

transpired, twentieth century baseball has provided a common cultural practice for many Latinos and North Americans. The game has served as an institution for “Americanizing” new populations in the U.S. as well as an arena for Latinos to strive for social acceptance. These, however, are not uncomplicated processes. During professional baseball’s Jim Crow era, the incorporation of individuals from the Spanish-speaking Americas raised questions about their eligibility for inclusion (and to what degree). As demonstrated in the Almonte case, baseball still represents an institution where the meaning of social inclusion, citizenship, and national belonging all come into play. Moreover, beyond the playing field, the ways these issues were contested in the Almonte controversy sheds light on the problematic process of everyday surveillance of the “other” – a social form of policing where the punishment for being suspect (not belonging) within the national imaginary is banishment to the periphery of American society.

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**The Mexicanos Show Them: The 1961 Donna  
Redskins and Their Drive to the Texas State  
Football Championship**

During the past three decades the breadth of Mexican American history has expanded dramatically as researchers explored the development of various communities throughout the United States as well as spotlighting class, religious, and political diversity within this group. While much has been learned, there are still facets of barrio life that remain relatively unexplored; athletic endeavor is one such area. An increased Mexican American/Latino presence in a variety of professional and amateur athletic activities attests to the growing significance of this minority group at all levels of the American sporting scene. Yet, the history of team sports in the United States is still framed, almost exclusively, in terms of black/white interactions. In the case of states with large Mexican American/Latino populations, such as Texas, this omission leaves a gap in our historical understanding of sport and its impact on social relations. This lacuna calls for the examination of Mexican American athletic success, and how it has contributed to breaking down stereotypes

of their intellectual and physical limitations, The story of the 1961 Donna High School Redskins, the only team from the Rio Grande Valley ever to claim a state football championship, will explore some of the issues surrounding Mexican American success on the gridiron and its impact on social relations.

Given many Texans' infatuation with high school football, the result of Mexican American success on the gridiron can have a significant influence on how the broader society views such individuals in towns throughout the state. Over the past four decades, writers such as Harold Ratliff, Bill McMurray, and Carlton Stowers have chronicled Texas' love affair with high school football. These authors have worked to preserve the great games and feats of the sport that dominates Friday nights throughout Texas during each fall. In recent years a number of works, lead by H.G. Bissinger's notorious Friday Night Lights, have painted a much darker picture of the rites and rituals surrounding Texas' obsession with gridiron battles. Regardless of the author's analysis of the benefits or shortcomings of the sport, Mexican Americans have made little more than cameo appearances in the various histories of Texas high school football. As far as many Lone Star State football fans are concerned, the areas of the state where Mexican Americans predominate, in the South Texas and El Paso, are considered the "death valleys" of Texas.

It is because of such notions and stereotyping that the triumph of the 1961 Donna Redskins (comprised mostly of Mexican Americans) is so significant. The team lost its first two games and barely registered on the polls for Class AA throughout the season. This paper will draw on oral history interviews, area newspapers, and secondary literature on masculinity, sport, Texas and Mexican Americans to highlight how athletic success helped counter the stereotypical construction of Mexican Americans as "greasers" and "wetbacks" in southern Texas.

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### **Black Fives: The True Story of the Colored Basketball World's Champions, 1907-1925**

The Black Fives Era had its genesis in 1904 when a Negro physical fitness instructor originally introduced the game of basketball to African Americans in Washington, DC. At first