

American-British Sporting Rivalries and the Making of the Global Sports Industry

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ABSTRACT

This article examines a key aspect of American sports history within a transnational context. Whilst the internal histories of American sport are exceedingly rich and voluminous, our general understanding of the nation's contribution to the international, global scene is less well-known. The postcolonial rivalries between American and British sports communities fuelled the development of what became open, international cup competitions in such sports as tennis and golf which bolstered an emerging global industry in the first half of the twentieth century. The transnational process of initial American imitation and absorption of British models have been well documented within the scholarly literature and debates in American Studies for decades; however, the gradual reversal of this imitative process to a more reciprocal relationship has received far less attention (especially within sports history). The authors show how the Davis Cup competition is an example of the way in which Americans indigenised a cultural sporting import, namely tennis; created a nationalistic, international sporting competition; and effectively exported it back to Britain within the wider context of a burgeoning, imperial rivalry on the world stage between these two, rival sporting nations. This process not only expanded the worldwide consumption of sport but spreads a spirit of cultural emulation within twentieth-century global consumer culture. This transnational perspective also illuminates the thorough de-provincialising of the notion of "American Exceptionalism" within the field. When, for example, the respective imperial histories of the two nations are considered comparatively, the "American" story does not look so "exceptional" after all. Though American exceptionalism adapted some British sports to suit American sensibilities, the sporting cultures of the two nations and within their zones of influence remained similar in many respects. This was particularly true in amateur sports such as tennis, rowing and track and field (athletics to the Brits) as well as in the sport of golf. In the twentieth century, many sports adapted as focus shifted from nationalism and national worth towards professionalism and international spectacle.

KEYWORDS

American Exceptionalism; consumer culture; transnational history; sporting nationalism; International mega-events; global sports industry; tennis; golf; davis cup; ryder cup; cross-cultural rivalry and emulation

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Prologue

While virtually everyone knows Britain supposedly ‘taught the world to play’ sports, the American (USA) contribution to the longer historical development of modern global sports is not as well-recognised or understood. In directing attention to the sporting rivalry between the USA and Britain during the early twentieth century (in particular), one discovers that while the British may have introduced the world to modern sport and created many of the commonly held adages about the ethical practice of sports, it was primarily Americans who taught the world how to sell and consume sports, often to the dismay of British elites who reluctantly followed suit in the late twentieth century as their international performances continued to decline. While Americans were moderately successful at exporting (and facilitating the growth of) two of their nation’s games (baseball and basketball) abroad during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, their most significant legacy to the development of global sport was in the packaging and promotion of sporting ‘events’, in sport as a commercial enterprise.

Born of an intimate, shared cultural heritage in its various colonial and postcolonial guises (exuding both reverence and revulsion), the Anglo-American rivalry proved to be an especially creative dynamic in the development of class and nationalist discourses of modern sport in particular (and of popular culture more generally). In particular, the pattern of initial American imitation and absorption of British models and the gradual reversal of the process to a more reciprocal relationship was a significant process in the development of ‘Anglo-American’ culture (Belich 2009). There are few more evocative, enduring examples of this historical and cultural relationship than within the world of professional soccer (Nauright and Ramfjord 2010). While association football (soccer) was invented by the English, during the first decade of the twenty-first century, the British model has increasingly come to resemble the American business model. The increased ‘Americanization’ of English soccer marketing and management strategies recently have clashed with well-established British traditions of fan and community-based club organization as well as with supporters’ consumption of the game itself (and, as such, has been widely loathed by die-hard British football supporters). Whereas the entry of American ownership into the English Premier League was initially interpreted in culturally imperialistic terms (e.g. as the death-knell signal of the decline of English sporting heritage at the hands of Yankee businessmen who knew nothing of soccer), in truth, American capital (as well as European external investment more generally) was a product of the convergence of forces during the early twenty-first century which precipitated such ‘foreign’ investment in English soccer. In particular, it was the increasing global market for the sale of licensed products and televised broadcasts of games that underpinned the structure and viability of direct, external ownership. As John Nauright and John Ramfjord have recently argued, ‘while the structures of leagues differ between North America and England, it is clear that the trend is toward a globalised business model that began in North America and is sweeping the world as investors seek to maximise profits in diversified sport, entertainment, leisure media and property portfolios’ (Nauright and Ramfjord 2010, 435).

Within the context of the contemporary global sports industry, the ‘American model’ refers to diversified revenue streams from television rights and sponsorships, various forms of revenue sharing among professional franchises, entertainment activities linked to sport (which date back to the pre-Second World War period), public-financed sport stadia, and

corporate hospitality schemes (e.g. luxury suites) – all of which debuted within the U.S. during the 1980s and 1990s. Symptomatic of the ‘British absorption’ of the ‘American model’ (i.e. the recognised American expertise in sport marketing) is the exponential rise in the Premiership’s television rights revenue from £670 million in 1997 to £1.78 billion in 2012.

The American–British sporting rivalry, which produced fruitful dividends for the development of modern sport and consumer culture, was a product of colonialism. The North American context provided the first case study for the export of British sport. As Elliott Gorn and Warren Goldstein have written, ‘settlers did not just transport English pastimes to the New World; they also brought their *ideas* about the role of play ... across the ocean’ (Gorn and Goldstein 2004, 16–17). As such, the American colonists ‘were heirs to England’s bifurcated leisure heritage’ which vacillated between Puritanical strictures regarding excessive physical and worldly joys and fantasising upon how ‘an easy, plentiful life could be recreated in terms of the old ideal of a leisurely paradise’. In short, English colonists carried both traditions to North America and attempted to shape their lives with them. During colonial and antebellum times Americans imported various British sports and games and subsequently, transformed them with newly invented rules, conventions, traditions and meanings after the Civil War – a process abetted by an Anglo-American Protestant ideology known as ‘Muscular Christianity’ (Baker 2007).

The maturation of American sport proved to be a decisive, resilient force of the post-colonial relationship. Symptomatic of more than a century of cultural rivalry, elite Americans were especially keen to initiate and test the ‘mother’ country. This sporting rivalry, which raged (especially) from the late nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth, offers a window into transnational aspects of both American and British cultures. This culturally fruitful interaction enables one to explore episodes in ‘American sport history’ within a transnational framework, an approach sadly lacking in the American sports history literature to date.

The discussion about how historians might move beyond an exclusively nation-centered, American ‘exceptionalist’ perspective has advanced in recent years toward a consideration of American history within world history and a reconsideration of the American past as less ‘tightly bound to perceptions of the nation as the container of American history’ (Bender 1999, 3). Thomas Bender, one of the leading figures in this revisionist vanguard, argues historians must integrate the stories of the American past with other ‘larger stories from which, [and] with a kind of continental self-sufficiency, the United States has isolated itself’. Bender maintains that we ‘must understand every dimension of American life as entangled in other histories [and that] other histories are implicated in American history, and the United States is implicated in . . . similar projects in other countries’ (Bender 1999, 5–6).

Americans have imagined themselves to be fundamentally unique, special, or ‘exceptional’ – unlike any other nation as an embodiment of an ideal. This historical amnesia of the nation’s past stems from the hold of popular historical narratives of American ‘westward expansion’ and ‘manifest destiny’, which have portrayed a benign, often romantic, fortuitous story of ‘aggrieved innocence’ or that ‘greatness was thrust upon it’ (Steel 2004, 270). Second, following on this cultural explanation is the fact that historians (including sport historians) have been seduced by the interpretive talisman of American exceptionalism – a term, as Trevor B. McCrisken, explains, used to describe ‘the belief that the United States is an extraordinary nation with a special role to play in human history; a nation that is not only unique but also superior’ (McCrisken 2001, 63). Although the idea can be traced back to colonial times

(e.g. John Winthrop's reference to a 'City Upon a Hill'), an exceptionalist American nation was probably first articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville in his 1835 *Democracy in America*. Thereafter, it became a central component of burgeoning American national identity and a powerful ideological influence on US foreign policy that persisted throughout the twentieth century (and remains influential in the twenty-first century). Within the American historical profession, the concept informed Frederick Jackson Turner's 'frontier thesis'; promulgated prominently within the 'consensus' historiography of the 1950–1960s; and even persisted in spite of the 'new social history' with its emphasis on race, class, gender and ethnicity which cut across the central tenets of the faith in the United States as an exception.

During the past decade there has been a thorough de-provincialising of 'American exceptionalism' (Tyrrell 1991). In his 1993 presidential address to the Organization of American Historians, John Higham affirmed that from the mid-nineteenth century until the 1960s, 'the nation was the grand subject of American history.' The leading American historians 'either devoted themselves to explaining the nation's distinctiveness, as a polity and a people, or took it for granted'; nevertheless, the 'reality and importance of that distinctiveness were never in question.' In spite of the proliferation of numerous subfields associated with the 'new' social and cultural history – notably women's history, immigration history, African American history, Native American history, and working class history – historians continue to situate their work, according to Higham, 'largely within the American arena and (except for early American history) make contact only intermittently with similar projects in other countries' (Higham 1994, 1290–91, 1301). The legacy of 'exceptionalism' can only be properly laid to rest by overcoming a strictly national focus and embracing a transnational mode of analysis so as to interpret the American story not as an exception, as Tyrrell writes, to 'patterns of national power in a world of nations but as a particular, and constantly changing expression of complex forces' (Tyrrell 1991, 1055).

Similarly, there has been an expansion of thinking about British Imperial and Commonwealth history to embrace a wider notion of spheres of British influence such as the formerly classed 'informal' empire in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, Brazil in South America and other zones around the world particularly in Asia. Oxford University historian, James Belich, has recently conceptualised the intersections between American and British capital as the Anglo-world expanded across the North American continent and in Australasia and southern Africa. His *Replenishing the Earth: The Settler Revolution and the Rise of the Anglo-World, 1783–1939* demonstrates many overlapping interests of settlers and capitalists who went from the American East and Britain to the West of North America and to the colonies of settlement in the British Empire (Belich, 2009).

Among the key cultural activities taken to these new lands were sports. Though American exceptionalism adapted some British sports to suit American sensibilities, the sporting cultures of the two nations and within their zones of influence remained similar in many respects. This was particularly true in amateur sports such as tennis, rowing and track and field (athletics to the Brits) as well as in the sport of golf. In the twentieth century, many sports adapted as focus moved to nationalism and national worth to professionalism and spectacle.

Fast Forward to the Past

During the summer of 1899, four members of the Harvard University tennis team competed in a Monterey, California tournament and they were encouraged by the level of play

(beyond the east coast) in the new game of lawn tennis. Dwight Davis, a twenty-year-old Harvard student and scion of a prominent St. Louis family, had a hunch that an international competition might do for tennis what the America's Cup, begun in the late 1850s, had done for yachting. 'If team matches between players from different parts of the same country arouse such great interest and promote such good feeling,' Davis wondered, 'would not similar international contests have even wider and more far-reaching consequences?' (Kriplen 1999, 37). Davis drafted the tournament format of what would later be called the Davis Cup competition with the advice of Richard Olyney, who had served as Secretary of State under President Grover Cleveland. Davis was later appointed Secretary of War in 1924 (a post which he served until 1929) and then Governor-General of the Philippines (1929–1932) (Kriplen 1999). No doubt Davis's eastern patrician and political connections elevated the status of the Cup (as for instance in 1924 President Calvin Coolidge agreed to draw the contestants' names out of a bowl at the White House) – which, obviously, delighted the upstart American tennis establishment (Tregrove 1985).

First played in 1900, the Cup was the maiden attempt to stage a grand, annual competition between the two leading tennis powers of the day – an early effort by Americans to challenge the mother country of modern sport (Grimsley 1971). In commissioning and donating a \$700 sterling silver bowl (purchasing it out of his own funds) as the annual competition's trophy, Davis was following a well-established tradition in the material culture of sport (Hardy, Loy, and Douglas Booth 2009). The historical record from Homer in antiquity onward links sporting competition to some sort of prize. The centrality of a symbolic (and often very valuable) prize is one of the most consistent themes in the long history of sport.

Britain was the obvious opponent for such a challenge since they, having gotten a head start in the sport, were considered to be the world's standard bearer (though Australian, New Zealand and South African players were reaching a similar standard of play by the early 1900s). Nevertheless, Davis and Samuel Hardy, one of the top California players, predicted an American victory during their meeting the previous summer. 'I think that we could beat the British . . . our style of play is more aggressive and better,' Davis imagined. Hardy responded 'Yes, I understand the British play a strictly baseline game. I doubt that they could stand up to our net attack'. Davis and Hardy's predictions were prescient, as the American team crushed their British rivals 3–0 to win the first Cup. For the American hosts, the 1900 competition was a spectacular success, proof of how far the country's tennis had progressed in such a short time. An unabashedly jingoistic drawing in one Boston paper showed a giant silver bowl being towed off the tennis court by two tiny American players, while the third player sat on the rim waving an American flag. Three other players, bowing slightly in apparent obeisance, stood on the sidelines watching it go, a limp Union Jack at their side (Tregrove, 1985, 215). One of the key factors in the American victory was the adaptation of new strategies in tennis resulting from seeking competitive edge in match play. Innovation in sport was resisted by the British who utilised concepts of amateurism and superiority to assert class and cultural superiority (Nauright 1992). To play as a gentleman connoted an ethos to play to win, but to not train too hard, play within the rules and follow the dictates of the sport in question. In the United States and British societies of settlement, however, there were many innovations, which began to give a competitive edge over British founders of modern sporting codes.

The history of Anglo-American rivalry in golf followed a similar trajectory to tennis. Like other British games, golf followed the flag and trade. The game was introduced by Scottish

military officers in places such as Calcutta and Bombay in the 1830s and 1840s before the game became popular in England. The game was more popular in the distant Scottish immigrant colonies of Australia, New Zealand and Canada than in Victorian England. Originally a purely Scottish pastime and only initially played in England by Scottish transplants, by the 1880s golf became increasingly popular throughout the British Isles. The Scottish game attracted only nominal interest in the U.S. While the first documented American golf course took shape in Sulphur Springs, West Virginia in 1884, it was in and around the major cities of New York, Boston, and Chicago that the sport emerged within newly established country clubs which were staffed primarily by Scottish expatriates (who won most of the tournaments, including the US Open championship, prior to 1911). John Reid, a Scottish immigrant constructed a crude course in Yonkers, New York and later founded the St. Andrews Golf Club in 1888. Two years later the first permanent golf club was established in Newport, Rhode Island where the Carnegies, Astors, Vanderbilts and Rockefellers led a colony of wealthy summer enthusiasts for the new game.

Given those who initially gravitated to the game in the early years, most Americans viewed golf as an elite pastime ('pre-eminently a game of good society', as *Harper's Weekly* characterised it in 1895) as well as a foreign import not entirely consonant with 'American' sporting values. Nevertheless, during the late nineteenth century, Americans founded numerous –national organisations to regulate and promote their burgeoning sporting culture, and as such, the United States Golf Association was founded in 1894. By 1899, there were 887 golf courses in the US (154 were west of the Mississippi River), and by 1910, the National Golf Links of America sponsored 20 tournaments (Pope 1997). Women of the lawn set culture embraced golf as an attractive compromise between 'the tediousness of croquet and the hurley-burley of lawn tennis' (and an annual women's championship tournament was established at the Meadowbrook Club in Westbury, New York in 1895). In 1900, A.G. Spalding and Company sponsored an exhibition tour of Britain's best golfer, Harry Vardon in 1900 in an effort to promote the commercial future of the game (Labbance and Siplo 2008). And the following year, a Cleveland dentist named Coburn Haskell, invented a ball composed of elastic thread wound under tension around a rubber core and covered with dimples – a ball both livelier and truer than the existing one used in Britain. In 1902 Scottish pro Sandy Herd successfully used the American ball to win the British Open and as William Baker notes 'within a decade American golfers, using an American-invented ball, charged to the forefront of the golfing community in the Western world' (Baker 1988, 188). Within less than thirty years golf as a new sports fad imported from Britain had made impressive inroads into the American sporting landscape already effectively dominated by baseball and gridiron football (Markovitz and Hellerman 2001).

Interpreting the Sporting Past

Traditional historical narratives have rather uncritically characterised the diffusion of country club sports such as tennis and golf as evidence for 'the rise of elite sport' within a more general surge in the modernisation of commercialised American spectator sport between the 1920s and 1950s (Guttman 1978). As Douglas Booth writes, such structural-functionalist explanations have been the work of historians 'imputing abstractions (e.g., sport, society) with agency and then assigning those abstractions functions and needs' (Booth 2010, 14). Thus, for example, in the hands of historian Benjamin Rader, spectator sport constitutes one

of the 'major pillars' of the twentieth-century American social order given that it 'replaced or supplemented the church, the family, the local community, ethnic sub-communities and a system of mutual class obligations. According to Rader, spectator sport (particularly the prominent athletes who became "sports idols" such as the tennis player William Tilden) served a compensatory cultural function (Rader 1983).

Under the influence of the 'cultural turn' in social theory, such grand narratives are no longer thought to be conceptually plausible. Over the last decade the theoretical content of sports history has crossed from the social to the cultural paradigm. Whereas sociological theories in social history framed the search for unified and unambiguous interpretations of the past, cultural theories conceptualise history as a more creative, self-conscious and critical enterprise (Evans 2000). Sport historians are increasingly more inclined to interrogate sources as artefacts, 'the meaning of which exists in their reading/telling rather than their connections to a past reality' (Booth 2005, 28). While we suspect relatively few sport historians have read Hayden White's work, many would now support his contention that historians invent and imagine their narratives rather than discover them in the sources (White 1986). And while few sport historians have fully embraced deconstructionism, a fledgling number of them concur with cultural historian Lynn Hunt who suggests that the practice of history is 'a process of text creating and "seeing" that is, giving form to subjects' (Hunt 1989, 20).

If we deconstruct the Davis Cup (and the more general US–British sporting rivalry) story within the established 'rise of "elite" and spectator sport in America' narrative, we discover various, prospective narrative tropes for our interpretive proclivities. One could note the long-standing Anglophilia which prevailed within the upper-class echelons of American society; an established pattern of American imitation and absorption of British models and the gradual reversal of the process to a more reciprocal interrelationship within popular culture; American–British rivalry for global economic–political–sports leadership; the transatlantic cross-incubation of elite culture; the development of a national/global/middle-class consumer culture; the role of imperialism in the development of sport; modern sport as a 'modern survival of prowess' (through 'the preservation of archaic traits') as well as an expression of 'conspicuous consumption' – a term first utilized in 1899 by Thorstein Veblen to describe the lifestyle of an emergent leisure class in which the display of high pecuniary status (and the accompanying exhibition of socially useless goods) which had become a dominant cultural concern. As such, Veblen was the first critic to stress the cultural significance of consumption for social groups in their attempts to fix and demonstrate to others their place within the social hierarchy (Veblen 1899).

We argue that any and all of the above thematic tropes provide fruitful building blocks for historians constructing a plausible historical account of the role in international sporting rivalries and the development of a global consumer culture. These two (initially) 'elite' competitions provide a window into understanding how Anglo–American rivalries fueled global sport consumption during the first half of the twentieth century. Such trans-national competitions in tennis and golf illustrate the broader process of American absorption and imitation of British sporting practices towards a gradual reversal of the relationship. Both provide evidence of Americans indigenising a sporting import (e.g. tennis and golf); creating nationalistically charged competitive rivalries with the 'mother' country (e.g. the Davis Cup and Ryder's Cup), and then effectively exporting the adapted product back to Britain (and to the wider global sporting world) – a discernible connection between the globalisation and

commercialisation of sport. Finally (but certainly not definitively), one could (and should) speculate upon how tennis and golf transported particular social class ideals of leisure and consumption based upon their (initial) attachment to the elite social set of private clubs – a prime example of early twentieth century conspicuous consumption.

The rise of Transatlantic Rivalries in Tennis and Golf

Although lawn tennis dates back to the early fourteenth century when it was first played in French monasteries, it is a quintessentially modern sport linked with Major Walter Wingfield's 1874 patent office licence for 'A Portable Court of P laying Tennis'. It was Wingfield who codified and marketed tennis as a suitable game – a gentle diversion and an alternative to croquet and bowls – for upper-class ladies and gentlemen (replete with a handy kit containing net, balls, racquets for play on most large English country home gardens). In 1877, the rules and conventions were established by the All England Croquet Club in the London suburb of Wimbledon, which hosted the first modern tennis tournament.

The game diffused quickly. Tennis arrived in the U.S. within months of Wingfield's patent whereby early tournaments were held in 1876 and 1880 (in Massachusetts and Staten Island); and the first official national championship was held at the posh Newport, Rhode Island Casino in 1881 (and became the home of the U.S. Lawn Tennis Association (USLTA) was formed and served as the country's governing body. By 1895, 106 clubs belonged to the USLTA; then, due to the subsequent popularity of golf in country clubs, membership in the association declined and only returned to the 1895 level a decade later. Lawn tennis spread quickly beyond its Anglo-American hub as clubs were established in France, Brazil, Scotland, Ireland, and India during the mid to late 1870s; and by 1890, it was also played in South Africa, Denmark, Switzerland, Holland, Finland, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, and Egypt. Yet, despite its international diffusion, the sport was dominated for the first half century by England, the United States, France and Australia (Gillmeister 1998).

The key venue for early lawn tennis was the country club – a late nineteenth-century development deriving from elite male city clubs wherein leisure traditions and customs were created as a form of social status and networking. As James Mayo writes, commuting advances and suburban development 'enabled elites to create a lifestyle that integrated their desire for club life, outdoor and leisure activities, and suburban living ... the combination of these conditions played an essential role in the formation of the country club' (Mayo 1998, 65). While the international diffusion of the country club ideal has yet to attract its historians, as the three leading tennis powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is reasonably clear that elite, private clubs in Britain, the US, and Australia hatched the first two generations of elite tennis players internationally. In Australia, the competitive version reached its greatest heights at the Melbourne Cricket Club in the 1880s, although tennis at club level was still primarily a Protestant pursuit surrounded by the business ethic and the concomitants of the Masonic Lodge (Baltzell 1995). The movers and shakers of this emergent international tennis culture had the habit of bumping into each other in various and sundry places – at the Pyramids, along the French Riviera, and at Henley, Wimbledon and Lords in London. As such, *fin de siecle* tennis, like most sports, was 'based on a fraternity of elites, among both the athletes who garnered public adulation and the officials who wielded power behind the scenes', Barbara Keys writes – a 'world oddly poised between modernity and tradition, embracing technology, quantification, and progress even

while grasping outdated ideals of amateurism and the purity of play. It mediated between nationalism and internationalism, strengthening both simultaneously' (Keys 2006, 14).

The social class orientation of British sporting culture influenced the development of particular styles of play. According to Robert Lake, from the 1870s British lawn tennis developed a code of behavioural etiquette demanding self-restraint on the court, which impinged upon the development of particular playing strokes and styles. As such, prohibitions against certain playing strokes up until First World War were indicative of a class anxiety among the aspirational middle class who controlled the sport, as certain playing styles conveyed an unseemly working class competitiveness. Moreover, as Lake maintains, specific expectations of lawn tennis players required the transmission of a unique style of 'manliness' and reflection of masculinity not found in other middle-class sports (Lake 2015). Veblen's assessment of the dominant, 'barbarian' traits of the leisure class was that they served 'to indicate the stage of economic evolution to which the individual possessed of them is adapted'. Although Veblen focused upon the dominant 'masculine' traits of the new leisure class, he might have bolstered his argument by considering the way in which American upper-class women embraced tennis during the late nineteenth century. For women of the leisure class, tennis offered an opportunity to combine exercise and competition without being subjected insinuations of masculinity. While upper-class American women carefully negotiated the dominant gender conventions (i.e. playing and acting like 'ladies') in holding their racquets in one hand and lifting their long skirts with the other while gently patting the ball back and forth over the net, and in so doing, the thrill of competition (and the attainment of a more active sporting style) compelled them to wear shorter skirts – so as to play more like the 'boys' – which, in turn, ultimately hastened the streamlining of their athletic garb (Veblen 1899). While the women's special tennis dress was noticeably evolving within the first decade of the twentieth century, 'change came slowly to tennis', fashion historian Patricia Campbell Warner writes 'tied as it was to the authority and tradition' of the powerful governing associations of the day (i.e. ELTA and USLTA) run by men. The bloomers and knee-length skirts worn by American female bicyclists and collegiate athletes worn a decade earlier were not allowed for *public* wear by the male tennis establishment until the 1920s. It was the French champion Suzanne Lenglen's ensemble – headband, rolled stockings, and pleated, knee-length skirts that finally broke the mould (and also simultaneously established the fashion style of the flapper). Although women's shorts remained taboo at Wimbledon until after Second World War, Warner concludes that the form of the new outfit 'came about first in the privacy of the campus testing ground, but it took the fashion-conscious stamp of approval that fame and international press coverage could bring in order to deliver the critically important message of acceptability to the world of women's fashion' (qf. Warner 2006, 58–59). This reinforces the process by which American cultural trends led and revolutionised the world of sport and leisure consumption prior to Second World War I and thereafter.

With their elite backgrounds and imperial aspirations, the Anglophile Americans and Australians exhibited similar class and ideological characteristics as their former colonial masters. For the turn of the twentieth century Americans and Britons, social status implied physical mobility in terms of steamship crossings. For the Australians, according to Graeme Smith, those included financial security; an emphasis on high or privileged birth, family, social acceptability and contacts; often a sense of colonial swagger that harked back to the well-bred 'jackaroo', even the new chum colonial experience; connections with the

Colonial Service, with Empire, possibly with the Indian Colonial Service or other areas of experience where Public School; often an informal link with the occupiers of the Vice Regal office; a membership holding in common private schooling and a calling to the professions; an ascendancy, in Australia at least, of the landed, the squatter, the entrepreneur; and an assumption of common ground with the officer class in the armed services who were to be welcomed as social or playing guests, even if not skilful at either of the games (Kinross-Smith 1987, 210). With this in mind, it should not be surprising that the leading Australasian players in the early Cup competitions hailed from privileged backgrounds. Both Anthony Wilding (New Zealand) and Norman Brookes (Australia) hailed from privileged English migrant families. Wilding did his prep schooling in England and studied law at Cambridge. He became intimate friends with statesmen, European aristocrats and royalty, frequently being a house-guest in palaces and stately homes (Tregrove 1985). Brookes (described by Bill Tilden as ‘the greatest tennis brain of the twentieth century’) was the son of a wealthy ship owner and bridge builder, who took to the game at age five, and would go on to dominate the administration of Australian tennis until the mid 1950s, was also a skilled cricketer, adept at billiards, and won several national golf titles. Underpinned by a healthy faith in social Darwinism as an ideological rationale for Anglo-American–Australian gentlemen’s destiny to run the world (and in so doing, preserve class exclusivity), the tennis establishment perpetuated a Victorian era amateur code until the 1930s (Tregrove 1985).

According to historian E. Digby Baltzell, the amateur sporting code was an aspect of a class code of honour which was uniquely characteristic of the Anglo-American social systems between the Civil War and Second World War, which dominated the tennis world until the early 1960s, but which died a slow death during the late 1960s (Baltzell 1995). While most of the scholarship on amateurism has depicted its spread as an example of British cultural imperialism – an ideology concocted by headmasters, clergymen, and editors that diffused from Britain to the ‘rest “ of the sporting nations – Murray Phillips’ analysis of sporting amateurism in Australia at the turn of the twentieth century suggests that ‘the accepted definition was interpreted differently and selectively or was modified ... which effectively differentiated within sporting activities and in different locations.’ In the case of Australia, amateurism ‘overwhelmingly favoured the version that did not explicitly discriminate along occupational or class lines’ (as had been the case in Britain) and thus, when discussing amateurism in sport, Phillips argues, ‘it is more accurate to talk about “amateurisms”, in the plural [which] reflects the selective, fluid and dynamic dimensions of the amateurism as it was interpreted in the context of local, regional and national historical traditions (Phillips 2001: 24–25).

The creation of the Davis Cup was the greatest achievement of American tennis. The Europeans regarded its ‘round robin’ structure as indicative of an American competitive spirit and a distinctly American method – which obligated all contestants to contest each of the opposing team’s singles players (rather than evading particular players by virtue of a lucky draw) (Gillmeister 1998). There is substantial evidence to suggest that the Davis Cup profoundly stimulated interest in the game within the US.

Originally only the USA and Britain contested the trophy. Led by Wimbledon champions Reginald and Hugh Doherty, the British wrested the trophy from the Americans at the Longwood Country Club and this marked the last time Britain and the US were the sole competitors for the Davis Cup. In 1904, Belgium, Austria and France entered, followed in 1905 by Australasia with a combined team from Australia and New Zealand. By First World

War, Germany and Canada had entered teams as well (Grimsley 1971). Up to 1927, the only three nations to win the Cup were the U.S., Great Britain, and Australasia. The French dominated competition between 1927 and 1933 led by Rene Lacoste and the so-called 'Three Musketeers' after the Bill Tilden –dominated era of 1920–1926 when America had its first 'golden' hero of the sport – France has since won the cup just once and Britain has not held it since 1937 – for 27 years after Second World War, the Cup was won by either America or Australia until South Africa won it by default in 1974. Indeed, during the 1950s and early 1960s – the 'golden age' of Australian tennis – the staging of the Cup became a fixture on the Aussie sporting calendar and Aussie players dominated. By the mid 1980s sixty- two nations played in the competition – the field has doubled during the past 20 years, as 137 teams competed in 2007.

Unlike its sister country club cousin, tennis, international team competition in golf was slower to emerge. Initially conceived as a competition between Britain and the US, the Ryder Cup began in 1927, following an exhibition match in 1926 between a team comprising American professionals against a similar one drawn from the British PGA at the Wentworth Club in Surrey. Like the Davis Cup, the first four Ryder Cups were split evenly between the Americans and the British with the US winning at home in 1927 and 1931 and the British team doing the same in 1929 and 1933. By the end of the 1930s, it had become clear that the US had eclipsed Britain in the production of world-class golfing talent. It was typical of many cases in international sporting competition that the British were shackled by tradition and initially viewed such competitions as 'sporting' rather than do or die events. As a result, in many sports the British invented, their early dominance was rapidly eclipsed in the twentieth century.

So long as the Davis Cup remained primarily a US–British affair, relations were cordial, if not culturally contentious at times. Once the British players returned home from the first Cup competition held at Longwood Country Club, they unloaded their frustrations about the conditions under which they were forced to compete for the new trophy – American balls were too soft, the grass on courts was too long, the nets sagged, etc. Davis's biographer noted how 'several of the elements that had been factors in the outcome of the first Davis Cup competition would surface again and again in future challenges. Overconfidence, for instance, and dissatisfaction with the conditions of the host country's courts, and possibly most important, the inability of a country to convince its leading players that they were needed and that patriotism outranked personal convenience' (Kriplin 1999, 64).

The geo-political dynamics changed after Australia's (playing then with New Zealand) 1907 triumph, the first time that the trophy had been won by a country other than US or Britain and meant that the world tennis powers would have to travel south if they were to regain the Cup. The Australian defence in 1908 on its own turf, in November's 100+ F temperatures proved to be a decisive home court advantage over their American and British rivals, but the competition also laid to rest any enduring notions that tennis was a namby-pamby sport (associated with afternoon teas) – and, in the process, the 1908 Cup Challenge was the key watershed in legitimising lawn tennis as a major modern, masculine and decidedly 'Australian' sport (Senyard 1996). Success in the Cup was taken by many Australians as indicative of much more than a mere sporting achievement. The victories seemed to symbolise Australia's recent shift away from Britain and outward to the world in general, and the US in particular (Fewster 1985).

For the Americans and Britons, the discursive script between the mother country of modern sport and the emergent world power, would follow similar lines as those which unfolded during the controversial 1908 London Olympics that summer. The fourth Olympics turned into a battle between English and American athletes, officials, and spectators. At a time when the United States challenged Britain for the political, economic, and athletic leadership of the western world (at least), the 1908 Games simplified the larger rivalry in terms easily understood by a receptive American public. The headlines of the *New York Times* prior to the Games reflected the intense desire of the Americans to beat the Britons: 'American Athletes Sure of Success'; 'Britishers Fear Yankee Athletes'; 'We Will Knock the Spots Off the Britishers.' Such audacious declarations signalled the most powerful industrial and imperial power alongside the emergent one (Dyreson 1998). During the fourth modern Olympiad, British officials neglected to display the American flag among all the others on the opening day of the London Games. Infuriated American athletes carried small flags with them as they marched past the reviewing stand occupied by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandria and whereas each team had traditionally dipped its flag in tribute to the head of the host government, the American squad refused to do so that day thus establishing a tradition which persists to the present ('this flag dips to no earthly king' quipped shot putter and flag bearer Ralph Rose) – an act of protest which initiated a wave of American protestations throughout (and after) the 1908 Games. Historian William Baker concluded that 'whatever the ultimate benefits, bickering and strife rather than friendly competition characterised the London Olympics of 1908' (Baker 1988, 206) which as fellow historian Dyreson has discerned signalled that the 'United States, embodying the spirit of Athens, had supplanted a Romanised British Empire. Olympic dominance signified that Americans best controlled the awesome energies of modernity' (Dyreson 1998, 164). A contemporary *New York Times* cartoon provocatively captured the vision of the 1908 Games as 'proof' of the Americans' eclipse of English decadence and athletic special pleading. The cartoon caricatured a robust, fit looking Theodore Roosevelt facing a skinny, effete-looking Englishman wearing a monocle and top hat (*New York Times*, 1908).

The early twentieth century nationalistic America-British rivalry evoked a vexing debate about professionalism that was central to the development of transatlantic commercialised sport and consumer culture (and beyond). The key forum for this debate was within the Olympic Games discourse. As Dyreson contends, 'the complaining about the American style of Olympic athletics reached its highest pitch in the English press' following the 1908 Games (Dyreson 1998, 164). Although British athletic officials had promised that their team would rally in the 1912 Stockholm Games (after losing the Americans in 1908), their mediocre performance (placing fourth) merely incited chauvinistic American responses (e.g. 'the defeat of the English athletes at Stockholm and the manifest proof that they were outclassed created a good deal of astonishment in Europe').

Needless to say, the British press was not amused by the self-congratulatory American tone and noted in defence that England had avoided 'professionalism.' As one magazine writer contended 'the team which represented the United States at Stockholm was run on "business lines". It was to use its own lingo, "out to win". For Americans the 'business of their heroes is not to amuse themselves, but to win; not to delight in their strength and prowess, but to show that these United States can whip the universe' (Dyreson 1998, 164). Although such scathing attacks on American athletic achievement sold newspapers (and magazines) in Britain, the handwriting was on the wall for a fundamental overhaul of the

British model. Recriminations about American professionalism may assuage traditional British sporting consciousness in the short term, but the future for global athletic competition would go the American way.

The British dedication to the amateur ethos prevailed but only temporarily. In 1912, the Americans failed to enter a team in the Davis Cup Challenge Round, although to their relief, the Brits won and brought the Cup back to England. That year, Maurice McLoughlin, a young Scotch-Irish lad who perfected his game on the public courts of San Francisco, won the Men's LTA Championship which signalled to Baltzell an interesting omen in not only the American class system but also in the world of tennis (Baltzell 1995). Yet in spite of hopeful prospects for a new generation of tennis, the Americans refused to attend the inaugural meeting of the newly formed International Lawn Tennis Federation due to the fact that their English rivals wanted to claim exclusive ownership in holding the lawn tennis championships (i.e. Wimbledon). Americans thought that the only truly world championship was the Davis Cup and only in 1923, after considerable wrangling, were the Americans persuaded to become members of the international federation – only after England relinquished calling the All England Championships the 'world championships.'

Americans emerged from World War I with a newfound sense of confidence in their ability to exert cultural and political muscle with other European powers as well as within the nation's established spheres of influence in the Caribbean and the Far East. This invigorated cultural swagger derived from the fact that after World War I the United States had eclipsed Britain and had become the new centre of economic power.

As golf became established in the US and 'open' championships were created on both sides of the Atlantic, discussions turned to the comparative qualities of golfers on each side of the Ocean. As with tennis, the creation of a golf culture road the coattails of the dominant players enshrined in the American pantheon of 1920s 'golden age' – namely, the professional Walter Hagen and amateur Bobby Jones who proved that the US excellence in golf was on par with the best Britain had to offer, if not better.

In the 1920s American tennis firmament, no star shined more brilliantly than Bill Tilden, a Philadelphian gentlemen. As the dominant player on the national and international stage during the decade, Tilden's celebrity stature did much to popularise the game beyond the country club scene to a wider American public. Between 1920 and 1926, Tilden (who was the world's number one ranked player for seven years), led the US team to seven consecutive Davis Cup victories.

In the words of his biographer, Frank Deford, Tilden 'believed that the people who played tennis, especially the nephews of Uncle Sam, were morally superior to those who trafficked in other games' (Deford 1976, 43) – a view which Tilden promulgated in various articles and speeches. Writing in the leading juvenile magazine of the day, Tilden fused together amateurism and nationalism by asserting that 'the American amateur athlete is above all else a clean sportsman ... Good sportsmanship is also inherent in American manhood ... A nation whose men have been trained to the practices of honesty, generosity and fair play is bound to have a policy of broad-minded liberality in all its international dealings' (Tilden 1921, 675). Such sentiments captured the elite Anglo-American amateur ideology which dominated tennis, golf, the Olympics, cricket and rugby. Tilden was the most exciting, yet self-aggrandising, but also revolutionising force in modern tennis. He personified the alleged 'lost innocence' of gentlemanly tennis (Baltzell 1995).

Rather than interpreting the post-Tilden era as the decline of gentlemanly, 'amateur' tennis perhaps a sounder argument would be that tennis sustained the *appearance* of an already antiquated notion of amateurism. The sentiments that surrounded the world of gentlemanly tennis in the 1920s and 1930s persisted because the socially insulated elite country-club set protected it from the censure of the sport establishment's duplicitous 'shamateur' (professionalised sport masquerading under the 'amateur' banner) system. Ultimately, the American tennis establishment fell victim to its own success. By the 1920s, when tennis began to attract large box office receipts, the management of the USLTA was in the hands of those who used the game as a vehicle for lifting themselves into the upper echelons of elite social circles. As Rader explains, in order to 'retain the image of tennis as a high-status sport, these social climbers were adamant in defending a rigorous definition of amateurism. ... Yet, for tennis to be successful as a spectator sport, the players had to become full-time athletes' (Rader 1983, 193).

The waning of the amateur code in tennis was also tied closely to Tilden and ultimately to the Davis Cup rivalry. USLTA leaders' attempts to preserve tennis as a 'gentlemanly' amateur sport were steadily declining in influence. The pressure of fielding a high-calibre team to compete for the Davis Cup ultimately revolutionised the tennis establishment as America's favorite son, Bill Tilden, threatened a hold out in 1924 over a new rule interpretation that players who were paid to write for newspapers would no longer be considered amateurs and would not be allowed to compete in USLTA-sanctioned events. As long as Tilden wrote and spoke on behalf of the character and nation-enhancing influences, the USLTA bureaucrats were content to subsidise leading players' travel and living expenses but when they attempted to further tighten the code to include wages earned from writing, Tilden used his celebrity to rally public opinion against the USLTA. For an athlete like Tilden, who expressed a commitment to amateurism in tennis while earning an impressive salary for writing about it, it was possible to protect his financial interests while threatening the United States' hopes of defending the Davis Cup (Carvalho 2009).

Thus, while Baltzell is correct in interpreting the post-Tilden era as the end of gentlemanly tennis, it also marked the effective end of 'shamateurism' and thereby initiated the first relatively democratic period in tennis history as working and middle class players gravitated to the game. The last and greatest period of American Davis Cup prowess was between the mid-1930s and late 1940s, during which time the US produced a talented generation of players – Ellsworth Vines, Donald Budge, Robert Riggs, Richard Gonzalez and Jack Kramer – all of whom were born and bred on the public courts in California and represented a departure from the tradition of young men from privileged backgrounds who learned the game on the staid clubs along the Eastern seaboard. It was also during the 1930s that Britain won its last Cup victories (in 1933, 1967, 1937) led by the stellar play of Fred Perry whose working class father, active in the co-operative movement, became a Labour Party Member of Parliament. In short, while the US–Britain rivalry was crucial to the international development of tennis and the diffusion of the game and its trappings within modern consumer society, its days were also numbered (as Australia dominated the competition during the 1950s and 1960s).

Sport and the Triumph of Consumer Culture

The development of competitions for global consumption is a component of what historian Allen Guttman describes as the institutionalisation of modern sport (Guttman 2004). The

transatlantic relationship between Britain and the U.S. formed the epicentre of this 'ludic diffusion' (or cultural transfer) process between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Sport was a powerful but largely informal social institution and practice in the arsenal of British imperial power bolstering the growth of its empire. With an imperial sense of destiny, the US challenged Britain on various cultural, political and economic fronts in the process of achieving its own empire with colonial possessions and protectorates in the Far East and in the Caribbean. Analysing how just as the US was in the process of eclipsing Britain as the leading global power (which was accomplished after first World War), Americans also, as historian Mark Dyreson writes, 'assume[d] that their sporting traditions would make the globe more American – precisely as the British had believed about their sport and culture a generation earlier.' Dyreson notes the irony of such American efforts to spread its national culture through sport prior to (and even after) Second World War – 'just as the United States had borrowed from Great Britain the idea of using sport as a tool to construct national identity while at the same time rejecting the British notion that the tool would inevitably spread British-style culture around the world,' he writes, 'so too did other nations accept the American notion of defining nationhood through sporting prowess but rejected Americanisation in favour of their own nationalisms' (Dyreson 2003, 97).

During the interwar years Americans achieved the most significant and longest lasting impact on international sport. While modern, competitive sport was a British invention, by the interwar years it was increasingly identified with the USA. One of the ironies with the growing global influence of the US during the 1920s–1930s is that they were increasingly less successful at exporting their sports. The role of American sports globally has been far less dominant compared to other areas of American mass culture such as movies, television, popular music or fast food restaurants. As Keys argues, American influence expanded not by persuading other nations to play their games (one exception would be baseball in Japan, Taiwan and Korea), but rather, by 'imbuing sport with moral and technocratic impulses [rigorous training, an achievement-oriented ethos, and the celebration of individual heroes], and in expanding its connections to the worlds of entertainment and mass culture' (Keys 2006, 89). Thus, at its most fundamental level, Keys writes,

the American influence catalyzed the transformation of international sport from an elite cultural pursuit to a mass cultural phenomenon based on commercialism and the new consumer culture, boosting sport's popularity and laying the foundation for sport's emergence in the Cold War as a global force of major cultural, economic, and political import.

Like jazz, Hollywood movies and Ford's mass-production techniques, American sports techniques and styles inspired emulation and envy (as well as derision) (Keys 2006). This was linked in American discourses to democracy – which was often a euphemism for spreading 'the American way of life' abroad (a type of cultural imperialism or 'soft power') (Pope 2007). For large swaths of the American public, the nation's stars and international victories influenced the way they perceived the country's role and destiny in world history.

Clearly, international sports rivalries were a key component in the wider growth of global consumption. We argue that the Davis Cup and Ryder Cup competitions heralded (and thereby signified) the development of the global sport industry. While posh country clubs lost over one million members and sporting event and amusement sales dropped by almost half between 1929 and 1933 (the first phase of the Great Depression) the values of consumerism were firmly embedded within American culture. As historian Gary Cross documents, despite joblessness and wartime austerity, 'ordinary Americans held tight to old consuming

habits and dreams ... [and] American business continued to seek new ways and new things to sell consumers'. Unlike Britain, after Second World War Americans 'fulfilled the dreams that the years of hardship had nourished ... [and] celebrated that prosperity with exuberant spending' (Cross 2000, 67). The steady growth of American consumer culture unleashed a dynamic throughout Western society which was emulated and which ultimately conquered. As Cross writes, despite 'clashes of ideologies, two devastating world wars, and a 45-year cold war that ultimately made the United States the leading global power, the century did not culminate in the victory of American political ideas' but rather, 'the real winner of the century was consumerism ... Consumerism was the "ism" that won' (Cross 2000, 6–7).

Consumer culture derives its coherence and power from the articulation of key discourses and practices. Throughout much of the twentieth century this form of socialisation had been carried out under the rubric of Americanisation – understood by theorist Antonio Gramsci as early as the 1930s to involve the processes whereby the values of capital come to be embodied in the everyday life of US culture. In his analysis of this process within British culture, John Hargreaves argued that the 'dominant discourses and practices' of contemporary social life are 'organised around consumer culture' and include 'youth, beauty, romance, sexual attraction, energy, fitness and health, movement, excitement, adventure, freedom, exotica, luxury, enjoyment, entertainment, fun'. Hargreaves explored the relationship between physical practices and the organisation of power through the workings of consumer culture which manipulates the public representation of bodies (Hargreaves 1987, 132).

To conclude, then, although largely neglected by sport historians, the Davis Cup provides a fertile and suggestive case study for better understanding American sporting imperial initiatives at the turn of the century (and throughout the twentieth century). The promotion of the Cup contains elements of both an imperialist mentality alongside a much longer Anglo-American dynamic within sports history. The Cup (in particular, and sport more generally) is a prime example of the longer historical pattern of American imitation and absorption of British models and then the gradual reversal of the process to a later, more reciprocal interrelationship within popular culture. During colonial and antebellum times, Americans imported various British sports and games, and subsequently transformed them with newly invented rules, conventions, traditions and meanings after the Civil War. After the mid-nineteenth century, American-styled entertainment such as the minstrel and wild west shows eclipsed the British theatre and English popular music within American popular culture and paved the way for the export of jazz and blues – as well as Hollywood film – to Britain after First World War and a broader range of consumerist trends (such as fast food, supermarkets, household appliances) after World War II.

In short, the Davis Cup competition is an example of the way in which Americans indigenised a cultural sporting import, namely tennis; created a nationalistic, international sporting competition; and effectively exported it back to Britain within the wider context of a burgeoning, imperial rivalry on the world stage between these two, rival sporting nations. This process not only expanded the worldwide consumption of sport but spread a spirit of cultural emulation within twentieth-century consumer culture.

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