

Blair Kerkhoff. *Phog Allen: The Father of Basketball Coaching*. Indianapolis: Masters, 1996. 223 pp. \$19.95.

"I am very glad to know of your interest in the University of Kansas, but as you know, we do not have any special scholarships of any kind for athletes here at the University." Thus opens the standard letter Phog Allen used in the 1930s and 40s to respond to inquiries from prospective basketball players. Gems such as Allen's letter underscore the vast changes in college athletics, basketball in particular, since the 1940s. They're what fascinated me in reading this biography penned by a sportswriter for *The Kansas City Star*.

At times I wished Kerkhoff would provide more commentary and analysis on Phog's life than he does, as Kerkhoff tends to leave Allen's comments and actions to interpret themselves. But Allen's colorful statements do provide many entertaining moments in the book. Of the AAU, which Allen regularly attacked for having too much control in amateur athletics, he snapped, "I like the AAU like a fellow likes garlic for dessert." Another time he claimed AAU stood for "Asinine And Unfair." Even his own players were not spared. Of center B. H. Born, who helped lead Kansas to the championship game in 1953, Phog complained after one game, "He stood around like a Christmas tree, and out of season at that."

Apparently, Allen was also willing to stretch the truth for a good yarn, especially to inspire his teams in pre-game and halftime talks. The exploits of his 1923 National

Championship (Helms Foundation) team in a game with Missouri were stretched to the limit by Phog; Kerkhoff mixes Phog's words with players' letters and interviews to play the yarn against the "true" story. Phog's version included his inspiring the star player to "win one for the Gipper," in this case, for deceased former Kansas footballer Tommy Johnson.

For those used to seeing players grab the headlines and the dough rather than coaches, here's a contrast. In Allen's era, 1905-1956, particularly before the 1950s, the coaches had the personal shoe contracts—there are great photos of 1928 ads for the "Phog Allen Basketball Shoe." Allen also had "Phog Allen" basketballs and even invented a recreational variation on basketball called "Goal-Hi," which was marketed to schools in particular. "Goal-Hi" even had a 3-point shot, an innovation that in 1939 was long before its time. Thankfully, his frequent demands for a return of the center jump after made baskets and for a 12-foot goal are not a part of today's game.

Many have traced the Allen/Kansas lineage of basketball coaching, but Kerkhoff instead emphasizes the relationships Phog had with Adolph Rupp, Ralph Miller, Dick Harp, Dean Smith and, above all, James Naismith. Kerkhoff cites the oft-quoted comment of Naismith to Allen that "basketball should simply be played; you do not coach it," but he also reveals they maintained an often friendly collegiality throughout their time at Kansas, in spite of whatever differences they had. Of historical interest are the excerpts from two radio interviews Allen conducted with Naismith in 1938, in which Naismith often took the upper hand, asking Allen the questions instead of the other way around. In one discussion Naismith preferred an emphasis on the individual's development in physical education rather than an emphasis on team sports development. Allen respectfully disagreed.

Those interested in the roots of college basketball coaching and of the game itself will find Kerkhoff's biography informative. The combined reading of the Allen biography and the recently revised Bernice Larson Webb biography of James Naismith (*The Basketball Man: James Naismith*, Lawrence: Kappelman's Historic Collections, 1994) would provide a vision of the sport at the University of Kansas through the late 1950s Wilt Chamberlain era.

Philip Wedge

Carl Vigeland. *Stalking the Shark*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996. 224 pp. \$25.00.

*Stalking the Shark* is as much about Brad Faxon as it is about Greg Norman, and as much about Carl Vigeland as it is about Brad Faxon. For readers who as golfers like to amble down the fairway sandwiching shots between stories, Vigeland has designed a varied layout and set it up for easy play. For readers who are fascinated by the complexities of a Greg Norman, or who are searching for a "grip and rip" analysis of the effects of pressure and passion on professional golfers, be warned: Vigeland uses a three wood.

Although including oneself as a character in the story is a given for the "study of a famous athlete" genre, Vigeland appears as both "the golfer" and "I." This puzzling feature may be an oversight, or evidence of a botched rewrite, or some literary equivalent of a draw or fade. The latter seems unlikely because Vigeland at times assumes that his audience has no knowledge of golf. Why else state that "Pleasant