

BOOK REVIEW
"SPORTS MEDICINE"

Eds. J. G. P. Williams and P. N. Sperryn. 2nd ed. 1976. Publ. E. Arnold, London. £23.50

A review of "Sports Medicine" for this journal needs to be slanted differently than for one whose readers are not active in the field. It is likely that most readers of the British Journal of Sports Medicine will acquire this book themselves or ensure that their libraries do so and borrow it for an extended period. The editors are well-known for their devotion to sports medicine and their book *demands criticism at the highest level*.

Sports Medicine is concerned both with the management of sports injuries and the behaviour of the body under severe physical stress and so it is right that one-third of the book is concerned with basic sciences. Chapters on physiology, psychology and doping are followed by injuries discussed by tissue and by region. There are a number of miscellaneous chapters including sport and the disabled. The book gains by drawing its contributors from physical educationists as well as doctors though I would like to have had chapters from a top-class coach expounding the empirical basis for training methods, and from a top-class athlete him or herself, to give a first-hand insight into the stresses of preparation and performance.

For what purports to be "the definitive English language textbook of clinical sports medicine",* there were too many occasions where detailed treatment of the subject in hand is avoided on the grounds of lack of space. The point about this type of text (and at this price) is that the subject should be treated fully. The editors should watch this carefully in forthcoming editions.

There are some masterly chapters — Shephard on physiology strikes just the right note of science related to sport, Tuxworth's refreshingly common sense treatment of training, Jokl's chapter is a mine of fascinating and valuable knowledge on biomechanics, Tunstall-Pedoe's and Thomason's exemplary account of sport cardiology and a most useful chapter by Sperryn on problems of travel.

I was disappointed in the superficial discussion on soft tissue injuries. These surely are the most neglected of all injuries affecting sportsmen — and in such a text there ought to be a comprehensive discussion of the nature, pathology and management of these all-important lesions with a critical look at the various methods of treatment used around the world.

Some rather superficial and somewhat uncritical comments about physiotherapy are dotted about various chapters and one misses a reasoned programme with detailed instructions of how to tackle sprains and strains of muscles and ligaments on the lines of Alan Bass' publications.

But what really troubles me is the design of the major part of the book which is devoted to injuries of the various parts of the body and reads more like a condensed textbook on simple orthopaedics for medical students or nurses, which is quite out of place in this context.

Surely a text on sports medicine should concern itself with the special problems afforded by each sport: the typical injuries of ski-ing, football, cricket, gymnastics for example, how they are produced, how they can be prevented and the psychology peculiar to each sport, and draw on the experience of medical men and coaches who have had particular experience in each sport.

It is not that there is not plenty that is sound and sensible in these chapters — it is that they are misplaced. There are numerous textbooks on orthopaedics and trauma, but none on Sports Medicine — an opportunity has been missed.

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* *But this is not a claim made by the authors or editors. — Ed. B.J.S.M.*