

Sports in American Life

A History

Third Edition

Richard O. Davies

WILEY Blackwell

Praise for the Second Edition

"It's all here – the rise of sports in America, the emergence of athlete celebrities, the growth of the sports business empire, and our jaw-dropping fascination with the entire process. Embedded in Davies's narrative are important stories of race, gender, ethnicity, and economics. And behind it all breathes Davies's passion for his subject."

Randy Roberts, author of *A Team For America: The Army-Navy Game that Rallied a Nation* (2011)

"I am a big fan of Davies's book. No text does a better job of discussing the central role of sports in American society. The first edition worked extremely well with my students, and with added coverage on women and extreme sports, the second edition is stronger still."

Alan Bloom, *Valparaiso University*

"Well researched and effectively summarizing the significance of sport within the broader US history, Davies's book also provides insight into the business of athletics, contextualizing how it interacts with politics and economics. A first-rate book to introduce students to this evolving and vibrant field!"


Jorge Iber, *Texas Tech University*

Featuring extensive revisions and updates, the new third edition of *Sports in American Life: A History* brings its lively, interpretative history of the relationship of sports to the larger themes of American history up to the end of 2015. Incorporating the latest sports scholarship and research, Richard O. Davies's lauded narrative of American sports continues to shine as the only survey textbook to cover such diverse topics as NASCAR, mixed martial arts, skateboarding, and more, in addition to mainstream sports. Along with expanded coverage of college sports, women in sports, race and racism in organized sports, and soccer's sharp rise in popularity, this edition also features an all-new section that tackles the growing controversy of head injuries and concussions caused by contact sports. Other updates include insightful biographical studies of revered UCLA head basketball coach John Wooden, and of legendary Penn State football coach Joe Paterno, whose legacy was marred by a high-profile child sex abuse scandal in 2011. Placing a special emphasis on the relationship of sports history to such issues as gender, race, economics, international politics, the media, and higher education, chapters also reflect a careful balance among amateur, college, and professional sports in the United States. Accessible and timely, *Sports in American Life: A History, Third Edition*, helps shape our understanding of the evolution of the fascinatingly complex interrelationship between sports and American society.

Richard O. Davies is Distinguished Professor of History, Emeritus, at the University of Nevada, Reno. His books include *Rivals! The Ten Greatest American Sports Rivalries of the 20th Century* (Wiley, 2010), *Sports in American Life: A History* (Wiley, 2007, 2012), *Betting the Line: Sports Wagering in American Life* (2001), and *Main Street Blues: The Decline of Small-Town America* (1998). Davies was inducted into the Nevada Writers Hall of Fame in 2013 and continues to pursue an active retirement.

www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell

WILEY Blackwell

 Also available
as an e-book

ISBN 978-1-118-91237-9



9 781118 912379

Davies

Sports in American Life

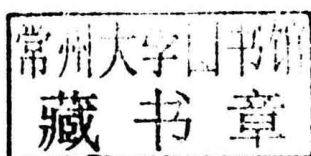
WILEY
Blackwell

SPORTS IN AMERICAN LIFE

A HISTORY

Third Edition

Richard O. Davies



WILEY Blackwell

This third edition first published 2017
© 2017 John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Edition history: Blackwell Publishing Ltd (1e, 2007); John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (2e, 2012)

Registered Office

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Offices

350 Main Street, Malden, MA 02148-5020, USA

9600 Garsington Road, Oxford, OX4 2DQ, UK

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services, and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com/wiley-blackwell.

The right of Richard O. Davies to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. It is sold on the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering professional services and neither the publisher nor the author shall be liable for damages arising herefrom. If professional advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Davies, Richard O., 1937-

Title: Sports in American life : a history / Richard O. Davies.

Description: Third Edition. | Hoboken : John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2017. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016003745 (print) | LCCN 2016005130 (ebook) | ISBN 9781118912379 (paper) | ISBN 9781118912454 (pdf) | ISBN 9781118912546 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Sports—United States—History.

Classification: LCC GV583 .D39 2017 (print) | LCC GV583 (ebook) | DDC 796—dc23

LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2016003745>

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Set in 11/13pt DanteMTStd-Regular by Thomson Digital, Noida, India

Printed in Singapore by C.O.S. Printers Pte Ltd

SPORTS IN AMERICAN LIFE

Cover photo

Thirty-eight year old New York Giants quarterback Y. A. Tittle kneels in the Giants end zone in September 1964 after throwing an interception returned for a touchdown by the Pittsburgh Steelers. Tittle was ferociously hit as he released the pass by 270-pound defensive end John Baker and slammed to the ground, suffering a cracked sternum and a concussion on the play that left him dazed and disoriented. This iconic photograph is one of the most famous football photographs of all time because it encapsulates the violence and humanity of the game. It was taken by *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* photographer Morris Berman, and ironically was not published by the newspaper because it was not an “action” shot. Tittle returned to play the following weekend, his concussion symptoms not considered of medical importance. He retired after the season, bringing to a close a 17-year career in professional football, much of it spent with the San Francisco 49ers. Traded to the Giants in 1961 he led the team to three consecutive Eastern division titles and was named the league’s Most Valuable Player. He was elected to the Professional Football Hall of Fame in 1971 based upon a record-setting career that included 242 touchdown passes and 2427 completions that gained more than 33,000 yards. In 2016, at the age of 89, the former NFL star resided in the Bay Area suffering from dementia.

For Sharon, Jenny, and Bob

Acknowledgments

No book of this magnitude can be brought to publication without the assistance of many individuals. This third edition has sought to sharpen the focus of the preceding volumes and incorporate important developments that have occurred since 2010. Ever since I began work on the first edition some 15 years ago I have benefited from the encouragement and guidance of Wiley-Blackwell Executive Editor Emeritus Peter Coveney. His enthusiastic support for the project, coupled with his professional guidance and good humor, has made the effort rewarding. Several student assistants provided essential help for the first edition: Jennifer Valenzuela, Seth Flatley, Eric Bender, Jayme Hoy, and Yulia Kalnaus. I am especially grateful for the contributions of graduate students Kimberly Esse and Andrew McGregor to the second edition. I appreciate the careful reading given earlier editions by Dr Dee Kille, Professor Thomas E. Smith of Chadron State College, Professor Ronald A. Smith of Pennsylvania State University, and Professor Emeritus Frank Mitchell of the University of Southern California. This edition benefited from a careful reading by Kevin Schmidt. I am especially grateful to Professor Stephen K. Davis of Lone Star College, Kingwood, for his careful analysis of the manuscript. Two professors at the University of Missouri that helped shape my academic life and started me on a lifetime of historical research and teaching remain important to me: I belatedly but warmly express my appreciation to Professors Richard S. Kirkendall and Allen F. Davis. I am deeply indebted to Scott E. Casper, former department chair and colleague, now Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Science at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, for his many years of friendship and support of my work. I am grateful for prior financial assistance provided by the John Noble Endowment for Historical Research that is of inestimable importance for members of the Department of History at the University of Nevada, Reno, and I also acknowledge the research assistance provided by the University of Nevada, Reno Foundation through its unique Foundation Professorship program. When I retired in 2011, I brought closure to an academic adventure that began as a graduate student instructor at the University of Missouri in 1960. During the intervening 51 years, despite nearly two decades devoted to senior administrative positions, it was my good fortune to teach a wide range of courses that enrolled somewhere in the neighborhood of 10,000 students. This text grew out of my efforts to enliven my course in American Sports

History, and this, the third edition of *Sports in American Life*, symbolizes for me the capstone of an academic life well lived. Throughout my career my family has provided a rock-solid foundation, and it is to those three very special people that I dedicate this book.

Richard O. Davies
University of Nevada, Reno

Contents

List of Illustrations	xii
Acknowledgments	xv
Introduction	1
<i>Sports in American Culture</i>	2
<i>Sports and American History</i>	3
<i>Notes</i>	6
1 The Emergence of Organized Sports, 1607–1860	7
<i>Games in Colonial New England</i>	8
<i>Recreations in Southern Colonies</i>	10
<i>The Revolutionary Era and Beyond</i>	14
<i>The Democratization of Racing: The Trotters</i>	17
<i>Racing by Land and Sea</i>	19
<i>The Formative Years of Prizefighting</i>	22
<i>Baseball: The Creation of “America’s Game”</i>	27
<i>Notes</i>	31
2 Baseball: “America’s Game”	33
<i>The Early Professional Era</i>	35
<i>Henry Chadwick and a Game of Numbers</i>	38
<i>Growing Pains</i>	40
<i>Early Years of the Professional Game</i>	42
<i>Emergence of the Modern Game</i>	46
<i>The 1880s: A Decade of Rancor</i>	48
<i>Notes</i>	51
3 Sports and the Emergence of Modern America, 1865–1920	53
<i>Prizefighting Enters the Mainstream</i>	54
<i>Sports and Social Class</i>	58
<i>Strong Bodies and Devout Souls</i>	62

	<i>America's Greatest Athlete</i>	66
	<i>Organized Play for the Modern Era</i>	69
	<i>Interscholastic Sports</i>	71
	<i>Notes</i>	72
4	The Emergence of King Football, 1869–1920	74
	<i>The Early Years of College Athletics</i>	75
	<i>Football American Style</i>	76
	<i>Yale and the Creation of Football</i>	78
	<i>Football Moves West</i>	82
	<i>Football as Spectacle</i>	85
	<i>Football in Crisis</i>	87
	<i>Notes</i>	94
5	The National Pastime: Baseball, 1890–1930	95
	<i>The 1890s: Years of Discord</i>	96
	<i>Ban Johnson and the American League</i>	98
	<i>The Cyclone and the Georgia Peach</i>	100
	<i>Masters of Strategy</i>	103
	<i>The Federal League Challenge</i>	105
	<i>Crisis: Gamblers Fix the World Series of 1919</i>	106
	<i>The Babe</i>	112
	<i>Baseball's Golden Age</i>	116
	<i>Notes</i>	118
6	Playing Nice: Women and Sports, 1860–1945	120
	<i>The Early Years of Women's Sports</i>	121
	<i>The Demise of Women's Sports</i>	126
	<i>Helen and Trudy: America's First Women Sports Stars</i>	127
	<i>Babe: The Texas Tomboy</i>	129
	<i>Women Play Hardball: The Peaches and the Chicks</i>	134
	<i>"The Instinctive Urge to Compete"</i>	136
	<i>Notes</i>	137
7	Sports in the Age of Ballyhoo, Depression, and War, 1920–1945	139
	<i>Gee Whiz: Sports Journalism during the 1920s</i>	140
	<i>Heroes for a Heroic Age</i>	143
	<i>Growing Pains: The National Football League</i>	146
	<i>Boxing Gains Respectability</i>	148
	<i>Baseball's Long Slump</i>	151
	<i>Seabiscuit: Sports Star for the Depression Era</i>	157

	<i>Baseball during the War Years</i>	160
	<i>Notes</i>	161
8	Sports on Campus, 1920–1950	163
	<i>The Essential Myth of Big-Time College Athletics</i>	163
	<i>Football: Driving the Bus</i>	166
	<i>Football's Golden Age: The Twenties</i>	168
	<i>Knute Rockne and the Making of Notre Dame Football</i>	171
	<i>The Second Challenge to Big-Time Football</i>	176
	<i>Hoop Dreams</i>	179
	<i>Hoop Nightmares</i>	181
	<i>Notes</i>	184
9	America's Great Dilemma	185
	<i>The "Fight of the Century"</i>	186
	<i>Separate and Unequal: The Negro Leagues</i>	190
	<i>Out of the Cotton Fields of Alabama: Jesse and Joe</i>	194
	<i>Jackie</i>	200
	<i>In the Shadow of Jackie Robinson</i>	204
	<i>Gentlepeople and Sanctimonious Hypocrites</i>	206
	<i>The Baron and the Bear</i>	210
	<i>Notes</i>	214
10	"The Thrill of Victory, the Agony of Defeat": Television Revolutionizes Sports	217
	<i>The Formative Years of Sports Television</i>	218
	<i>Tale of the Tube: Boxing</i>	221
	<i>Professional Football Comes of Age</i>	223
	<i>Pete and Roone</i>	225
	<i>Super Sunday and Monday Night Madness</i>	229
	<i>ESPN: All Sports, All the Time</i>	233
	<i>Notes</i>	237
11	The Big Business of College Sports	239
	<i>The Sanity Code Is Scuttled</i>	240
	<i>Creation of a Cartel</i>	241
	<i>Emphasis and De-emphasis</i>	242
	<i>Woody and the Bear</i>	243
	<i>The Wizard of Westwood</i>	249
	<i>Madness in March</i>	254
	<i>The NCAA as Enforcer</i>	256

	<i>Intercollegiate Athletics: Education or Big Business?</i>	259
	<i>Turmoil, Realignment, and a Playoff System</i>	263
	<i>The Futility of Reform</i>	264
	<i>Trouble in Happy Valley</i>	266
	<i>Notes</i>	271
12	Play for Pay: Professional Sports in America	273
	<i>A Tale of Three Cities</i>	273
	<i>Urban Relocation, Redevelopment, and Promotion</i>	276
	<i>The Economics of Organized Baseball</i>	278
	<i>Baseball's Labor Disputes</i>	284
	<i>The Magic of Parity: The National Football League</i>	287
	<i>The Wondrous World of Magic, Larry, and Michael</i>	291
	<i>Always Turn Left: NASCAR Takes the Checkered Flag</i>	295
	<i>Beyond the Bright Lights: Hockey and Soccer</i>	302
	<i>Notes</i>	304
13	Do You Believe in Miracles?	306
	<i>The Cold War Shapes the Olympics</i>	309
	<i>Television Transforms the Olympics</i>	316
	<i>The Games Must Go On</i>	320
	<i>To Boycott or Not to Boycott</i>	323
	<i>The Triumph of Professionalism</i>	325
	<i>Athens and Beyond</i>	328
	<i>Notes</i>	330
14	The Persistent Dilemma of Race	331
	<i>"I'm the Greatest"</i>	333
	<i>Boycott, Backlash, and Beyond</i>	337
	<i>Breakthrough: A New Era in American Sports</i>	340
	<i>Hank Aaron Catches the Babe</i>	347
	<i>Can White Men Jump?</i>	349
	<i>Tiger</i>	353
	<i>Sister Act: Venus and Serena</i>	358
	<i>Notes</i>	363
15	Playing Nice No Longer: Women's Sports, 1960–2015	365
	<i>Deceit and Deception: The NCAA and Gender Equity</i>	366
	<i>Titanic Rivalry: Connecticut/Tennessee Basketball</i>	371
	<i>Billie Jean Sparks a Revolution</i>	377
	<i>Viva America! World Cup Winners</i>	381

<i>"You've Come a Long Way Baby!" Or Have You?</i>	384
<i>Title IX at Forty</i>	387
<i>Notes</i>	389
16 <i>"Only in America!"</i>	391
<i>Triumph of the Swoosh</i>	392
<i>The World of Jimmy the Greek</i>	396
<i>The Tragedy of Pete Rose</i>	399
<i>The Demise of Boxing</i>	403
<i>Iron Mike and the King of Boxing</i>	405
<i>Whatever It Takes</i>	409
<i>Under a Cloud: Barry Bonds Chases Hank Aaron</i>	416
<i>Notes</i>	419
17 <i>The Democratization of Sports</i>	421
<i>Community Cauldron: High School Sports</i>	421
<i>Youth Sports</i>	425
<i>Golf's Golden Age: Arnie, the Super Mex, and the Golden Bear</i>	430
<i>A Tale of Two American Cyclists</i>	436
<i>"Sidewalk Surfing" and the Rise of "X-treme" Sports</i>	441
<i>Notes</i>	448
Epilogue	451
<i>Notes</i>	460
Index	462

List of Illustrations

1.1	Trotters Mountain Boy and Lady Thorn head for the finish line at Prospect Park in Brooklyn in 1869	18
1.2	The sleek yacht <i>America</i> is captured by artist J. E. Buttersworth as it leaves Boston harbor on its way to England for the great race of 1851	22
2.1	The Knickerbocker team of 1858 is captured in this rare photograph	36
2.2	A standing-room crowd packs the Baltimore Orioles ballpark in 1897 for an important game with Boston	47
3.1	John L. Sullivan squares off with Jake Kilrain in the backwoods of Mississippi in July 1889	56
3.2	Golf provided women with a new opportunity to develop their athletic skills as private country clubs were established at the turn of the twentieth century	61
3.3	Jim Thorpe during the shot put competition in the decathlon at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm	68
4.1	This typical formation employed by the 1893 Yale football team illustrates the theory of mass momentum advocated by Walter Camp	80
4.2	The trend away from mass momentum play received a boost from the offensive play of the Carlisle Indians coached by the innovative Glenn “Pop” Warner	93
5.1	Ty Cobb slides into third base with his spikes flying	102
5.2	Forward March! The Cleveland Indians participate in marching drills ordered for all American League teams during the 1918 season by league president Ban Johnson	108
5.3	Commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis tosses out the first ball at an unknown game during the 1920s	111
5.4	Babe Ruth burnished his public image by reaching out to youngsters	114
6.1	Vassar College students demonstrate that they did not necessarily always “play nice” when they took to the basketball court	122