

Development of a New Sports Library: the Amateur Athletic Foundation's Ziffren Center

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The Paul Ziffren Sports Resource Center in Los Angeles is a major new source of information for sport historians. The center's library represents a marriage of two older sport collections: the Helms Collection, begun in Los Angeles in the 1930s; and the San Jose based National Library of Sports, purchased by the center in 1989.

The library houses a variety of media—monographs, annuals, magazines, journals, newspapers, scrapbooks, Olympic documents, media guides, game programs, microforms, photographs, films and videos—totalling more than 500,000 individual items dating back to the eighteenth century and covering the full range of sport.

Three professional librarians staff the facility, which features an online catalog, several database services, video viewing rooms and copy equipment. The library is open to the public. Staff provide telephone reference and limited document delivery service.

Dedicated in 1988, the center is operated by the Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles, a \$93 million foundation created with the surplus funds from the 1984 Olympic Games.

The development of a sport library at the Ziffren Center is not a unique phenomenon. As sport sciences have developed in North America during the past twenty-five years—and as sport has become an increasingly prominent feature of North American popular culture there has been a corresponding growth of sport archives and libraries. Several academic institutions, private associations, public libraries, and sport museums and halls of fame now maintain collections that provide a rich array of historical information.

The development of sport libraries has led, in turn, to the emergence of a North American association of librarians and information professionals with an interest in sport. The North American Sport Library Network (NASLIN) held its first conference in Los Angeles in April 1990. NASLIN has published a directory of North American sport collections and, in the future, may develop a union list of periodicals and a resource sharing network that will assist sport historians and other scholars to identify the existence and location of sport research materials.