

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM



SPORT



LEADING THE FIELD

THE STORY OF SPORT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

MATT COLE

The University of Birmingham has invested its aspirations and its resources in sport from the opening of the university to the present day. Whether for the recreation, education and health of its staff, students and the public, or for the development of some of Britain's sporting pioneers, the University has recognised the integral role of sport in its work. The investment has paid dividends for over a century now in Birmingham's role in the development of sporting participation, expertise and influence.



Sir Oliver Lodge was interrupted on the golf links to be recruited by Joseph Chamberlain as Birmingham University's first Principal. His sporting enthusiasm was captured in this portrait for a 1904 profile in *C.B. Fry's Magazine of Action and Outdoor Life*.

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS: THE EDWARDIAN ERA



The University of Birmingham was founded at a time of dramatic change for sport and society, which it embraced in its early years. By the time of the First World War, despite limited resources and numbers, the University had developed a growing range of sports, and established a culture of participation and ambition.

Certain sports had a successful tradition in the University's predecessor institutions, Mason's and Queen's Colleges, and the Birmingham University Athletic Club (BUAC) founded in October 1900 had sections for rugby, hockey (for men and women), Association football and cricket, as well as separate clubs for cycling and tennis. From the first session of the university an athletic sports day was held every spring featuring the usual track and field events as well as tug-of-war and Throwing the Cricket Ball; an Inter-Faculty Challenge Cup and Inter-Varsity tournament against Bristol also ran annually.

To these were added clubs for swimming and golf in 1907, boxing and wrestling in 1909, and, just before the First World War broke out, fencing.

Support for this organisational structure came from the University authorities: the first meeting of the BUAC was chaired by Professor Sir Gilbert Barling, its President before he became Dean of the Medical Faculty and the BUAC Presidency was taken over by Joseph Chamberlain, with Pro-Chancellor Alderman C.G. Beale as his Vice-President. Other professorial figures whose names are still remembered at Birmingham lent their time and kudos to sport: philosopher J.H. Muirhead led the Cycling Club, Classical Scholar E.A. Sonnenschein was patron to the tennis players and J.H. Poynting, developer of the Poynting theorem in Physics, was Vice-President of the BUAC; but the most persistent advocate of sport at the University was its Principal for its first two decades, Sir Oliver Lodge.

Lodge was passionate about the role of sport in public life and in the University. In 1905 he wrote a pamphlet endorsing a call by *The Times* for a parallel spirit to the Japanese warrior code of Bushido amongst the British. A keen golfer, he was on the links when he received Joseph Chamberlain's telegram inviting him to discuss the post of Principal at Birmingham. In every session of the University from its foundation in 1900, Lodge pressed the Council to provide an athletic ground for students at Edgbaston, and when this was made possible by a gift of an additional 20 acres of land from Lord Calthorpe in 1907, Lodge declared that it was "a source of the utmost gratification, and will assuredly have a good effect in welding students together and promoting healthy emulation. But of course," he warned Council, "it will entail considerable expense", and indeed the development of the grounds was partly blamed for the University's serious debts in 1911.

This commitment to sport as part of university life was a personal conviction of Lodge's, but also reflected the desire of the University of Birmingham's leadership to compete with the ancient universities and with their Redbrick contemporaries; it also resonated with the contemporary concerns about 'National Efficiency' – the need for a healthy and well-trained population to promote Britain's interests against competitor nations, whether at work or in war.

The first students at Birmingham shared in this view. The University's Student Handbook from 1900 onwards opened with prominent advertisements by Grenville's sports retailers of Corporation Street alongside an annual 'Word to Freshmen' advising:

A man who refrains from developing his physical side by athletics must as certainly be counted a failure ... as the man who develops these qualities at the expense of his intellect. The obedience, presence of mind and alertness acquired on the football or hockey field are equally as good cards in the game of life as the patience and industry necessary in the laboratory

or the trained memory and faculty of expression which succeeds in the examination hall.

The *University of Birmingham Magazine* similarly urged in 1902 that "we have, in fact, the makings of a power in the world of sport. If you wish to make this University the Alma Mater not only of the pure scientist or scholar, but of the man, cultivate the athletic side of life"; and two years later an editorial in student magazine *The Mermaid* which bemoaned the lack of *esprit de corps* at Birmingham prompted a letter from a member of the Senior Common Room proposing inter-faculty sports as a solution.

The challenges for these pioneers of sport at the new university were twofold: resources and numbers. In the earliest years of the University, club players repeatedly joined Sir Oliver Lodge in pleading for a dedicated sports ground at the new site at Edgbaston. Before the opening of the first buildings there in 1909, Rugby matches were played at Selly Oak, the Reddings and King's Heath, where they complained that "the ground was too small and inaccessible" with "wretched changing accommodation" and even that the footballs were punctured. The

consequences were "scanty fixtures, a scratch side and poor football." This caused such confusion that at the start of the 1902 season a visiting team from Bromsgrove team got off the train at the wrong station and "peregrinated the purlieus of the city" before giving up and being reduced to playing soccer.

The Hockey Club used fields at Portland Road in Smethwick before moving to Harborne and then Wheeler's Lane in King's Heath; tennis was played on courts at Beaufort Road until they were declared unfit and Herbert Chamberlain rented the club his private courts at 'Penryn' on Somerset Road; cricket players met at the top of Richmond Hill before an arrangement was made to use Warwickshire County's ground at Edgbaston, where the annual Sports event was also held until 1909. In 1902 the *University of Birmingham Magazine* warned that "athletics in the College are not at present the success they might be. This is doubtless owing to the fact that no ground is available but it is hoped that this shortcoming on the part of the authorities will soon be remedied."



1908



1910



1911

BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY'S ANNUAL SPORTS EVENT OF 1908 AT WARWICKSHIRE COUNTY CRICKET GROUND IN EDGBASTON TESTED RUNNING, JUMPING, HURDLING AND THROWING THE CRICKET BALL. AFTER THE OPENING OF THE CAMPUS PLAYING FIELDS THE SPORTS OF 1910 AND 1911 WERE RECORDED IN GLOSSY MONTAGES BY THE UNIVERSITY PRESS.



1902

"OUR RUGBY FOOTBALL TEAM, IF REPRESENTATIVE, WOULD BE ONE OF THE STRONGEST COMBINATIONS IN THE MIDLANDS" WROTE THE UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM MAGAZINE WISTFULLY IN 1902, WHEN THIS PHOTO OF THE TEAM WAS TAKEN. BIRMINGHAM'S POTENTIAL WAS BETTER FULFILLED LATER BY THE SOCCER CLUB, WHICH TOURED TO PRAGUE IN 1913 AND (PICTURED HERE) COPENHAGEN IN 1914.



1914

Despite the difficult circumstances of building a new university from scratch, benefactors including Joe Chamberlain responded to this call, opening four tennis courts at in the university grounds by 1904, to which a pavilion was added, and improved grounds, changing rooms and new balls were provided for the Rugby Club the following year. In 1909, the grounds still in use today alongside the new sports centre on Bristol Road were opened with the new buildings by King Edward VII. Though some early hockey fixtures were called off, and *The Mermaid* reported that the 1910 Sports were spoiled by the "sodden, greasy ground" of Bournbrook fields, they became the permanent home of sport at Birmingham and the basis from which the facilities developed. By 1913 King Edward's School on Edgbaston Park Road – on whose generosity the BUAC had relied for home fixtures in the past – was asking permission to use the University's grounds at Bournbrook.

There were similarly critical but ambitious comments about the scale of student participation and enthusiasm in Birmingham's

early years: it was true that at times teams were short of players and that some sports including soccer and swimming went into abeyance for years at a time. The Student Handbook exhorted its readers to "play for your Varsity, and not outside clubs. While here you should be zealous for its reputation, your first duty is with it. If you do not play, you can at least turn up to matches and shout for Birmingham." In the *University of Birmingham Magazine* complained that fewer than fifty competitors had entered the annual Sports event, and asked its readers "how can the chosen few, the small minority of athletic enthusiasts, make any headway if they cannot depend on the support of the multitude?"

However, this frustration was mainly a sign of the tension between the noble aspirations of the critics and the limited resources at hand. In a university with barely 1,000 students, the Rugby and Hockey sections regularly fielded three teams for dozens of competitive fixtures; there were 65 in the tennis club, which won cups at local tournaments such as the Priory's. The cricket club played up to 25 matches in a short summer season and the Cycling Club could

recruit two dozen members and go on 18 runs. By 1913 the Association Football Club could justify a tour to Prague and the Swimming Club had its own gala at Kent Street Baths.

Birmingham had yet to produce athletes of national standing, and it was true that a small number of students reappeared as supporters of different sports or in successive years (the Victor Ludorum trophy, for example, was won outright twice in the university's first twelve years). But by the time the First World War broke out, the university had set up the organisation to promote a range of sports which enjoyed the support of the university leadership. Notably, too, the BUAC had encouraged women students to take part in competitive sports and in the administration of the Club as Committee members. This was a firm foundation on which to build.

FROM NATIONAL TO INTERNATIONAL: BIRMINGHAM'S EARLY SUCCESSES

5000-metre runner R.A.S. Castell (near right) won England's only Gold medal at the first international student games in Paris in 1923. That year he graduated in Chemistry at Birmingham, and earned an MSc three years later. In between, Castell was Birmingham's *Victor Ludorum* of 1925. Birmingham's J.G. Helps (far right) won Gold in the 1500 metres at the University Games of 1930 at Darmstadt despite what *The Mermaid* called "the very rough tactics of the opposition."



BETWEEN THE WARS



After a period of abeyance during the First World War, Birmingham's students resumed their active commitment to sport. Over the next twenty years the University's athletes and players forged links with national and international bodies, claimed some high profile prizes and developed their facilities in a challenging environment.

New sections and teams were organised offering sports to Birmingham students not available before the war. By the end of the 1930s the Athletics Club sponsored sections in a dozen sports, two-thirds of which – including newcomers squash and lacrosse – were played by women. Soccer and rugby (the latter boasting “a very large membership” in the early 1930s) expanded to four regular teams, and the runners established a Harriers team. Each of these sections organised fixtures against other Varsity teams, the King Edward's Schools in Birmingham and Stratford, and local amateur clubs.

The University was still moving to Edgbaston from its city centre premises, and this meant that, on occasion, facilities continued to be outrun by the energy and ambition of athletes and players. With no dedicated university pool, men swam at Woodcock Street and Tiverton Road baths, women at Kent Street. Boxers shared the top floor of the old student union building in Edmund Street with the Drama Society. Squash was played at Edgbaston Lawn Tennis Club on Edgbaston Park Road, where the 'Tennis Courts' student accommodation now stands. The playing fields continued to require investment in their drainage, and the 1926 annual sports tournament had to be cancelled altogether because of the General Strike.

Nonetheless, with the support of new Vice Chancellor Charles Grant Robertson, improvements in facilities were made. Robertson set up a Standing Joint Advisory Committee for student affairs in 1921 to address the need for better sporting amenities. “We must not forget”,

he warned the University Council in 1923, “that a strong corporate spirit in athletic life may be a real stimulus to intellectual activities”; he was gratified six years later that, after a new gift of land from the Calthorpe family, “the playing fields will be at the doors of the laboratories and lecture rooms. None of our provincial rivals will be better off in this respect than we shall be.”

Tennis players had sixteen hard and grass courts at their disposal by the early 1930s, when a grant of £5,000 (approaching £200,000 today) was secured from the Treasury to pay for two new pitches with a shelter for hockey, and a new pavilion by the main playing fields. A Head Groundsman was appointed, and athletes, members of the soccer, boxing and squash sections sometimes had access to professional training. The student-run Athletics Club was spending £1,200 a year at this point, the equivalent of over £40,000 today, of which the lion's share went on travel to away fixtures and the entertainment of visitors, but

THE 1920-21 BUAFC FIRST TEAM WAS CAPTAINED BY ASTON VILLA AND ENGLAND AMATEUR MIDFIELDER W.E. BARNIE-ADSHEAD (FRONT AND CENTRE, WITH THE CLUB BEAR). THE BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY HARRIERS OF 1930 WERE THE FIRST EVER NATIONAL CHAMPIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS UNION.

1921



1930



1930s



BIRMINGHAM STUDENTS COMPETING IN THE ANNUAL SPORTS TOURNAMENT IN THE EARLY 1930S. THE TUG-O'-WAR TEAM PICTURED HERE WAS ONE OF TWO FORMED BY STUDENTS IN THE MINING DEPARTMENT, WHICH HAD ITS OWN RUGBY TEAM. THE CROWD BRAVING THE WEATHER TO WATCH THE ATHLETES WERE DESCRIBED BY THE UNIVERSITY GAZETTE AS 'THE REAL HEROES OF THE SPORTS'.

other costs included referees, instructors, a band, a dance and the services of the police for the annual sports.

At the end of the inter-war period the University made its biggest investment in sports with the opening in 1939 of a purpose-built and fully-staffed gymnasium – in use until the opening of the new buildings in 2016 – with ancillary rooms and three squash courts at a cost of £15,000 met by the University Grants Committee, the National Committee for Physical Fitness and the Neville Chamberlain Physical Fitness Fund.

With this improved activity and facilities came a higher profile for the university's sports outside Birmingham. Birmingham University Athletics Club was amongst the founding members in 1919 of the Inter-Varsity Athletics Board and in 1923 of the Women's IVAB. Birmingham's tennis and soccer teams were national IVAB champions in 1926. When the IVAB became the Universities Athletic Union in 1930, Birmingham goalkeeper R.C. Tewkesbury became Captain of the UAU soccer team where he played alongside two fellow Birmingham

students, and the Birmingham cross-country team were UAU champions. Birmingham's playing fields were used as training grounds for the national student rugby and hockey teams. Most impressively, BUAC committee member R.A.S. Castell won England's sole victory at the first International Universities Championships in Paris in 1923, claiming Gold in the 5000 metres. Castell remained at Birmingham until 1928, winning the Victor Ludorum trophy at the 1925 sports. The Gold for the 1500 metres was taken at the International University Games at Darmstadt in 1930 by Birmingham's Joseph G. Helps despite what *The Mermaid* called "the very rough tactics of the opposition." Four members of Birmingham's Swimming Club were also selected to represent Great Britain at Darmstadt, competing in water polo, the relay team, and reaching the semi-final of the back stroke.

Birmingham had also begun to nurture talent to compete beyond the student community. In Rugby, R.C. Cameron played for the North Midlands RFC; and the 1923 BUAC Annual Meeting gave commendations to committee members Phyllis Scarlett for keeping "a regular place in the England Women's Hockey team"

and W.E. Barnie-Adshead, capped as centre-half for England's amateur soccer squad.

Scarlett, who also played for Staffordshire and the Midlands, won 19 England caps in all between 1922 and 1928, whilst she read Science and then Social Studies at Birmingham. Barnie-Adshead was a local boy whose father was the mayor of Dudley. He became a Birmingham undergraduate during the First World War and remarkably graduated in Science at the age of 19 before qualifying in Medicine at 22. A leading figure in the post-war revival of sport at Birmingham, Barnie-Adshead captained the soccer, cricket and lawn tennis teams whilst playing three seasons for Aston Villa and winning a place in Worcester County Cricket first team until giving up competitive sport to focus on his medical career in 1925. Barnie-Adshead became surgeon to the Birmingham Women's Hospital; but he continued to encourage Birmingham University's students to engage in sport as Assistant to Dame Hilda Lloyd, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Medical School, and as Captain of Edgbaston Golf Club.

All of this progress, however, looked limited by comparison with the step change which took place following the arrival in 1938 of Sir Raymond Priestley as Vice Chancellor at Birmingham. Priestley was the survivor of Antarctic expeditions with both Ernest Shackleton and R.F. Scott, and had won a Military Cross in the First World War before establishing the Scott Polar Research Centre and becoming a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge. Leaving the Vice-Chancellorship of Melbourne for Birmingham, Priestley immediately established a Physical Education Committee with student representation briefed "to supervise physical education generally." The already integral role of sport at Birmingham University was about to experience a power surge.



Priestley exploring Antarctica before the First World War. Courtesy of University of Melbourne Archives.



Sir Raymond Priestley (1886-1974) explored the Antarctic with both Shackleton and Scott before becoming Vice-Chancellor at Birmingham in 1938. He established the University's Physical Education Committee, its Physical Education undergraduate programme, and saw the opening of the University Sports Centre which was in use until 2016.

PLACES TO PLAY: EARLY INVESTMENT IN BIRMINGHAM'S SPORTS FACILITIES

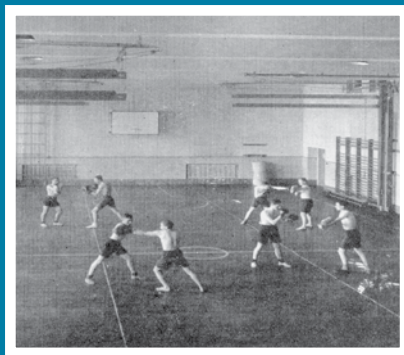


The demands of a growing student population were met by a new athletics track in 1952 (above, seen in the late 1960s), the sports centre opened in 1965 (left), with a swimming pool added in 1977, named after A.D. Munrow, Birmingham's pioneering Director of Sport. Minister of Sport Denis Howell conducted the ceremony (right).





Before and after: the playing fields at Bournbrook – still in use today – were opened with the other buildings at Edgbaston by King Edward VII in 1909. Students initially complained of the “sodden, greasy ground” of the new pitches, but they came to be the training ground of national student teams. Eighty years after their opening, the fields were given their modern synthetic surfaces.



The gymnasium opened in 1939 was a state-of-the-art facility at the time, with squash and fives courts, a fully-fitted hall (above, left in use for boxing), and offices for Birmingham’s developing corps of sports staff.



The Priestley Centre, opened in 1981 on the western shore of Coniston Water in the Lake District, provides a fantastic setting for sailing, windsurfing, kayaking, rafting and canoeing. Surrounding Lakeland fells offer opportunities for climbing, abseiling, gorge walking and hill walking. Towering above the Centre is the Old Man of Coniston – the highest of the Coniston fells, with views of the Isle of Man, Yorkshire Dales and the rest of the Lake District fells.

1940-81: THE MUNROW ERA



One of Priestley's proudest achievements was his work for "the medical care and physical development of the university student" and the optimism of post-war reconstruction added to the urgency of his ambitions. The Vice-Chancellor reflected in his diary that "it is good to be rid of the war. Let us show our relief not by taking things easy, or by diverting excess energy into ragging or exhibitionism, but by putting more into, and getting more out of university mental, social and athletic life." He reminded the University's Court of Governors early in 1946 that "our educational objective is not the production of the misanthrope genius in an underdeveloped C III body. Such men are dangerous." This aim was sought using a comprehensive programme unprecedented in any modern university, and to implement it Priestley sought a special leader who was to leave his mark on sport at local, national and international levels: Albert Davis ('Dave') Munrow.

Priestley recruited Munrow, a former university footballer and schoolteacher, from Carnegie College in Leeds where he had learned and developed a distinctive philosophy of physical education which stressed both public participation and rigorous methods of improvement. This was put into practice at Birmingham in two ways: study of physical education at degree level for the first time anywhere in Britain; and compulsory physical recreation for all new undergraduates.

Birmingham's taught programme in Physical Education began in 1946, contributing modules to the degrees in the Faculty of Arts. The programme was in Munrow's view intended both to prepare teachers of P.E. in a way which was integrated with other academic training, but also to establish a core for a wider undergraduate life in which physical education was embedded. The course had support from the University authorities, and Munrow claimed it had "attracted considerable and favourable

interest from American and colonial universities". D.R. Hardman, the Parliamentary Secretary for Education, had eagerly anticipated the new programme at a conference of sports leaders in July. Nonetheless, some observers were more sceptical, and Munrow himself found their reactions "maddeningly self-satisfied and conservative." The course started with one student and at first struggled to recruit suitable applicants, but by the time Munrow retired it had over a hundred undergraduates and a Masters programme, and most universities had followed Birmingham's lead, often imitating its original combination of approaches to the study of physical education and sport.

Dave Munrow set the standard for his colleagues in terms of his work at the University and beyond, reflecting not only upon sport and the teaching of sport but upon its role in society. He undertook research with Barbara Knapp questioning the development of generalised sports skills; contributed a string of articles to everything from

the *Journal of Physical Education to Coaching Newsetter* and *Advancement of Science*; and published standard works including *Pure and Applied Gymnastics* and influential reports such as *Britain in the World of Sport*. He took his research to conferences of the World Congress of Physical Education and UNESCO around the globe, and made his voice heard in the national policy-making debate at home. Munrow was invited to join the committee headed by Sir John Wolfenden investigating sport in Great Britain during 1958-60, and made a major contribution to its report, *Sport and the Community*. Though not disposed to put its proposal for a national Sports Council to encourage public participation into practice, the new Sports Minister Denis Howell was persuaded by Munrow, together with University colleagues Denis Molyneux and Peter McIntosh, to concede: "My opinion of him was so high", said Howell, "that I would have readily involved him in any way that he chose." Naturally Munrow became a member of the Sports Council and later drafted the European 'Sport for All' charter, for which he was commended by a conference of European sports ministers. In 1967 Munrow was awarded the OBE for services to sport. Remembering all this, former

England Football Manager Walter Winterbottom paid tribute to Munrow: "All excellent things are rare. In the field of physical education, Dave Munrow was a singularly gifted man."

Munrow recruited staff reflecting his faith in academic inquiry coupled with practical experience, and the Birmingham Physical Education Department team trained and researched at the highest levels. Amongst these were Max Madders, a former international swimmer who joined Birmingham in 1940, helped pupils at Kings Norton Boys' School during the war, encouraged Birmingham undergraduates as President of the Swimming Club, and made appearances to give swimming advice on children's television. He also went on to help develop the Amateur Swimming Association's training programme, writing their standard text *Swimming and Swimming Strokes* in 1953. In 1956 Madders coached the British Olympic swimming team which brought back one of the country's six gold medals. Nonetheless Madders remembered later the ambiguity about P.E. which prevailed: "In those early days, there was some doubt about the standing of the Department of Physical Education, and whereas Dave was

1946



PIONEERING THE FIRST UNDERGRADUATE COURSES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION BROUGHT BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY SOME GENTLE MOCKERY FROM THE PRESS IN 1946, BUT BOTH THE PROGRAMME AND THE DEPARTMENT PROSPERED AND WERE WIDELY COPIED.

clearly on the Academic Staff, there was some discussion as to whether I should go to the Hall Porter for my wages at the end of the week or not."

Alongside Madders worked Bill Slater, a footballer whose playing record at national and international levels was matched only by his commitment to the teaching and promotion of physical education. Slater was the last man to play in an FA Cup final as an amateur (for Blackpool in 1951) and won the Cup nine years later leading Wolverhampton Wanderers, the year he was voted Footballer of the Year. He played for Great Britain in the Helsinki Olympics of 1952, and he won 20 England caps as an amateur and twelve as a professional, six earned at the World Cup of 1958.

Slater blended these achievements remarkably with his teaching responsibilities at Birmingham and with an increasing role in national sports administration. A clause in Slater's contract at Birmingham required him to put his University responsibilities before his playing career, so he took an unpaid six-month leave of absence for the World Cup. "Compared with today", says

Radio Five Live's Mark Pougatch, "it is extraordinary to think that someone who wasn't even a full-time pro could play in the World Cup and that the honour might have cost him financially."

In 1961 Bill Slater was recruited to the Central Advisory Council for Education in England, and in 1974 he joined the Sports Council. He had two years earlier taken over from Munrow as Director of Physical Education at Birmingham, where he stayed until he became the Sports Council's full-time Head of Sports Development in 1984. He was manager of the British Universities football squad for ten years, and President of British Gymnastics from 1989-99, having coached his daughter Barbara to take part in the British gymnastics team at the Montreal Olympic Games in 1976.

Priestley and Munrow gave a second legacy to sport at Birmingham: participation by the whole student and staff body in recreational sport. Initially, and distinctively, Birmingham made this compulsory for all new undergraduates from 1940 onwards, who after assessment by Medical students were counselled towards the activity

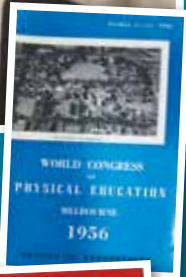
which would best strengthen their fitness. The first, Max Madders remembered, was an Egyptian Prince who asked for both Munrow and Madders to watch him undertake vaulting: by the mid-1970s the programme came to embrace 5,000 students taking classes in 32 activities from the main team games to Movement to Music (particularly popular with staff) and roller skating on the roof of the old gym. Some new students were resistant to any sort of compulsion, and repeated battles were fought to keep other departments from running Wednesday afternoon classes; but even after compulsion ended in 1968, the recreational programme went from strength to strength, and over a decade later was providing weekly sporting activity for 85 per cent of first year undergraduates.

This scale of sporting activity with an ever-growing student population called for more facilities: Munrow complained in the 1950s of the "nightmare" of trying to provide over two thousand visitors a week with the chance to play sport, and the prospect that his own students would have to take priority without more space, buildings and equipment. Accordingly one of Priestley's last duties as Vice-Chancellor in 1952

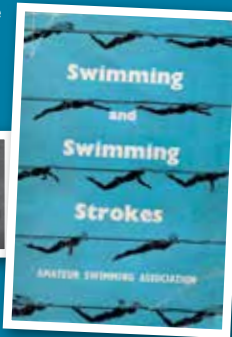
STAFF OF THE NEW DEPARTMENT



Albert Davis ('Dave') Munrow OBE, founder of the Department of Physical Education at Birmingham, and inspiration of the Sports Council. Munrow established Birmingham's place on the international stage of physical education.



Swimmer Max Madders lectured at Birmingham under Munrow whilst writing the standard ASA training text and, seen here on Movietone newsreel, coaching the British team for the Melbourne Olympics.



Bill Slater worked at Birmingham whilst he won the FA cup, twelve full England caps, and was named FA Player of the Year before taking over from Munrow as Director of Sport in 1972.



was to unveil the running track which, according to the Student Guild, was “considered by many reliable judges to be the finest in the country”, and which remained in use until 2015. By 1964, new workshop buildings were in place at the University’s playing fields at Wast Hills. Architects’ plans had been drawn up in the late 1950s for a new sports hall to include small and large gymnasias with spectators’ seating, eight squash courts, staff flats and offices, a lecture theatre, seminar rooms, a health centre incorporating a dentists’ practice, pharmacy and physiology laboratory; a cinescopic laboratory, film editing room and cinema, a music room, an ice rink, a rifle range, a roof terrace, a boat house by the canal, and a space-age swimming pool on legs atop the main building.

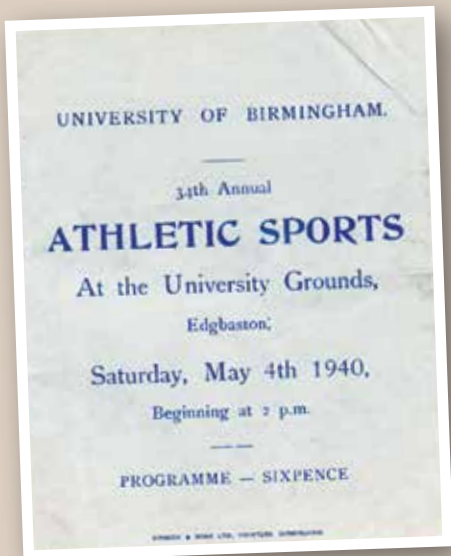
Whilst not all of these ambitions remained desirable or affordable, the new sports centre was eventually opened by Denis Howell in 1965, boasting a playing area and tennis courts as well as rooms for weight-lifting and dance. It was, as the University’s own Annual Report noted, “apt and fitting, and to all his friends most welcome, that Sir Raymond Priestley was present at the opening, for it was he who

brought the Physical Education Department into existence on the principle that university life should be a full life, in which the body is partner to the mind.” Straightened economic circumstances meant that the swimming pool had to wait another twelve years to be opened, again by Howell, and that it was a conventional ground-floor affair. It was right that this was the moment chosen, with the support of Munrow’s widow Hilda who had worked with him to build up the Department, to add his name to the University sports centre which was to serve as the hub of the activity of Munrow’s department for another forty years.

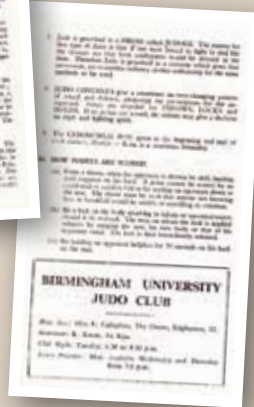
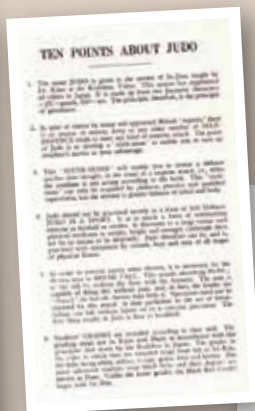
Finally a University centre for outdoor pursuits at Hoathwaite in the Lake District was named after Priestley and its first phase was built in 1976. Priestley himself had accompanied students and staff camping at the site led by Max Madders in the 1940s; now permanent accommodation, surrounded by protected landscape on the edge of Coniston Water made an idyllic base for orienteering, rock climbing and sailing as well as for geological field work. In the first year after the project was completed in 1981, over 3,000 Birmingham students, staff and their families

used the Priestley Centre, and it has remained a source of inspiration and education for Birmingham students ever since. It forms a lasting memorial to the explorer who had laid the foundations of Birmingham’s unique sporting traditions forty years before.

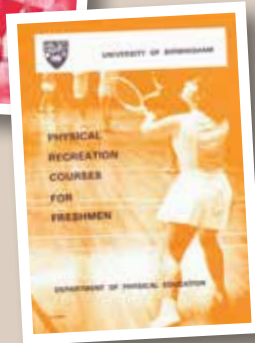
THIS PROGRAMME SHOWS THAT BIRMINGHAM'S ANNUAL SPORTS EVENT KEPT GOING AFTER WAR HAD BROKEN OUT. IN 1940 THERE WERE OVER A HUNDRED COMPETITORS, TWENTY-NINE EVENTS AND FIVE TROPHIES.



INVITATION TO JUDO, 1957:
WITH THEIR CLUB LESS THAN A YEAR OLD, BIRMINGHAM UNDERGRADUATES TOOK THE TROUBLE TO EXPLAIN TEN KEY POINTS ABOUT JUDO TO RECRUIT MEMBERS TO THE CLUB.



RECREATIONAL SPORTS
BROCHURES 1974 AND 1975:
SEVEN YEARS AFTER BIRMINGHAM ENDED ITS SYSTEM OF COMPULSORY SPORT, FOUR OUT OF FIVE NEW UNDERGRADUATES ENROLLED IN ITS PROGRAMME OF RECREATIONAL SPORTS.



RECENT LEADERS: BIRMINGHAM STUDENTS WHO HAVE JOINED THE BEST IN THE WORLD IN THE TWENTY- FIRST CENTURY

'These young sportsmen and women are the cream of the crop, both on and off the pitch. We are hoping to inspire our employees through opportunities to get them together with the players, so that they can understand what a winning mindset can do in business as well as sport.'

EH Smith Ltd. on sponsoring Birmingham's eight hockey teams

'The University of Birmingham changed my life by giving me the platform and confidence to pursue my sporting goals.'

Paul Manning



Paul Manning graduated in Earth Sciences in 1996 before winning bronze, silver and gold medals as a Team Pursuit Cyclist for Team GB at the Olympics of 2004, 2008 and 2012. He went on to coach Team GB Olympic cyclists, and was especially thanked by Laura Trott after her double gold win at Rio in 2016.

'Playing for the University added dimensions to my game.'

Izzy Christiansen



Birmingham's Lioness: Birmingham Sports Scholar Izzy Christiansen played football for the University, Birmingham City, Everton and Manchester City before her call up to the senior England squad. In 2016 she collected the award for FA Women's Players' Player of the Year.

Photo courtesy of the FA



Two champion triathletes: Chrissie Wellington (above) and Rachel Joyce won the ITU Long Distance World Championship in 2008 and 2011. Chrissie studied Geography at Birmingham; Rachel read Politics and Law. Chrissie holds the four fastest times in the World Ironman competition, was voted *Sunday Times* sportswoman of the year in 2009, and received an OBE in 2016.



From Sydney to Rio: Birmingham University has produced no fewer than six Team GB hockey players since 2000. The first goal in the final match of the gold-medal winning women's team at Rio was scored by a partnership of Birmingham graduate Sophie Bray and Lily Owsley, then still at the University, who took the selfie above with her team-mates.

Image courtesy of Team GB

'The University of Birmingham was the springboard to greatness for me.'

Chrissie Wellington

1981-2015: THE ERA OF SPORTS SCIENCES



The 1980s were a time of dramatic change for Higher Education and for sport at universities in particular, and Birmingham University responded to this with a transformation of its own. As the university sector suffered significant funding cuts and pressure for research performance and measurable achievement intensified, the provision of sport at Birmingham changed its name and direction, but not its standards.

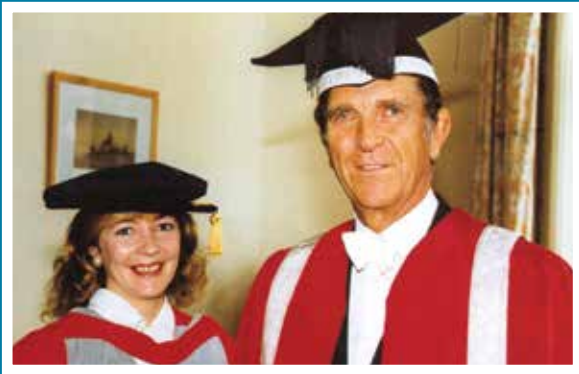
1983 saw the end of the Physical Education Committee set up by Sir Raymond Priestley, and the following year Bill Slater, who had first joined the University in the 1950s, stepped down as Director of Physical Education. The next four years saw the Physical Education degree programme moved from Arts to Sciences, staff recruitment and department activity directed more exclusively towards academic research, and the change of the degree's name to Sport and Exercise Sciences. These changes were not universally welcomed: some saw them as a departure from the

commitment to teacher training, the practical application of theory and the encouragement of recreational sport throughout the university (by then involving 1,600 students) which had been the hallmarks of Munrow's approach; they feared that the new arrangements were a concession to a mixture of government pressures and academic snobbery, and pointed to Physical Education programmes at other universities which had made themselves vulnerable by competing with pure academic research departments. Former professional footballer and Minor Counties cricketer Iain Moir, then lecturing in the department, remembers that "there was a great deal of sadness at the end of the Munrow system. Inevitably, it took some time to adjust."

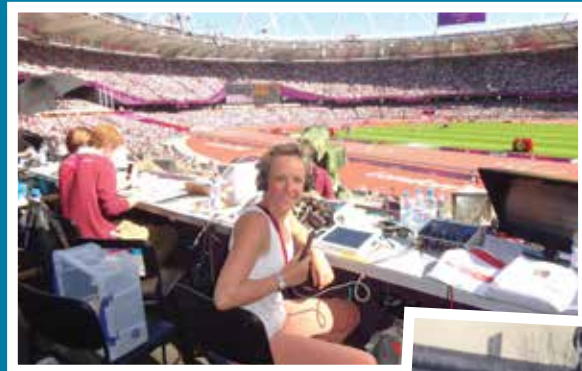
1989 was a landmark year as the University transferred management of facilities and recreation programmes from the School of Sport and Exercise Sciences to the Estates Management Office. Keith Madeley was

appointed as the first Director of Sport of this new era, and built new facilities funded from loans from the University and various external grants. These included new floodlit synthetic pitches at Bournbrook, a new reception and café for the Munrow Centre, a gymnastics centre and 3 glass-backed squash courts. These developments were largely funded via an increase in annual income generation from £225,000 in 1990 to around £1.5m by the time of Keith's retirement in 2003, and subsequently to £3.5m by 2016.

The other major change during this period was the transfer of the Athletic Union in 1999 from the Guild of Students to the Foundation for Sport, which comprised facilities, classes, an applied performance sport unit, the Athletic Union and the Raymond Priestley Centre. It was one of the first integrated sport set-ups in British Universities, and resulted in significantly enhanced resources for student clubs.



Birmingham Geography graduate Lisa Clayton became the first woman to sail the globe single-handed in 1995. She developed her yacht, The Spirit of Birmingham, at the University, whose Vice Chancellor Sir Michael Thompson awarded her an honorary doctorate.



Allison Curbishley graduated in Sports Sciences at Birmingham, where she helped to test new advances in sports equipment developed by the Sports Medicine and Human Performance Unit before winning silver in the 400 metres at the 1998 Commonwealth Games and representing Britain at the Sydney Olympics. She went on to work as a commentator for BBC Five Live.



Advocates of the changes also argued that they brought status – the head of the newly-titled School C.T.M. Davies was appointed as Professor of Applied Physiology – student recruitment, and funding for research, which could more easily be carried out in conjunction with other science disciplines including Psychology and Biochemistry. This tied in with the University's strategy to establish itself as a 'Centre for Excellence' in the challenging economic environment of the time. In the 1990s, research by Alison McConnell and Mike Caine at the Sports Medicine and Human Performance Unit won two Department of Trade and Industry Smart awards, and developed Powerbreathe, a hand-held device to assist athletes and asthma sufferers with breathing patterns.

In the twenty-first century a significant body of research has been pioneered through the Medawar Centre for Healthy Ageing and the EU-backed Promoting Adolescent Physical Activity project. Birmingham's Professor Asker Jeukendrup has worked with Tour de France cycling teams and Chelsea and Birmingham City football clubs to explore optimal regimes of nutrition in sports, and in 2014 Dr Jennifer

Cumming of the School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences has brought together the Mental Skills Training programme and St Basil's in Birmingham with the support of the Duke of Cambridge to assist physical and mental recovery by homeless young people in the city.

Nor did the University abandon its commitment to wider participation in sport, as the sports centre has recruited 1,000 community members from outside the university, which also provides facilities for fifteen local clubs. The number of student sports clubs grew to over fifty, and the number of students regularly involved in sport to 9,000 (with room to support 13,000 in the new sports centre). In 2011 Sport England awarded £65,000 to Birmingham's 'Who Will You Be?' programme promoting further student sporting activity. Birmingham's Director of Sport since 2003 Zena Wooldridge personifies the University's links with national sporting achievement as Chair of England Squash between 2006 and 2012, before becoming President of the European Squash Federation. In 2009 Zena was awarded the OBE for services to sport.

Pioneering preparation for practical work in sport continues to be a distinction of Birmingham, too. Just as satirists scorned when the University launched the first Physical Education degree course in 1946, the introduction of Birmingham's BSc in Applied Golf Management – the first of its kind – in 2002 initially prompted some raised eyebrows, but the degree has prospered and spawned copies elsewhere. Accredited by the PGA, the course was commended in Universities UK's 2006 report *Higher Level Learning: Universities and Employers Working Together*, and by 2009 it was heavily oversubscribed and its graduates had a full employment rate with a starting salary above the Birmingham University average. Taking office in 2010, Universities Minister David Willetts advised a Birmingham audience: "think of golf management as business studies applied to a particular industry - an industry that's important to this region - and then look at Birmingham's Applied Golf Management Studies degree."

In the last generation sporting competition has become ever more intense, global and professional, and Birmingham has helped

populate the highest ranks of the full range of sports and their supporting organisations.

In 1995 Birmingham Geography graduate Lisa Clayton became the first woman to navigate the globe single-handedly non-stop; under the patronage of Vice-Chancellor and avid sailor Sir Michael Thompson, her yacht *The Spirit of Birmingham* was developed in the laboratories of the School of Manufacturing and Mechanical Engineering. Clayton gave first acknowledgement in the memoir of her achievement to the University “which played such a key part”, and Thompson returned the compliment with an honorary Doctorate of Science noting “the close and friendly relationship between you and the university.”

1997 saw Allison Curbishley graduate in Sports Sciences and win the 400 metres event at the World Student Games and the European Under-23 Championships as well as competing in the relay at the Athens Commonwealth Games. Allison represented Team GB at the Atlanta and Sydney Olympics, and took Silver in the 400 metres at the Commonwealth Games of 1998. That year saw the graduation in

Geography of Chrissie Wellington, winner of four World Ironman triathlete Championships between 2007 and 2011, during which time she also claimed Gold in the ITU Long Distance World Championship. That title was won in 2011 by Birmingham Politics and Law graduate Rachel Joyce, who started by joining the University swimming team for its social life. Birmingham alumni amongst the athletes in Team GB at the 2012 Olympics included Louise Hazel, winner of the heptathlon gold medal at the 2010 Commonwealth games, and adaptive rower Pam Relph gained a degree in Physics at Birmingham before going on to win a gold medal at the London 2012 Paralympic Games. Birmingham Physiotherapy graduate Lora Turnham went one better at the Paralympic Games in Rio, winning Gold and Bronze medals in the Pursuit and Time Trial Cycling events.

Birmingham has continued to produce top-class team players, too: Victor Ubogu played with Moseley RFC (for which the University later acted as a home ground for five years) while picking up a degree in Chemical Engineering in the 1980s before gaining 24 caps for England; his Senior Physiotherapist with the national team was Phil

Pask who graduated from Birmingham in Physical Education, and looked after the England Rugby players through twenty years including the World Cup victory of 2003. David Hemp graduated in 1991, when he began his career as a Glamorgan, Warwickshire and Bermuda cricketer.

In hockey, Birmingham has provided a string of national players: Medicine graduate Tom Bertram played for Great Britain at the Olympics of 2000 and 2004, Simon Mantell joined the national team two years before graduating, also competing in the World Cup, the 2008 Olympics and three Commonwealth Games; and in 2012 Britain's goalkeeper was Birmingham Geography graduate James Fair. The national women's team recruited Susie Gilbert for the 2012 Olympics - Sophie Bray and Lily Owsley for the gold-medal-winning team of 2016. While still an undergraduate, Lily overcame meningitis to win the European Championships and the title of FIH Rising Star for 2016.

The University's most prolific Olympian of recent times is Team Pursuit Cyclist Paul Manning, who came from Lichfield to study Earth Sciences graduating in 1996, and went on to win Bronze,

Silver and Gold at the Olympic tournaments in Sydney, Athens and Beijing. In 2016 Paul coached the Team GB women's cyclists to their remarkable medal haul. Looking back on his career Paul said:

'I'm really proud to have attended the University of Birmingham. My time there certainly changed my life by giving me the platform and confidence to pursue my sporting goals, safe in the knowledge that I had a great education from a well-respected university behind me. I really appreciate the support and interest the University has shown me over the years.'

Most recently, the captain of Birmingham University's women's football team Izzy Christiansen played for Birmingham City Ladies (who train on campus) before graduating in Sports Sciences in 2014, and then joining England's lionesses for the run-up to the 2017 UEFA Women's Tournament, scoring in her first match against Estonia. Izzy, who was named PFA Women's Players' Player of the Year in 2016, said that "playing for the university added dimensions to my game, as they can often get

very heated. It teaches you to be composed."

As the world of sports administration and support has grown, Birmingham graduates have taken their place in its most high-profile and dynamic positions: Sir Patrick Head, founder of the Williams team which dominated Formula One in the 1990s, studied Mechanical Engineering at Birmingham. Former Manchester United Chief Executive David Gill, now the Vice-Chairman of the FA and a member of the UEFA Executive, learned the ropes of finance earning a BCom at Birmingham in 1978. He refused a place on the FIFA Executive in protest at corruption in football, but has been pleased to come back to discuss football finance with Birmingham students more than once in recent years.

Barbara Slater was an Olympic gymnast before graduating in Physical Education at Birmingham in 1981, after which she went on to become the BBC's first female Director of Sport in 2009. In 2014 Barbara was awarded the OBE for services to sports broadcasting. Working as one of Barbara's most senior sports commentators from his graduation in 1990 was another Birmingham alumnus Simon Brotherton, whose

voice and face are familiar to followers of everything from *Match of the Day* to coverage of the Tour de France and Formula One as well as world championship boxing, athletics and World Series baseball. Simon started his BBC career running from lectures on campus to grab casual slots at the BBC West Midlands Pebble Mill studios, reporting from Warwickshire's Edgbaston cricket ground.

2016 saw the appointment of Myra Nimmo, Professor of Exercise Physiology at Birmingham and Pro-Vice-Chancellor Life and Environmental Sciences at Birmingham, as the new Chair of England Athletics. Professor Nimmo is a former Olympic and Commonwealth Games competitor in the 100m hurdles. The England Athletics Nominating Committee commented that "our sport needs a strong and perceptive chair", and that "Myra's experience and expertise make her exactly the person to perform that role."

The sporting facilities at Birmingham have to keep pace with rising demands, and in 2012 the University was awarded a further £2m grant by Sport England towards the University's new £55m sports centre as part of the Olympic

Legacy Iconic Lottery Fund. That year the athletics track first opened by Sir Raymond Priestley sixty years earlier won the role of training facility for the legendary Team Jamaica for two weeks prior to the London Olympics. Usain Bolt expressed the gratitude of the team which went on to win twelve medals including four golds as they celebrated their victory in the 4 x 100 relay:

I'd like to say all the big up to Birmingham University. That's where we trained: they really supported us. We got everything possible. Thank you guys for everything you have done.

From its beginnings over a century ago, the University of Birmingham has celebrated sport for all – at all levels, for all students and across the world. “It occupies”, said Sports Minister Denis Howell, “a unique place in the post-war history of physical education in Britain.” Its players have celebrated the demands of sport on the body, mind and character, and fulfilled their ambitions in all of these. The high standards of that mission will continue to be matched in the future by the highest standards of environment in which to pursue it.



“ALL THE BIG UP TO BIRMINGHAM UNIVERSITY”: IN 2012 MULTIPLE OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL WINNERS TEAM JAMAICA, SEEN HERE WITH DIRECTOR OF SPORTS ZENA WOOLDRIDGE, USED THE UNIVERSITY'S SPORTS FACILITIES TO TRAIN FOR THE LONDON GAMES.

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Our School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences is one of the longest-established in Europe for scientific research into sport, exercise, health and rehabilitation. In 1946 we became the first university in the UK to offer degree courses in physical education. Our research underpins our teaching and investigates topical issues such as the workings of the healthy body and the way in which physical activity promotes health and well-being.

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Thanks to a £16.4 million investment, we boast one of the largest custom-built Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences facilities in the UK. This includes teaching and research laboratories for physiology, biochemistry, psychophysiology, biomechanics, sport psychology, motor skills, immunology, muscle mechanics and the neurophysiology of movement.

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Dr Cole is a Teaching Fellow in History at the University of Birmingham.
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