



a substantial portion of the book's ending to Chadwick's role in the controversy over baseball's origin (the rounders version versus the Abner Doubleday version). Though this is an interesting tale, it would have benefited from placing Chadwick in the context of the larger society of which baseball was an increasingly prominent element. In addition, like many contemporary books, this one suffers throughout from inadequate editing (typos and factual errors). **Summing Up:** Optional. ★ Comprehensive collections only.—*W. F. Gustafson, emeritus, San José State University*

46-0967 GV651 2007-41329 CIP
Xu, Guoqi. **Olympic dreams: China and sports, 1895-2008.** Harvard, 2008. 377p bibl index afp ISBN 0674028406, \$29.95; ISBN 9780674028401, \$29.95

In this adept study of the power of sport and its political platform in China over the last century, Xu (history and East Asian affairs, Kalamazoo College) describes how China has striven to improve its global image and overcome its characterization as "sick man of East Asia." Xu looks at China's "coming out" in the 1970s through Ping-Pong diplomacy, the continuing saga of the two Chinas, and the opportunities and dangers posed by the 2008 Olympic Games. In describing how China has entered the global sport arena with the philosophy "friendship first, competition second," the author shows that China has now developed a "championship mentality," with Olympic gold becoming the important gauge of its strength. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ Lower-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers.—*M. E. Beagle, Berea College*

46-0968 GV863 2006-100127 CIP
Yu, Junwei. **Playing in isolation: a history of baseball in Taiwan.** Nebraska, 2007. 217p bibl index afp ISBN 0803211406, \$26.95; ISBN 9780803211407, \$26.95

Yu (Shu Te Univ., Taiwan) takes on an understudied subject. The author argues that until the late 19th century Taiwan did not have modern sports because of the influence of Confucianism; when the Japanese gained control of the island in the 1890s, they brought baseball with them and it caught hold. Japan encouraged the growth of baseball, and the sport became part of Japan's colonizing effort. Baseball continued to be popular in Taiwan even after the restoration of the island to the Republic of China, and after WW II baseball in Taiwan entered its golden age: it became a way to hold on to the Taiwanese heritage and language in the face of Chinese control. In the wake of controversies about Little League play, the popularity of baseball declined in the mid-1970s, but this trend reversed when professional baseball was established in Taiwan after embarrassing losses in the Asian Games and the Olympics. Taiwan hosted the Baseball World Cup in 2001, and this event and others ensured the future of baseball on Taiwan. Yu details these ups and down, and includes excellent notes, photographs, and appendixes (in which he supplies names of teams and players to support the generalities of the study). **Summing Up:** Recommended. ★★ Upper-division undergraduates through faculty; general readers.—*L. A. Heaphy, Kent State University*

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

46-0969 BF448 MARC
Ariely, Dan. **Predictably irrational: the hidden forces that shape our decisions.** HarperCollins, 2008. 280p bibl index ISBN 9780061353239, \$25.95

One of the exciting, controversial research frontiers in recent years has been the intersection of economics and psychology. Behavioral economists, as they are dubbed and of which Ariely is one, have jumped into the fray to take issue with the economist's traditional assumption of the rational "economic man" who, whether making decisions about buying a product or a stock, or getting married (or divorced), responds predictably and purposefully to incentives. With teaser subtitles—"Why We Often Pay Too Much When We Pay Nothing," "Why We Are Dishonest, and What We Can Do about It"—the author leads readers through a plethora of applications in a baker's dozen of largely stand-alone chapters. In the current century, the Nobel committee has already made economic laureates of economists and psychologists who traffic in these "boundary waters," e.g., Daniel Kahneman, Vernon Smith, George Akerlof, and Daniel McFadden; others, such as Robert Shiller and Richard Thaler, are well-known academic compatriots. The debate will continue over whether the fact that we are forgetful, bad at math, emotional, overconfident, and stubborn simply produces intriguing anomalies, or whether there is something of true substance to explore. Either way, reading Ariely is certainly an entertaining, valuable way to spend a few hours. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. ★★★ All collections.—*A. R. Sanderson, University of Chicago*

46-0970 HB883 2007-40553 CIP
Connelly, Matthew. **Fatal misconception: the struggle to control world population.** Belknap, Harvard, 2008. 521p bibl index afp ISBN 9780674024236, \$35.00

Connelly (history, Columbia) has written a sweeping history of family planning and population control as ideological doctrines, scientific research agendas, and subjects for political contests among countries, intellectual elites, religious communities, private philanthropists, and political rivals. Using diverse, detailed historical sources, he weaves together the many strands of population politics over the past century and more, including ardent proponents of human eugenics; conservationists concerned about human impact on the planet; Catholic cardinals caught between church doctrine and their restive congregants; academic researchers pursuing scientific knowledge while engaged in feuds with one another and contests for private and government funding; political leaders using population policy for a mixture of humanitarian, nationalistic, and personal goals; and a welter of other colorful, unforgettable characters. This is the best book on population this reviewer has read in several years, one that every demographer, population economist, public health official, congressional staffer, private foundation executive, religious leader, and concerned citizen should read. The book, which includes so many of academic and other public figures who have shaped the family planning and population policy professional world, compellingly integrates its subject into a huge, panoramic struggle over basic human freedoms, the shape of families and societies, and the future of the planet itself. **Summing Up:** Essential. ★★★★★ All levels/libraries.—*E. Carlson, Florida State University*