

Philip Abrams Memorial Prize

2016 Joint Winner

Seriousness and Women's Roller Derby: Gender, Organization and Ambivalence

By Maddie Breeze

As a new, women-led, self-organized and not-for-profit amateur sport, women's flat track roller derby initially represented an overt challenge to a broader sports culture.

Drawing on in-depth ethnographic research with a UK league, this book presents an analysis of skaters' concerns with 'getting taken seriously', traces changes in self-representation and do-it-yourself organization, and develops a sociological account of seriousness in practice.



As skaters face the problem of how to achieve serious recognition without entirely negating those aspects of roller derby as initially critical and subversive of 'sport' and gender, Breeze focuses on moments when claims for serious recognition simultaneously refuse the terms of such recognition. Breeze argues that seriousness is an issue of gender contestation, a problem of bureaucratic organization, and the site of ambivalent, generative agency.

This sociological account of seriousness furthers debate on gender, organization and the mid ranges of agency between dichotomies of voluntarism and determinism.

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