

# Not So Instant Replay: Documenting Sports In America

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The study of man's recreational and sports habits crosses all scholarly disciplines. Historians, sociologists, political scientists, kinesiologists, and others pursue the better understanding of sports.

Yet there does not exist an organized approach to an integrated collection policy for sports documentation or a plan for the publication of significant documents to provide an historical basis for the study of sports. With the almost explosive increase in the study of sports since the 1960s, there is a need to save and publish the documents relating to the history of sports and its impact on society.

This paper, therefore, seeks to identify major areas of need to document the history of sport. Beyond suggestions for the collection of papers of great sportsmen and sportswomen, who as a group probably write fewer letters than any other group of notables, this paper encourages the exploration of several themes of sports history. This encompasses the study of sexism and racism, the evolution of amateur athletics as a major revenue source for many scholarly institutions, and the role of big business in professional sports.

Also, the author hopes to convey a sense of urgency that the study of the subject would dictate. For example, a scholar is able to study the European reaction to native American games and their impact on native life and the anti-trust cases against baseball. But what documentation is being saved to record the current probations handed to collegiate teams in violation of amateur athletics rules and regulations? Are any records being maintained of the use of both legal and illegal drugs in the sports world save on the sport pages of newspapers? Is there an archives being established for the materials produced by the myriad Olympics and similar international games. Arc video tapes being properly stored? In an area which keeps an incredible amount of statistics on both individuals and groups; who has the permanent responsibility for recording another "triple double" in a basketball player's career or a perfect 300 score on the lanes?

There is the need to document the opportunities that sports have provided various members of lower economic groups; a need to document the cohesive forces of sports interests. Before night World Series Games, the radio and later television brought this great American past-time into schoolrooms, shops and just about anywhere modern communication could reach. And it is not without reason that Monday morning in Washington, DC is a lot friendlier following a Washington Redskins win rather than a loss the day before. Beyond the study of the immediate impact of sports on the individual and society, there is the need to document the philosophical and political evolution of sports in world politics. Have international sports become "bloodless" wars of national supremacy? Does American democracy vie with totalitarian orders in sports competition? And to what extent are both systems similar in the goals of their national programs? These and other issues of sports history need to be documented in an integrated, organized way.