

Dropping Hierarchies: Toward the Study of a Contemporary Sporting Avant-Garde

Robert Rinehart

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

In this paper, I argued against the use of the sport-as-drama metaphor which is often used in historical research. I suggested that contemporary sport may be viewed in terms of an avant-garde and provide a theoretical basis for the selection of the “sport-as-avant-garde” metaphor. I based this argument on the modern/postmodern dialectic, and my implication is that sport and sport studies are only now embracing the modern era. I substantiated the historical art-sport connection and explore the historical and contemporary use of the term avant-garde. Further, I indicated how the avant-garde may be used as a metaphor for the study of sport and provide specific examples from professional football and the media in the United States in the past thirty years to support my theoretical argument regarding the avant-garde in contemporary sport.