The connections between international sport and global affairs are hard to miss in the daily headlines. Human rights groups are using the upcoming Beijing Olympic Games to pressure China on Tibet, Darfur, free speech, and penal reform. Beijing authorities, anticipating the influx of foreign visitors for the Games, are trying to change the cultural habits of the city residents, urging them to stop spitting in public and to line up in orderly queues. This summer Russian President Vladimir Putin threw his weight behind Sochi’s successful bid for the 2014 Winter Games, skiing down the slopes at the Black Sea resort and talking up the Games as a crucial sign of international respect for Russia. Hollywood was recently aflutter at the arrival of British superstar David Beckham, who came to add his celebrity luster to America’s glamour capital (and, incidentally, to play soccer there, too). The United Nation’s Environment Program is pushing the Olympic Games to think about green as well as gold, with the addition of environmental and sustainability criteria to the staging of events. Culture, politics, economics, the environment: sport is intimately and powerfully connected to all these elements at a global level.

Despite sport’s manifold connections to international affairs, until very recently historians of foreign affairs showed no interest in studying the subject. A handful of sport studies specialists wrote about sports and foreign affairs, but mainstream scholars paid little, if any, attention to their work. In the United States it was not until 1999 that diplomatic historian Walter LaFeber began to chip away at this intellectual barrier, with his study of

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basketball star Michael Jordan as both symbol and agent of the "new global capitalism."\textsuperscript{1} For the first time, one of the pre-eminent figures in the field of U.S. foreign relations wrote a book-length study on a topic few before had even included in a footnote.

The number of historians of foreign relations who have followed LaFeber’s intrepid footsteps suggests that sport may at last be receiving due attention in the field. Tom Zeiler, an esteemed diplomatic historian, has just published an innovative study of the 1888-1889 Spalding world baseball tour, connecting it to the roots of American empire. Guoqi Xu, trained at Harvard by Akira Iriye, has written a brilliant study of the ways China has used sport as a means of "internationalization" in the 20th century; it should be required reading for anyone who wants to understand the 2008 Beijing Olympics. Diplomatic historian Nick Sarantakes has completed a manuscript on the 1980 Olympic boycott. Uta Balbier's excellent new study of intra-German sport relations suggests that in Europe, too, sport’s relationship to foreign affairs is now a respectable subject for historians outside of sport studies.\textsuperscript{2}

International history’s increasing emphasis on cultural relations, informal actors, international organizations, and transnational flows, all of which come together in the study of international sport, have helped to make sport more relevant. (It has also enhanced sport’s academic respectability: studying organizations has an aura of seriousness that studying the playing of games lacks.) Newer studies of sport and foreign affairs share a broad view of sport not as an element of culture that occasionally gets manipulated in the political realm, but as a multifaceted phenomenon that wields power in itself.

My own book shares much with these new avenues of study. Conceived as a study in intercultural relations, it highlights sport’s role in cultural globalization. I sought to explain the explosion of international sports competitions in the 1930s, to delineate the characteristics of the international community it produced, and to analyze how these


developments reverberated in the cultural and political landscapes of nations that participated. International organizations and transnational networks are key actors in this story, and economics, ideology, tourism, consumerism, and gender play roles in it. I avoided the scholarly paradigm that sees sport as a “reflection” or “window” of other forces (either domestic or international), a much-worn formula that, in my view, begs the question of why one ought to study the reflection when one could study the real forces directly.

I was particularly struck, when I began looking closely at the diffusion of modern Western sport, at how it had so rapidly taken over the global landscape, squeezing out so many alternative and radically different versions of “physical culture.” The establishment of modern Western sport as a global culture has entailed a narrowing of our conception of physical culture, but the same process has also provided the world with its most visible evidence of global community. Though far from the airy ideals of harmony and mutual understanding its promoters proclaim, the world of international sport is founded on recognition of the common humanity of all participants. After a century of genocide, that acknowledgment is no small achievement.

It is a special honor to have my book reviewed by Steven Pope, whose excellent 1997 book Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination, provided both an early foundation for my understanding of sport’s relationship to national identity and an inspiration for how to do sport history well. Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu and I share the distinction of being the only historians who have breached the pages of Diplomatic History with articles on sport; her book on U.S.-Japanese baseball relations promises to be a path-breaking study of an important topic that has long cried out for serious treatment.3

I am grateful to both reviewers for the time and effort that went into their careful readings. They have been generous in their assessments of the book’s merits. Both of them have sometimes explained my conclusions better than I remember doing myself. Both point to further avenues of research, in diaspora studies, comparative studies of international institutions, and the complex relationship between nationalism and internationalism. There is, indeed, much work that remains to be done: in many respects we have only begun to study the full dimensions of sport’s connections to international affairs.

Pope rightly notes that excellent work has been produced on American sport in the first decades of the 20th century. The late 19th and early 20th centuries have been the subject of the finest studies of American sport history, including Pope’s own work. The international dimensions of the story, however, have not been deeply explored—certainly not for the 1930s. The 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Games are notable for the paucity of work they have elicited, thanks in part to being overshadowed by the more dramatic 1936 Berlin Games. Unlike virtually all of the other “modern” Games, they have not been the subject of a serious book-length study. More generally, the parochialism of America’s major team sports has

reinforced a scholarly propensity to assume that in the 1930s, international cultural interactions were of little significance. As Guthrie-Shimizu notes, part of what I tried to show was that the oft-studied U.S. cultural expansionism of the 1920s continued, in sport, into the 1930s, and even accelerated. The 1930s, as she aptly puts it, were not a detour but a bridge to the globalized mass culture of the postwar years.

Heather Dichter's review, unfortunately, provides a deeply inaccurate portrayal of my book. Ms. Dichter seems to have misunderstood my book's subject and arguments at a fundamental level. She says that the book is a "comparison of the sporting cultures" in three countries and that its central argument is that these three countries "combined to shape modern sport." She concludes that "overall [the book] demonstrate[s] the pervasiveness of sport at both a societal and political level." The book is not comparative and is not about particular countries' sporting cultures; as Pope and Guthrie-Shimizu note, the book is a transnational study of the rise of an international sport community that covers international organizations and competitions, in addition to examining the relationship between three countries and international sport. I never argue for sport's "pervasiveness" in society or politics; to the contrary, I show at length that sport was peripheral to the main political concerns of the U.S. government and of Stalin's Soviet Union. Nowhere do I suggest that my three case-study countries "shape[d] modern sport"; the forces I chart are much broader, and Dichter's contention contravenes an entire chapter of the book, in which I show that the Soviet Union played almost no role at all in Western international sport.

In addition to misrepresenting the book's subject and central argument, Dichter's review contains so many inaccuracies on subsidiary matters that responding to each of them would be impractical in this context. It is important, however, to correct the record with regard to the most egregiously false contentions Dichter attributes to my book. I do not argue that American sports enthusiasts spread "ideas about democracy" during sport tours abroad; such claims represent rhetoric, not reality. I never assert that Americans were "the dominant" actors in the creation of an international sport community, and I certainly never suggest that they intended to "control" international sport, which for the most part was firmly in the grip of Europeans. Dichter further suggests that I describe modern sport as less "nationalist" than traditional gymnastics and see international sport as "based on mutual understanding." Nowhere in my book do I say that international sport is "based on mutual understanding," and I emphasize repeatedly that modern sport has been a highly potent vehicle for expressions of nationalism (indeed this is a proposition most casual observers of the Olympic Games would take for granted). Finally, I do not claim that sport "helped draw the United States out of its isolationism." Sport had no effect on the country's foreign policy. In short, readers seeking an accurate description of my book should rely on the other reviews.

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