

The Evolution of Sport Prologue

What does sport mean in our culture? How is sport and play changing? How do sport and culture evolve together and where is it going? What is sustainability and how might modern day sport contribute or impede movement in this direction?

In any investigative process there are assumptions, some clear and some hidden. One basic assumption here is that it is worthwhile for a human mind to make an effort to understand what is going on in the world. This may seem such an obvious statement to be almost self evident. This drive to know, to understand things appears to be fundamental to the human condition. However, there is a catch. In this striving to know, our individual brains sometime think they can assimilate the massive quantities of information and perspective and put some coherence on it - even come up with the answer. This is likely an illusion. The old adage, 'the older you get the less you know', doesn't really mean that of course. It means that the more you study, the longer you investigate this remarkable planet and all the goings on, the more you realize the sheer depth and span of human interaction and invention is well beyond any one persons ability to synthesize and understand it. You know that you don't know.

The human world is also embedded in and rests upon an ecology of relationships so complex and mysterious, it takes epochs of human thought to make sense of the most basic trends in how the planet lives and functions. The point being this book is merely a well intentioned attempt to analyze and understand sport and play in the context of western culture and the natural world. Sometimes opinions will be strong because a lot is at stake, and if we don't at least think we can assimilate and put coherence on it then what's the point, right? It is of course easier to imagine getting a handle on a narrow field of endeavor, like how to throw a curve ball. In this case the largest playing field possible will be seeded and watered, as that is what I am drawn to and may be the most interesting and useful in the long run. But the soil for the investigation is always that of concern, hope and perplexity.