

# Baseball, Boxing and Bicycling in Porfirian Mexico

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This paper examines baseball, boxing, and bicycling in Mexico during the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz, 1876-1911, especially the 1890s. It argues that baseball (according to legend introduced by Abner Doubleday) demonstrated the growing influence of the United States in Mexico and the rush by the Mexican elite to adopt foreign, especially British and American, activities, including sport. Boxing not

only expressed this mimicry, but also revealed the new security and routine established by the Diaz regime that resulted in a quest for excitement in what had abruptly become an “unexciting” society. Above all Mexicans recognized the importance of progress, speed, and modernization through technology as they adopted the bicycle.

Mexican cyclists in the capital organized the Cyclist Union Club that also allowed foreign members. The club financed La Piedad racing track, sponsored social and competitive events, corresponded with other clubs in Mexico and beyond, pushed for better roads and friendlier laws, and encouraged female participation.

Riding a bicycle led the cyclist to accept new attitudes that constitute the modern temper, especially the fascination with technology. This widened the division between the elite and the other Mexico that remained secure in its traditions. The widening gap between the modern and the traditional segments of society created the circumstances in which the revolutionaries of 1910 could sweep Diaz from power in 1911, but also prevented the creation of a viable revolutionary regime until the era of Lazaro Cardenas.



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