

# Sport and Politics in Cartoons and Comics

KRISTINE WARNING

Pennsylvania State University

This paper, which will be augmented by slides of appropriate cartoons, will attempt to demonstrate the inter-relationship between the political cartoon and the sports cartoon and comic. The medium of “sport” has been used since the rise of political cartooning as a stage setting for the cartoonist’s statement. Van Dalen’s study, “Political Cartoons Employing Sports as a Communications Media” (1976), gives evidence of this. Politicians in athletic garb have been a frequent sight in editorial cartoons. Today this trend continues, but there is an extra dimension. Sport itself has become a political issue, and this political element in sport has been ridiculed by the cartoonist.

Not all sporting cartoons have a political theme. Since the rise in popularity of the sports cartoon, emanating from turn-of-the-century San Francisco, and artists such as Thomas (Tad) Dorgan, to today’s “Tank McNamara”, by Jeff Millar and Bill Hinds, a plethora of sporting angles have been ridiculed. This study will, however, concentrate on the evolution of the political sports cartoon. Emphasis will be on cartoons relating to events (for example, the Olympic Games) rather than specific sports.

Sources for such cartoons and comics will be primarily newspapers and periodicals, especially *Punch*, *The Nets Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. In order to gain some perspective on this specific development within comic art, a brief history of the field, from the Paleolithic Era to the present, will be necessary.