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***Crossing Sidelines, Crossing Borders:* Basketball in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1930-1950**

The San Francisco Bay Area is not generally known as a hotbed of basketball tradition. However, during the 1930s and 1940s its basketball courts were sites of intriguing racial, ethnic, and gender border crossings, which interacted with the cultural diversity of the San Francisco Bay Area during this period. Before, during, and just after World War II, whether in community, high school, college, commercial, or semi-professional basketball, young men and women of Irish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Mexican, and African American ancestries were able to develop, reinforce, and break down cultural identities and stereotypes. In the mid-1930s, the great Angelo 'Hank' Luisetti surfaced from San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood to become the Michael Jordan of his era. Ten years later San Francisco basketball fans thrilled to the exploits of a small, Chinese American, Willie 'Woo Woo' Wong, who never became as famous as Luisetti but yet represented the powerful courtside cultural interactions of San Francisco basketball. Moreover, during the late 1940s, Wong's sister Helen became one of the most storied 'school girl' basketball players in San Francisco's history.

This paper analyzes the cultural interactions taking place in basketball in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1930s and 1940s through an examination of contemporary newspapers and oral history accounts. It demonstrates how basketball provided culturally diverse females and males with powerful community identities during a tumultuous era and considers how basketball helped propel them across racial, ethnic, and gender borders that were difficult to transcend. It also examines how basketball can reinforce such borders and, thus support, racial, ethnic, and gender hierarchies.

This paper builds on the efforts of scholars such as Roberta Park and Samuel Regaldo to extend the boundaries of American sport history westward beyond the Rocky Mountains and supports the case for integrating the sporting experiences of culturally diverse people of both sexes into sport historiography.