

Weird Sports and Wacky Games around the World: From Buzkashi to Zorbing. By Victoria Williams. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2015. 369 pages. Acid free \$89 (ISBN: 978-1-61069-639-5). E-book available (978-1-61069-640-1), call for pricing.

Write a book about a topic so “weird and wacky” that no one has addressed it before and *voilà*, you have *the* reference title in your field. Williams, an Englishwoman, found her niche by describing activities “that may be less familiar to American readers.” This includes sports as popular outside the US as cricket and events as obscure to everyone outside the U.K. as the Cotswold Olimpicks.

None of the “games” are played on tables; all require some degree of physical skill or exertion. Many are “folk” sports, which is to say old and identified with a particular ethnic culture, but others are newly invented, such as lawnmower racing. Some are pub games, some are ball games, some involve animals—including sports in which animals are killed.

Even 103 entries will come up short for such a global subject; there is no entry for pickleball! Still, the entries are presented well. They are organized alphabetically and there

are two guides by which a reader can search for sports by geographic region or by theme (e.g., Competitive Transport sports). In its entry, the sport is described and relevant history is provided, along with “see also” internal cross-references and suggestions for further reading. Several black and white photographs are included, as are a bibliography and an index.

As indicated, it seems Williams pretty much has this topic to herself. There is a similar *Encyclopedia of Extreme Sports* by Kelly Boyer Sagert (Greenwood, 2009), which goes into more detail for that category. You might think Daniel Bell’s *Encyclopedia of International Games* (McFarland, 2003) would be comparable, but Bell’s use of the word “games” refers to the big, highly organized events such as the Olympics. The champions of many of Williams’s games are known only to their friends and families.

Given its topic, this is not a must-buy for every reference collection, but it is lively and impressive and should be useful to large libraries or any that specialize in athletic activities or ethnic cultures.—*Evan Davis, Librarian, Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana*