and Kalchman's comments on eye and dental injuries - ought to be widely circulated as an example of how such things should be done. Kalchman, a Toronto columnist on minor hockey and mother of three boys and a girl involved in competitive sports, writes

engagingly about everything from helmets to nutrition, with two experts, Bill Hayward and Lloyd Percival, contributing discussions on conditioning and training.

Her book shows considerable time spent with equipment manufacturers and the information gleaned from them will be helpful to parents buying their little hockey player his or her first skates, or to children puzzled about the type of stick to use. The information about equipment is detailed and often uses diagrams provided by the manufacturer to explain details of research and performance.

If there is one hole in the approach, however, it is Kalchman's sliding over the whole issue of competition in sports for youngsters. One can applaud the detailed information about safety equipment, but one is left to wonder if a wider philosophical approach might have benefitted the book. After all, it is to the industry's credit that safety equipment has been developed and marketed. But isn't it worth asking why minor hockey seems in a state of upheaval as parents question the need for their children to compete "like men"? A chapter on this topic would have improved Kalchman's already substantial contribution to parents and young hockey players.

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