

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

everyone saw basketball as a purely amateur recreational option that might offer physical and even spiritual benefits to its players, primarily members of America's colored elite, but that soon changed. Between 1904 and 1922, colored basketball grew from little more than a recreational afterthought into a game with national prominence among Negroes in America, largely due to the efforts of the intellectual son of an immigrant New York City grocer and the streetwise son of a Pittsburgh ship-builder. What initially were loosely organized amateur teams that played for fun, club spirit, and honor, rapidly evolved into an extensive national network of black fives that were followed and supported by fans and boosters, were covered feverishly in the national Negro press, were compensated generously, and played each season for a national title – the Colored Basketball World's Championship. Furthermore, during that span basketball among Negroes transformed from a game for elites to a game for the streets.

By 1925, a single all-black, nationally famous, out-and-out professional basketball team – the Harlem Renaissance Big Five – had emerged at the hands of a native West Indian to become so outstanding that they not only won the Negro national title that year but also subsequently dominated colored basketball until the late 1940s. But there was a price to pay for their success – the ultimate demise of all the original black fives. This study examines the original roots of black basketball: what happened and why, who did what, and where and how it all took place. The vibrant parallel sporting culture of the Black Fives Era included regional and inter-city team rivalries, coveted star players whose popularity sold tickets and commanded headlines, ideological conflicts between “good” and “evil” forces that shaped the Negro basketball landscape, powerful promoters who influenced the course of the game, and the unforeseen dramatic twists of a turbulent time, all in the midst of the most pivotal period of African American history in the last century.

The study centers on four individuals who played pivotal roles during the Black Fives Era. Edwin Henderson, who as the man that introduced the sport to colored high school students in the nation's capitol was perhaps the grandfather of black basketball: Will Anthony Madden and Cumberland Willis Posey, Jr. who having been instrumental in expanding Negro basketball to a national level as it's most fervent and successful team promoters

may have been its kings, and Robert Douglas who, as the man that inherited and successfully exploited the gains and discoveries in colored basketball made by his predecessors, was undoubtedly its crown prince.

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Not the Little Old Lady from Dubuque but Sol Butler, An Unheralded World Class Athlete

Jim Crowism, exacerbated by the famous or infamous Plessy v.. Ferguson Supreme Court decision in 1896, sounded a half-century death knell for integration in American sporting competition. With few exceptions African-Americans were excluded from integrated competition until professional baseball's Jackie Robinson broke the color line in 1946. One of these early black performers was the unheralded Edward Solomon Butler, a multi-talented athlete from the University of Dubuque (Iowa). Butler, the son of an emancipated slave, was born near Kingfisher, Oklahoma. He demonstrated outstanding athletic talents, particularly in football and track and field. After an illustrious athletic career in two high schools, Butler was recruited by the University of Dubuque, a small Presbyterian College near the banks of the Mississippi River in northeastern Iowa. The date was 1915 when only a smattering of African-Americans matriculated to American colleges and universities.

Butler's track and field accomplishments during college gained nationwide attention. He competed in the Penn Relays and other prestigious track and field events. In 1919 the barrel-chested 'Black Knight' broke the American record in the running long jump at the Interallied Games in Paris with a leap of 24 feet, nine and one-half inches. He defeated the renowned American speedster Charles Paddock in the ninety-yard dash. In 1920 Butler was one of three African-Americans to qualify for the US Olympic Track and Field team. The Games were held in Antwerp, Belgium and Butler was favored to win the running long jump. Fate intervened when the trackster pulled a tendon in his right leg on the first jump in the qualification round. After one more attempt, a distraught Butler withdrew from competition.

Butler's track and field career was all but over. He turned to professional football where he competed for several teams in the