

a unique urban structure whereby strangers assemble not only to be entertained but to 'engage the other' in meaningful dialogue" (p. 188).

After all of this analysis the authors end almost apologetically by suggesting much of this research could amount to "socio-babble," and the major societal function of sport fandom is possibly "to provide spectators and fans alike with a time-out institution" (p. 208). So the major psychological and sociological function of sport fandom is escape; sport offers people momentary freedom from the pressures and tedium of everyday life. (I told you much of this smacks of common sense.) But I find this a strange note to end on; it short-changes much of what the authors did in the previous 207 pages of this book. Of course sport offers escape, but this begs the question on which this inquiry began: at what psychological and sociological (not to mention political and economic) cost or benefit? This is an important question the authors ask, and they do a nice job presenting some of the research that might help us answer it. But as the authors concede, much work is still to be done.

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WATTERSON, JOHN SAYLE. *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy*. Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. Pp. xiv + 456. Notes, illustrations, bibliographical essay, index. \$34.95 cb.

This detailed study focuses on the persistence of corruption and scandal in college football throughout nearly its entire history, despite frequent calls for reform. Contemporary abuses strikingly resemble those of the early twentieth century. Even in the 1890s football critics charged that the sport, which had no connection to the school's academic mission, distracted students from their work and undermined the building of character as gentlemen defined it. Obsessed with winning, football spectators, much like those at a prizefight, clamored for their team to injure opposing players. By the 1920s many universities were erecting enormous stadiums whose seating capacity exceeded that of major league baseball parks, requiring a substantial shift of financial resources from academics. College coaches often recruited men who had never graduated from high school and who were not expected to attend class.

Professional coaches, employed solely to win games and often paid higher salaries than distinguished professors, quickly replaced the gentleman amateur. During the 1920s, the national celebrity of Notre Dame's Knute Rockne enabled him to earn huge sums endorsing products and as a business consultant, underlining the intrusion of commercial values into college football. His annual retainer from Studebaker Motors was more than the company president's salary.

In the book's first section, Watterson effectively describes the evolution of the early game, focusing on the brutality crisis resolved by rule changes introduced between 1906 and 1912 that resulted in a faster, more open game. He might have devoted more attention here to comparing football violence with that of late nineteenth-century student rituals like cane rush, which involved a larger proportion of the student body and were considered even more dangerous.

Watterson demonstrates how the Deep South, which Northerners had long derided as economically and culturally backward, relied heavily on college football to overcome low sectional prestige, delighting in victories over Yankee schools. Determined to protect their players' eligibilities and discourage them from taking their services elsewhere, by the 1920s colleges across the country were supplying athletes with funds through make-work jobs and providing them with tutors. But the Deep South's particularly intense involvement with football led colleges there to introduce athletic scholarships during the 1930s, a practice schools in other regions considered too overtly mercenary.

To illustrate the quasi-religious status of football in the Deep South, Watterson cites the strong emotional backing for legendary Alabama coach "Bear" Bryant by university trustees and state political leaders when he was accused of game-fixing in 1963. He notes that the National Football League (NFL) would likely have reacted very differently to similar charges involving its personnel. Here Watterson could have directly compared the unwillingness of college football and university authorities to take action against Bryant with the NFL's harsh punishment of Paul Hornung and Alex Karras in the pro football gambling scandal occurring at the same time.

In a lengthy section on race, Watterson underscores the isolation and vulnerability of African-American players at white colleges, who regularly suffered harassment into the 1960s. He does not examine football at black colleges. Northern colleges often benched their black players when facing Southern teams. Opponents deliberately injured black players, as in 1951 when an Oklahoma A&M lineman broke running back Johnny Bright's jaw, virtually ending his college career. Conference officials refused to discipline the offender. Two decades after Jackie Robinson broke into major league baseball, Texas A&M cadets taunted Jerry Levias, the first African-American scholarship player in the Southwest Conference, by placing black cats on the field.

The increasing commercialization of college football during the last several decades further corrupted the sport, intensifying schools' determination to field a winning team regardless of the consequences. Coaches' salaries grew astronomically, but there was no tolerance for losing, placing even more pressure on them to recruit the academically unqualified and to offer illegal gifts and bribes. Led to believe from an early age that their athletic talent allowed them special privileges, pampered recruits during the 1980s severely damaged several colleges' reputations by engaging in gang rape, shootings, and hard drug use, sometimes in the athletic dorm. Despite such outrages, football enjoyed such high status in many states that fans denounced any criticism of these programs as "Communist."

Believing that big-time college football has spun out of control, threatening universities' academic missions, Watterson urges the faculty to assume greater control. Yet football at least remains committed to meritocracy, which the faculty, engaged in massive grade inflation, has abandoned.

Watterson has contributed a carefully researched and often insightful examination of themes central to the history of college football, helping to fill a major gap in sport scholarship.

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