of Native culture without truly understanding it. There are many textual references to significant events in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Native North American history (such as those at Wounded Knee) but also of accomplished Native performers (such as the 1898 black-and-white photo of violinist Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), artists, and historical figures like Sequoyah, who developed a method of writing the Cherokee language.

There are a few weaknesses in this book, but I do not think they detract from its value. For instance, it is very difficult to track timelines for entries concerning different tribal groups without considerable prior knowledge of their histories. Introductory maps do show tribal areas, as well as culture areas as set out by North American anthropologists, but these do not look after the problem of time. With such an immense span — 1,000 years — covered by the book in only 212 pages, it is inevitable that much material is left out. For instance, some of the tribal groups shown in the introductory First Nations map, such as the Osage and Omaha, have no alphabetical entry. In some respects, the encyclopaedia appears intentionally organized in a more anecdotal fashion to give just a taste of what is actually available. The authors do provide three pages of references for additional reading at the end of the book, including individual tribal histories and an index for names, places, and things that do not have individual entries.

The information which is presented in *The Encyclopedia of the First Peoples of North America* is generally of great interest and highly informative. It is certain to spark interest among readers in looking up additional references. Reading this book cover to cover, as I am sure many will do, should give the interested young reader a rich background in Native history and in political activism. The authors, Rayna Green and Melanie Fernandez, are to be congratulated on presenting an alternative history sourcebook with intelligence, humour, and sophistication. I am sure that sales will reflect the broad appeal of this book.

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Sports Fables

Shut-Out. Camilla Reghelini Rivers. James Lorimer, 2000. 108 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-667-6. ***Queen of the Court.*** Michele Martin Bussley. James Lorimer, 2000. 108 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-702-8. ***Offside.*** Sandra Diersch. James Lorimer, 1999. 101 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-722-2. ***Rookie Season.*** Jacqueline Guest. James Lorimer, 2000. 115 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-724-9. ***Alecia's Challenge.*** Sandra Diersch. James Lorimer, 1999. 101 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-650-1. ***Hockey Heroes.*** John Danakas. James Lorimer, 1998. 95 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-596-3. ***Brothers on Ice.*** John Danakas. James Lorimer, 2001. 102 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-679-X. ***Heads Up.*** Dawn Hunter and Karen Hunter. James Lorimer, 2001. 85 pp. $8.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-718-4.

James Lorimer's *Sports Stories* series now includes over 45 titles. The genre, at least as defined by these eight books (my first encounter with the series), is the sports

fable: each tale is quite economical (if not as compact as Aesop's), features a limited cast of simply-typed characters, and skates its way rather deliberately to a portable moral.

I asked Treva, a former children's librarian who played basketball at university and who now plays soccer in a women's league, to read one. When she finished, she summarized: "In a word — predictable." And, then, after a pause: "Could be worse...." This reaction might be prompted by a great deal of sports writing. Games come with a predictable narrative: same time, same space, same rules, same objectives. If one hockey game is like the next hockey game is like the next hockey game, the hockey writer has to be especially adept in revealing the genius and surprise and nuance of any given game, season, or team.

As I read these books, I kept finding not the surprise but the trace of writer's guidelines for future volumes in the series. It would advise writers to start each book with the opening game of the season; place players in grades eight or nine; incorporate both a big and a small triumph; include meaningful issues — broken families, race, gender, athletic asthma, puberty ("I don't want to go shopping for bras," Alecia tells her mother, "spitting out the last word"); end with a lesson: after the boys in *Hockey Heroes* discover that their coach is a reformed NHL goon who almost killed an opponent, Coach Franklin pontificates, "I think maybe we're on our way to become a real team today, all of us." Look forward to next season.

Still, they could be worse. Formulaic they may be, but I wasn't tempted to immediately set them down. These stories have enough suspense and enough narration to keep even an adult reader interested. And I like the way they give some vague sense of Canadian locale: Vancouver in *Alecia's Challenge*; Winnipeg (even the Goldeyes) in *Shut-Out*; southern Alberta in *Rookie Season*. The grasp of game-specific terms is shaky (there are almost never "centres" in soccer), as is the representation of a thirteen-year-old's conversation and vocabulary. But, if these are the twenty-first-century replacement for *The Hardy Boys* and *Nancy Drew*, then we could do worse.

If you have a daughter playing hockey or a nephew playing soccer, they will like reading the books about their own sport. They may not find them fabulous, but they will enjoy the fabular.

Laurie Ricou *has coached girls' soccer since 1979.*

Where's the Delight in Instruction?

Canadian Children's Books: A Critical Guide to Authors and Illustrators. Raymond E. Jones and Jon C. Stott. Oxford UP, 2000. 538 pp. $29.95 paper. ISBN 0-19541-222-2. ***From Reader to Writer: Teaching Writing Through Classic Children's Books***. Sarah Ellis. Groundwood, 2001. 176 pp. $18.95 paper. ISBN 0-88899-440-0. ***The Gift of Reading***. David Bouchard with Wendy Sutton. Orca, 2001. 158 pp. $19.95 paper. ISBN 1-55143-214-5.

Stories are interesting. Analysis is interesting. Description can be interesting. Instruction is not interesting. These thoughts kept running through my mind as I