In his recent book A Place on the Team: The Triumph and Tragedy of Title IX, Welch Suggs provides an in-depth look at the war that continues to rage over the place for women’s sport in American society. Suggs’ emphasizes the historical context of the enactment and development of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), and his 15 years of experience in covering intercollegiate athletics in higher education as an editor and reporter for the Chronicle of Higher Education, Street & Smith’s SportsBusiness Journal, and The Kansas City Star are an obvious benefit. Suggs was named Associate Director of the Knight Foundation’s Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics in late 2005 (Knight Foundation, 2005).

The book is divided into an introduction, 12 chapters, acknowledgments, nine appendices, numerous endnotes, a bibliography, a list of landmark Title IX lawsuits, and a comprehensive index. The chapters are easy to read and very informative. The appendices provide a host of quality resources for continued research and exploration on Title IX. Suggs prefers to place the relevant Title IX laws at the end of the book.

A fine writer, Suggs actually begins his book like a novel: he sets the tone by engaging the reader in a chilly November morning soccer match between two girls’ soccer teams in the suburbs of Maryland. One can envision this game with remarkable clarity, and Suggs uses the match to support a theme that flows throughout his narrative: namely, that people should play sports for fun, for the camaraderie, and to push themselves (and their bodies) to their limits. Unfortunately he believes that women’s sports have become victims of their own successes by modeling their system after men’s athletic programs. This is another common theme that flows throughout his book.

In Chapter 1, “The Segregated History of College Sports,” Suggs provides the historical foundation for the development of women’s sports programs at the intercollegiate level in the United States. He notes the educational model of women’s sports eventually coming into conflict with the commercialized model of men’s sports. This conflict led to the acrimonious struggle for power between the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) over women’s sports in college.

The depth of Suggs’ analysis of the Democrat and Republican political tug-of-war over Title IX enactment, interpretation, and enforcement is second to none, as is demonstrated in Chapter 2, “A New Paradigm of Civil Rights.” In Chapter 3, “Heroines as well as Heroes,” Suggs demonstrates the success of Title IX and its impact on women’s sports. He confirms the struggle for power between the NCAA and the AIAW in particular—the awarding of scholarships for athletic talent and the
emphasis on recruiting high school girls was a major change in philosophy away from AIAW ideals. Later in the book Suggs claims that the successes of women’s programs such as University of Tennessee Lady Vols basketball, University of North Carolina soccer, and others have presented a pyrrhic victory for women’s sport advocates (Chapter 6, “The First Generation”). To Suggs, the emphasis on pursuing a college scholarship in women’s sports has actually hurt high school instruction by putting high school sports secondary to girls’ club sports and its private world of coaching and instruction.

Throughout the book, Suggs ventures into areas often ignored by other Title IX authors. For example, in chapter 9, “Sports before College,” Suggs addresses the struggles for equality female for female athletes among state high school athletic associations, but he immediately follows up with the perspective from advocates from the now-decimated men’s collegiate wrestling programs in chapter 10, “The Wrestlers’ Response.” In Chapter 11 (“The Tragedy”), Suggs offers a unique perspective by presenting data to support the fact that women suffer anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) damage at a much higher rate than men. He then suggests, however, that the reasons for such injuries are often debated as fiercely as Title IX itself. Suggs even addresses an area that few are willing to explore: the negative impact of Title IX on minority women in sports and the subsequent rift that exists among Title IX advocates because some have claimed women’s sport has become too white and too suburban. Suggs final chapter, (chapter 12, “Triumph?”), demonstrates that Title IX has succeeded but not without a price. For instance, Suggs indicates that the University of Maryland redefined women’s cheerleading as a competitive sport in 2003 in part to avoid having to cut men’s teams to comply with Title IX.

After reading this book, one would likely feel quite educated about the positive impact and effect that the 1972 law has had in promoting equality for women and girls in sport at the intercollegiate and high school levels. Suggs’ keen narrative, quality research, and entertaining journalistic writing style is captivating at times. Readers will find that, as Suggs puts it, the triumphs and tragedies of Title IX have resulted not only from women’s issues but also from the clash of old school ideals of amateur sport participation with the hypercompetitive balance-sheet driven intercollegiate sports world of today. Although Suggs suggests that it is possible to resolve Title IX issues by professionalizing intercollegiate sports, this is certainly not a new idea.

This book would be an excellent resource for required and optional reading in any course involving sport law and gender-equity issues in sport at any level of post-graduate instruction. It would also serve as a model resource for the history and development of women’s sport in colleges and universities in the United States. Further, the inclusion of the laws and interpretations makes the use of this book much appreciated by instructors and students who prefer to explore the historical, political, and sociological discourse of Title IX yet recognize the reading of these laws is essential to educating oneself on Title IX.

References

Smith and Westerbeek’s book is interesting because it makes you think. It is about future scenarios and as such it is a useful addition to the literature. Much of the book, however, is about the impact of computers on sport management and marketing. In and of itself, the book involves a fair amount of crystal-ball gazing and some science fiction. The text has nothing on mainstream organizational theory or organizational behavior. According to the authors, the text has at its heart “the dual threads of change and strategy” (p. 6), yet it does not mention any of the current literature on change or strategy, nor does it discuss the impact that computers might have on the change process or any of the strategies that are used by organizations.

In many ways the book does not go far enough, and, consequently, there are a number of things that could be added that would enhance it. For example, the first six chapters are dedicated to the impact of technology on sport management. Although these chapters are sprinkled with words such as nanobots and other computer jargon, they contain nothing on such basic technologies as e-mail and fax machines and the impact that these might have on the structure and processes of sport organizations. The book also contains nothing on sport-related gambling and fantasy leagues, two of the areas that promise to make the most of computer technology in the coming years. In terms of manufacturing organizations in the sport industry, no mention is made of AIT (Advanced Information Technology), CIM (computer-integrated manufacturing), or CAD (computer-assisted design). To suggest that these will not have an influence on the sport business in the future is naïve at best. Companies such as Nike, Adidas, and Huffy have already incorporated some of these into their manufacturing processes. Chapters 7 and 8 focus on the power of sport, as a vehicle of community action. Chapter 9 examines the power of culture as a variable in the future of sport business and as a mitigator of technological progression. Yet again, there is no mention of the culture literature, either that which deals with organizations or the culture literature in general.

Chapter 10, “The New Frontiers of Sport Business,” goes back to the theme of technological developments in sport business and entertainment. The chapter finishes with a commentary on some of the current issues in management and the marketing of sport enterprises. In discussing the impact of computer technology on sport, Smith and Westerbeek do not consider the ethical and moral implications that this technology has and will have on athletes and organizations. A related text that considers this aspect of the impact of technology on genetically modified athletes is Miah’s (2004) *Genetically Modified Athletes* (incidentally not referenced).

In Chapter 8 (on community action), Smith and Westerbeek discuss the impact of the Sydney Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games’ attempt at being recognized as the Green Games. Although the authors mention hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), they do not go into great detail about the impact that Coca-Cola and
McDonald’s refrigeration efforts had on the environment. It also fails to address the efforts of Greenpeace to prevent Coca-Cola and McDonald’s from using HFCs in their refrigeration.

The book also discusses organizational survival à la Darwin, yet it fails to incorporate population ecology, a branch of organizational theory that deals with this approach to organizations. This omission detracts from the large amount of data that Smith and Westerbeek have collected, but it also demonstrates their lack of knowledge about mainstream organizational theory. As Smith and Westerbeek note,

To suggest that sport will save the world is hyperbole at its extreme. To imply, as [they] have done on several occasions already, that sport (or rather the sport business) can be a major contributor to, if not a leader in, environmental concern, is, however, perfectly rational and responsible. (p. 147)

The text would actually go some way toward achieving this goal if it undertook a more substantive case study of a corporation that had introduced some aspects of computer technology into its operation and the problems it had faced in this task. Smith and Westerbeek follow Slaughter (2002) in this regard. Slaughter suggests that a deeper analysis of problems is required in future studies. Smith and Westerbeek provide a foundation for these future studies but do not go far enough in investigating actual situations in which computers and computer technology have played a role. There are numerous examples of this type of situation in both the academic and popular literature. Although they provide a basis for this type of thinking, the authors need to go farther if they are going to contribute to our understanding of the sport business. As noted above, they also need to suggest what type of organizations this thinking applies to. Given the vast range of organizations that make up the sport business, it is incumbent on them to provide some direction in this regard.

**References**
