This book is a collection of sports related poetry and creative writing which stemmed from a university module called The Sporting Image.

Following a poetry writing workshop to help students structure their ideas and poetry writing skills an engaging degree of self-expression about sporting concepts seems to have emerged which we are proud to showcase within these pages.

Many sports are featured including boxing, cricket, football and gymnastics and many issues tackled such as teamwork, comradeship, cheating, beauty and ugliness in sport. Consequently this is a varied compilation which we hope will give the reader as much pleasure to read or even perform, as we have had in producing it.
The Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies presents a valuable opportunity for students; undergraduates and postgraduates to write mentored publications of their research activities in the sport’s world.

The papers are externally reviewed by academics from institutions (UK and overseas) who have an interest in researching sport and Physical Education and who share a similar vision for raising student confidence in their academic writing and encouraging greater involvement with researching sport from a qualitative standpoint. Towards these ends the journal has three central aims which the Editorial Board hope the reader will recognise as educationally valuable in terms of academic quality and student centred support in academia:

(a) To showcase and share student research at either undergraduate or postgraduate level.

(b) Through a process of mentoring and external review, help to improve student’s confidence to present their ideas formally.

(c) To create a contemporary resource of qualitative research within the sports world which is accessible to students and informs their ongoing investigations.

If you have any enquiries for a potential submission or topic research, please do not hesitate to contact the editor through the UCLAN website.
Acknowledgements

There are a number of people who I wish to thank for sharing generously their time, energy and enthusiasm to tease the *What If?* publication into existence. First and foremost are the students who embraced the *What If?* challenge so confidently at the outset and provided such a disparate range of topics that we as staff could never have envisaged. Part of the intrigue of this project has been to set imaginations free and then wait to see what comes back. If a reader’s curiosity is stirred about the stories on the contents page it stems directly from what did come back from those relatively untethered imaginations. Thank you to the students for their confidence in us to set them on a path of discovery and to some degree, to experiment with an aspect of their final degree assessment - which they might regard now as being worthwhile.

Thank you also to Philip Caveney for running the workshop on creative writing from which some important lessons were learned for stylised writing. Following the workshop I know that Philip gave ongoing support to students and offered an open door for help should it be required; your interest in our project is very much appreciated, thank you.

No small debt of thanks are due to our mentoring co-authors who have shared their wisdom, time and energy with students to make the best of their work; Mitch Larson, Ray Physick, Iain Adams, Joel Rookwood, James Kenyon, Chris Hughes and Anthony Maher. I know they have faced their own challenges in the mentoring process and I thank them all for their confidence in me to guide them towards this finished product of which they should rightly be proud.

Thank you also to John Metcalf and Paul Hall for sharing their stories which are stylised accounts of their lived experiences in sport. The inclusion of these two cameo chapters helps to make a link with the sports world in almost the opposite direction to what the co-authored chapters have done by embracing the creative *What If?* Meeting somewhere between the two may be a sense of reality in sport filtered through a mesh of creative and interpretive writing which might render their accounts all the more accessible and engaging for us.

There have also been a host of proof readers who have volunteered their valuable time to cast a critical eye over drafts of chapters. Their attention to
detail and support for various authors is very much appreciated; in particular thank you to Norman Seddon, Val Sellers, Katherine Jones, David Hughes and Mark Hickman, but also to the many other friends, parents and colleagues who have supported students and staff in listening to ideas and reading early drafts of their stories.

For technical and practical support thank you to our publisher; Miles Bailey and his staff at Action Publishing Technology Limited and to John Minten, Head of School for Sport, Tourism and The Outdoors for supporting the What If? project towards this final publication.

Lastly, but by no means least, thanks are due to my wife Rin and daughter Grace, not only for colouring in my initial ideas for the cover design but also for tolerating a longer than average distraction from family life that this publication has required for a short while.

Clive Palmer
Cheshire
11th June 2010
Foreword

It’s always exciting when something unexpected happens.

When I was first approached to work on some fiction writing with a group of students, based in the Sports Department at UCLAN, I’d be lying if I said I had great expectations for the outcome. After all, so far as I was aware, none of these students had ever tried writing fiction before. And... I’m not being mean or anything, but... well, it’s not just something you can have a go at. It takes years and years of dedicated practice. Doesn’t it?

But then I went in to do a workshop with the students, taking along what I thought of as a brilliant example of the short story – Mrs Packletide’s Tiger by Saki (H.H. Munro). I chose it because it so brilliantly packs an absolute wealth of information into its 1,300 words; and in the deliciously bitchy interplay of dialogue, reveals so much about the characters.

The students listened politely enough to what I had to say, and then entered into the practical side of the workshop, where they broke themselves into duos and created fictional sporting characters, around which they wrote alternating lines of dialogue; sort of mini scripts. When it came time to read back what they had written, I had a surprise in store. Every one of the participants exhibited levels of humour and invention that made the workshop an absolute delight to run. I cheered up considerably. Maybe things weren’t going to be quite so grim after all.

A little time passed... and then I began to receive the short stories themselves. I started to read through them and quickly realised that it was time to put in my order for a large slice of humble pie.

Here were stories to delight and intrigue the reader... stories that thrilled and amused in equal measure, stories that explored the imagination of the writers, but remained easily accessible to all.. In most cases, the students needed only the lightest of guiding hands to hone their work to a satisfying conclusion. And here too was a valuable lesson for yours truly; that writing is not exclusively the domain of the specialist. Given a little time and encouragement, talent can blossom in the unlikeliest of places.

And now, here’s the tangible proof of that success – an actual, honest-to-goodness book featuring 30 short stories to delight and entertain you. The miracle of POD publishing means that the stories can be made available to
anyone who’s interested in reading them and I am only too happy to recommend them to anyone who enjoys a good read. It only remains for me to thank tutor, Clive Palmer, for getting me involved in the first place and the students themselves, many of whom, should they find themselves struggling to make headway in their chosen field of expertise, might seriously consider seeking careers in literature.

All in all, it’s been quite an education.

Philip Caveney
Royal Literary Fellow
University of Central Lancashire
January 2010
Notes on Contributors

First authors

The first named authors are Undergraduate students from the University of Central Lancashire, Preston (except James Kenyon who is from Liverpool Hope University). They are third year students following the Sporting Image module which is open to all those reading sport, however the majority of students opting for this module have a specialism in Sport’s Journalism. For many of the students this opportunity to publish their work is valued highly as it may be their first offering for public consumption - although some have benefitted from publishing and reporting as part of work experience placements with local newspapers. In the stories within this volume they have had an opportunity to research an event and tell a story of their own making – or at least interpretation.

Mentoring Co-authors

Clive Palmer is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Sport, Tourism and the Outdoors at the University of Central Lancashire, Preston. An experienced teacher and researcher he was awarded his Ph.D. on Aesthetics in Men’s Artistic Gymnastics from Liverpool John Moores University in 2003. He has since written widely in socio-cultural areas of sport, publishing for example, *The Turn to Aesthetics - An Interdisciplinary Exchange of Ideas in Applied and Philosophical Aesthetics* (2008). He is a strong advocate of research informed teaching and actively promotes opportunities to showcase student writing and student research which communicates their experiences and discoveries through the study of sport. He is the Editor in Chief of the *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies* (1754-2375) and recently edited *The Sporting Image – Sports Poetry and Creative Writing* (2009), which was the first publication stemming from the module The Sporting Image, this What If book being the second. His academic interests include gymnastics, ethnography, aesthetics and the philosophy of sport, Physical Education, sport’s pedagogy and Outdoor Education.

Philip Caveney was born in North Wales in 1951 and has been a published author since 1977. His first novel, *The Sins of Rachel Ellis* was an occult mystery, but through the 1980’s and 90’s, he published a string of hard-hitting thrillers including *Speak No Evil* and *Skin Flicks*. In 2007, he
published his first book for children, *Sebastian Darke: Prince Of Fools*. The book spawned two sequels and has been published in 20 countries around the world. Most recently, he launched the Alec Devlin series – 1920’s set tales featuring the adventures of a 15 year old archaeologist. Philip has been the facilitator of the Manchester Writers Workshop for over 25 years, helping writers at all stages of their craft to develop their skills. In 2009, Philip teamed up with the Royal Literary Fund and took over the post of RLF Fellow at University of Central Lancashire where is available to share his knowledge and expertise with students, through a series of 1 to 1 tutorials. For further information please see: Personal website: [http://www.philip-caveney.co.uk/](http://www.philip-caveney.co.uk/)

**Anthony Maher** received an undergraduate degree in Sports Development with Physical Education from Liverpool John Moores University. He has a Masters degree in the Sociology of Sport and Exercise from the University of Chester, and is currently enrolled as a part-time Ph.D. student at the University of Central Lancashire, where he also works as an Associate Lecturer in Sports Development. The inclusion of pupils with special educational needs in mainstream school physical education was the focus of both his undergraduate and masters theses and he hopes to further build on these projects for his doctorate by looking at this process from the perspective of special educational needs coordinators and learning support assistants. More generally, Anthony’s academic interests include the development and structure of modern sport, sociological theory and its application to sport, equality in sport and social research methods. The *What If* volume offers his second piece of published writing, the first being an article review for the *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies* (Maher, 2009). Together with teaching, research and writing, Anthony also enjoys exercising and travelling.

**Joel Rookwood** studied Football Science at undergraduate level, followed by Masters degrees in Notational Analysis, Sports Sociology and Sports Management. He has a PhD in football fan culture, and lectures in football studies at Liverpool Hope University where he also runs the Sport Development degree programme. Joel has travelled to 120 countries, 30 of which have included supporting and managing practical and research-based football programmes within a developmental and/or charitable capacity. He has also watched football in many countries across the world and is a member of the English ‘2 Club’ having watched a match in every professional ground in England and Wales. His research interests include fan culture, identity, spectator violence, subcultures, development, peace
promotion, social integration and higher education learning and teaching initiatives. He has written numerous papers and book chapters and is the author of *Fan perspectives of football hooliganism: defining, analysing and responding to the British phenomenon and social development in post-conflict communities: building peace through sport in Africa and the Middle East* (2009).

**James Kenyon** is a recent graduate of Liverpool Hope University and is an ex-student of both Clive Palmer and Joel Rookwood. Having achieved a first class Bachelor’s degree in Sport Development and Sports Studies, he is currently completing a Masters degree in Research Methods with a view to enrolling on a Sports Sociology PhD once he has completed his thesis. Despite his relatively new academic career, James has collaborated with both of his ex-lecturers on a number of peer-reviewed publications and academic conferences, and he is also Student Editorial Officer for the *Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies* (1754-2375). During the course of his studies James has been the recipient of Liverpool Hope University’s; Deans’ List Scholarship Award, Sports Studies Prize and Senior Scholarship Award. James’ research interests include; identity (particularly Scouse identity and culture), gangs and gang dynamics, race and racism, ethnography, Olympic values and Olympism and community sport. To complement his academic interest in sport, for the past nine years James has coached a number of sports to some of the most disadvantaged young people living in Liverpool and Sheffield. He is also an avid footballer and plays regularly for his local Saturday-league football team.

**Chris Hughes** is a recent graduate of University of Central Lancashire - class of 2010, with a Bachelor’s degree in Sports Coaching. Following a career as a chef in the hotel and restaurant industry, Chris returned to full-time education in pursuit of stimulation, creativity and learning through a sporting environment. His research interests include ethnography, coaching philosophy, coach decision making and creative writing within sport. He hopes to further his education as a post graduate by studying for an MPhil and PGCE alongside mentoring and developing student led qualitative research. Chris’ sporting passion is for football, however, considering his enthusiasm to give anything a go he is currently an extremely frustrated novice rock climber, trying to learn the art of “bouldering”.

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Iain Adams is a Principal Lecturer in the School of Sport, Tourism and the Outdoors at UCLan, Preston. He worked as a PE teacher in Dorset after gaining a BA in PE/geography from the University of Birmingham and a PGCE from Madeley College. He then won a scholarship to study for a Master’s degree and went to the University of North Dakota, USA. Completing an MSc in Sport Psychology, he continued through to his PhD in Platonism and Sport funded by working as the Women’s Badminton Coach. This was followed by periods of working, coaching, teaching and consulting in Los Alamos (New Mexico), Jordan, Bahrain, and Indonesia. After returning to the UK from Indonesia, he decided to become a full time pilot, a profession he had worked in part-time since his 17th birthday. Eventually realising he was missing the most important years of his children’s growth; he went back into full-time education at UCLan. He developed the module Sporting Image to introduce others to his passion of seeking to understand how sport is portrayed in other cultural forms.

Ray Physick is a PhD student at the University of Central Lancashire, his area of study is football and fine art. Ray is also a part-time member of staff at the university. His book, Played in Liverpool, was published in 2007 by English Heritage and forms part of English Heritage’s Played in Britain series (www.playedinbritain.org.uk). Most books about Liverpool sport are football focused but Played in Liverpool was the first book to offer an historical analysis of the development of Liverpool sport. Played in Liverpool was followed in 2008 by Boxing Venues of Liverpool, a book published by the Liverpool Echo. The book looked at the development of Liverpool boxing through three key venues: Pudsey Street, Anfield and the Liverpool Stadium. Ray has also made several contributions to the Encyclopedias of Sport and football in 2001 and 2003. He is a keen football, boxing and cricket fan and has been a Liverpool supporter all his life.

Mitchell J. Larson is Research Fellow in International Business at the University of Central Lancashire Business School. Dr. Larson received his doctorate in History at the University of Wisconsin–Madison (USA) by completing a history of the first two American-style business schools formed in the UK during the 1960s. This project familiarized him with a number of significant historical fields, including British political and economic history, the history of management in the UK and the history of Higher Education. During his post-graduate training he served as a graduate teaching assistant three times with Professor Alfred E. Senn (now emeritus); Senn’s module entitled, The Political History of the Modern Olympics introduced him to the history of sport; the business elements of
the Olympics and elite sport which have recently become part of his research programme. This volume represents his first entry into the field of teaching-led research.

**John Metcalfe** is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Sport Tourism and The Outdoors at The University of Central Lancashire, Preston. His main sporting passion is ultra-endurance mountain biking and he has competed in some of the sport's hardest races, including the IditaSport in Alaska, The Great Divide race from Canada to Mexico, and numerous 24 hour solo races. John's research is currently focussed on the physiology of long distance mountain bike racing. He has contributed to many of the country's mountain bike magazines and is the author of Mountain Bike Fitness Training.

**Paul Hall** is an International Gymnastics Judge and Coach, currently running the Huntingdon Gymnastics Club, Cambridgeshire, and working with the Senior Great Britain Men’s Squad towards the London Olympics in 2012. With over 20 years of coaching experience, Paul has consistently produced gymnasts at Commonwealth, European, World and Olympic level. He has coached over 12 British Champions, both in Men’s and Women’s Artistic Gymnastics, many of whom have gone on to win medals at International level. He is Coach to twice European Champion and World Medallist, Louis Smith, who, in 2008, created history by producing a bronze medal on the Pommel Horse at the Beijing Olympic Games, and is also the Coach to Daniel Keatings, current World All Around Silver Medallist in London, 2009. Paul travels extensively with his sport and is a Lecturer with the International Gymnastics Federation, having conducted courses in Saudi Arabia, North Korea, Egypt and Europe. He has published technical papers on gymnastics as well as various accounts of extraordinary events that have enriched his life. Outside of the gym Paul enjoys climbing, writing, and exploring nature.