

SPORTS IN AMERICA

FROM
COLONIAL TIMES
TO THE
TWENTY-FIRST
CENTURY

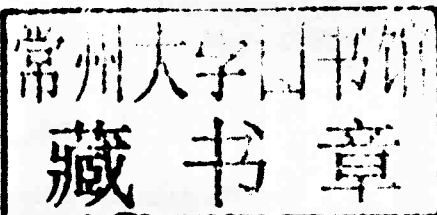
STEVEN A. RIESS, EDITOR

SPORTS IN AMERICA

**FROM COLONIAL TIMES TO THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA

VOLUME 1



STEVEN A. RIESS, EDITOR



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Publisher: Myron E. Sharpe

Vice President and Director of New Product Development: Donna Sanzone

Vice President and Production Director: Carmen Chetti

Executive Development Editor: Jeff Hacker

Project Manager: Laura Brengelman

Program Coordinator: Cathleen Prisco

Editorial Assistant: Lauren LoPinto

Text Design and Cover Design: Jesse Sanchez

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Contributors

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Maine East High School

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Gabriel Schechter
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Raymond Schmidt
Independent Scholar

Brad Schultz
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Ari Sclar
Hunter College

Mark Scott
Independent Scholar

Nigel Anthony Sellars
*Christopher Newport
University*

David A. Serafini
Western Kentucky University

Ameenah Shakir
University of Miami

Andrew Smith
Purdue University

Maureen Margaret Smith
*California State University,
Sacramento*

Ronald A. Smith
*Pennsylvania State
University*

Donald Spivey
University of Miami

David Stevens
Independent Scholar

Mark Storey
University of Nottingham

Richard A. Swanson
*University of North Carolina at
Greensboro*

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps no country in the world has embraced sports—in both their spectatorial and their participatory forms—quite like the United States. Certainly, as the historical emphasis of this encyclopedia reveals, no other country has embraced sports so readily and so enthusiastically. Since colonial times, sports in America have been a major source of entertainment, a form of recreation, and a way of achieving physical fitness. Sports have helped define who Americans are, even as Americans have put their own stamp on sports.

Americans have participated in sports throughout the nation's history. Native Americans, of course, had their hunting- and war-related games in pre-Columbian times, while European colonists and African slaves brought their own forms of athletic diversion. However, the term "sport" has changed over time. In the seventeenth century, "sport" referred to virtually any diversion. Thus, for the Puritans, playing cards, bowling, and shooting at a target were all sports. By the eighteenth century, the term had narrowed to a more modern meaning: competitive athletic activities governed by a set of rules or customs.

By any definition, sports always have been interwoven into the fabric of American life, promoting traditional values among the well-established, aiding acculturation among newly arrived immigrants, and reinforcing pride in shared ethnic identity. In fact, sports have been, and continue to be, a source of local, regional, and national pride for many Americans.

Participation in sports has served as a means of certifying social status and as a venue for promoting manliness and fitness and, later, feminine skill and strength. Sports provide myriad business opportunities as well as occupations for athletes, coaches, and many others. Sports hold up a mirror to society, reflecting trends in ethnicity, race, class, and gender. In essence, sports have come to represent a virtual social institution, one shaped by forces such as bureaucratization, immigration, industrialization, and urbanization.

As of the early twenty-first century, interest in sports, both active and passive, is at an all-time high.

Sports are enjoyed by men and women, children and adults, and people of all ethnic, racial, and class backgrounds. Sports also are big business. According to publisher Street & Smith, spectatorial and participatory sports in America generated more than \$200 billion in 2011—twice as much as the automobile industry.

Americans spend billions of dollars each year on sporting equipment alone. The two most popular participatory sports—fishing and hunting—lead the way: By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, some 30 million Americans spent more than \$40 billion annually on fishing gear, while more than 12 million spent upwards of \$25 billion on hunting equipment.

Spectator sports are bigger than ever. Americans devote more of their leisure time to watching sports—on television, in person, or through other forms of media such as the Internet—than they do taking part in them. American television networks produce some 2,100 hours of sports programming per year, with thousands more on cable; ESPN alone televises 24 hours a day, seven days a week, or about 8,500 hours each year. Americans are spending increasing sums of money on spectator sports—\$22.4 billion in 2010.

As a result, professional sports franchises have become extremely valuable. The New York Yankees, for example, were worth a reported \$1.7 billion in 2011, while the average Major League Baseball (MLB) team was valued at \$523 million. The leader in the National Football League (NFL) in 2010 (the latest available data) was the Dallas Cowboys, valued at \$1.8 billion, with a team average of \$1.02 billion. The leading franchise in the National Basketball Association (NBA) in 2011 was the New York Knicks, worth a reported \$655 million, while the NBA average was \$369 million per team. And in the National Hockey League (NHL), the most valuable franchise was the Toronto Maple Leafs at \$505 million, with a league average of \$228 million per team. Major college athletic programs continue to expand as well, with budgets of \$40

million to \$75 million annually and attendance at football games sometimes exceeding 100,000. Meanwhile, to support growing fan interest, private investors, companies, universities, and municipalities have been building facilities for professional sports teams on a regular basis since the late nineteenth century.

Professional athletes, oppressed by management for decades, began to assert their rights in the 1970s. Today, the best athletes earn tens of millions of dollars annually, while even journeyman players in the top leagues can become millionaires. In the NBA, for example, players made an average of \$5.85 million in 2010; in MLB, players earned an average of \$3.3 million. In the NFL, players averaged \$2.4 million, and in the NHL, they earned an average of \$1.9 million (a median of \$770,000). In individual sports, the stakes can be even higher. Golfer Tiger Woods, for instance, is estimated to have made more than \$1 billion over the course of his career, largely through endorsements.

Purpose of this Encyclopedia

This encyclopedia is divided into three sections. A series of long essays covers the history of American sports from colonial times to the twenty-first century. An A-to-Z section—the bulk of the book—covers a wide array of topics, including major athletes, teams, and institutions; individual and team sports; and broader thematic topics, such as business, media, immigration, and diplomacy. The book also includes a variety of ancillary materials, such as a thematic topic finder, a directory of leading sports organizations and leagues, a general bibliography, and a detailed index. In addition, each article offers a specialized list of recommended further readings, and A-to-Z entries also include cross references to related entries.

Generally, this work serves two purposes: First, it provides a comprehensive history of American sports—both in their spectatorial and their participatory forms—from the nation's beginnings to the present day. This is not the kind of history that you will find in conventional sports reference works, such as those that fill the sports sections of local bookstores. Not every player and team is covered here—rather, this book focuses on those who have shaped their sport and American society in significant ways.

Second, this book provides in-depth analysis of how social forces have shaped American sports history, and, in turn, how sports have shaped American society—affecting such issues as integration, social policy, class, and gender—throughout the course of history. Thus,

this encyclopedia emphasizes analysis and interpretation, along with factual information. While critical statistical information can be found in abundance here, it is provided not as an end in itself, but as a means of assessing the significance of a team or an individual athlete's accomplishments so as to measure his or her impact on a specific sport and on the history of sports in general.

Curious fans, of course, can find more comprehensive statistical information in almanacs or, increasingly, on the Internet. But what they usually cannot find there is analysis and contextualization—what sports have meant to American history and society for the past 400 years—and an examination of how sports have evolved from a morally suspect form of fringe entertainment to become a treasured national institution and an integral part of our daily lives. For that, intellectually curious fans—as well as those who are not fans—can find much to explore in this work.

Acknowledgments

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Once the project was under way, many people provided ideas and suggestions, ranging from potential topics to thoughts about particular themes such as nationalism and identity. I want to thank Richard C. Crepeau, Michael Doxtater, Jocelyn East, Gerald R. Gems, Greg Gillespie, Alan Gordon, Christopher Green, Andrew Holman, Bruce Kidd, John McClelland, Karen McGarry, Alan Metcalfe, Don Morrow, Robert Pruter, Andrew Ross, Ronald A. Smith, Michel Vigneault, Charlene Weaving, and John Chi-Kit Wong.

I also want to thank the many other contributors who did such a fine job researching, analyzing, and writing for the encyclopedia. In addition, I would like to apologize to those contributors whose essays could not be included in the final work. Late in the process, it became clear that the extensive amount of important information to be included required that we narrow the scope of the project from a broader discussion of North American sports to focus primarily on sports in the United States.

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Steven A. Riess

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