



Game Over: How Politics Has Turned the Sports World Upside Down

By Dave Zirin

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Sportscaster Howard Cosell dubbed it “rule number one of the jockocracy”: sports and politics just don’t mix. But in *Game Over*, celebrated alt-sportswriter Dave Zirin proves once and for all that politics has breached the modern sports arena with a vengeance. From the NFL lockout and the role of soccer in the Arab Spring to the Penn State sexual abuse scandals and Tim Tebow’s on-field genuflections, this timely and hard-hitting new book from the “conscience of American sportswriting” (*The Washington Post*) reveals how our most important debates about class, race, religion, sex, and the raw quest for political power are played out both on and off the field.

Game Over offers new insights and analysis of headline-grabbing sports controversies, exploring the shady side of the NCAA, the explosive 2011 MLB All-Star Game, and why the Dodgers crashed and burned. It covers the fascinating struggles of gay and lesbian athletes to gain acceptance, female athletes to be more than sex symbols, and athletes everywhere to assert their collective bargaining rights as union members. Zirin also illustrates the ways in which athletes are once again using their exalted platforms to speak out and reclaim sports from the corporate interests that have taken it hostage. In *Game Over*, he cheers the victories but also reflects on how far we have yet to go. Combining brilliant set pieces with a sobering overview of today’s sports scene in Zirin’s take-no-prisoners style, *Game Over* is a must read for anyone, sports fan or not, interested in understanding how sports reflect and shape society—and why the stakes have never been higher.

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Editorial Review

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Short of wearing out the subject of politics in sports (Bad Sports, 2010, and *A People's History of Sports in the United States*, 2008), sports analyst Zirin focuses here on the pushback by athletes and fans around the globe against injustices they see, whether in sports alone or on the larger political stage. For example, the NBA's Phoenix Suns changed their name to Los Suns for their 2010 Cinco de Mayo game versus the San Antonio Spurs to express their solidarity with Arizona's Hispanics over the state's tough anti-immigration laws. The NFL Players Association stood against Wisconsin governor Scott Walker's efforts to strip collective bargaining rights from public workers there. And there was worldwide support of South African runner Caster Semenya, who won silver in the women's 800-meter event at the 2012 London Games, over questions regarding the legitimacy of her stated gender. Other subjects include the Penn State scandal, the public reaction to Linsanity, and the continued objectification of women in sports. Readers who have responded to Zirin's other highly engaging books will find more of the same here. --Alan Moores

Review

“A damning indictment of all that is corrupting sports and a song of praise for athletes standing up for human rights and decency.”

—*Kirkus*

“In his enlightening essay collection, Nation columnist and author Zirin (*Welcome to the Terrordome*) employs common sense and research to show that politics and sports are entangled, whether it's members of the Green Bay Packers supporting the collective bargaining rights of Wisconsin's public workers or the Phoenix Suns donning 'Los Suns' uniforms to protest Arizona's controversial, immigrant-obsessed law, SB 1070. . . . Zirin steadfastly demonstrates how the games we watch are not just an escape from the everyday: they are a reflection that provides a perfect opportunity for protest and change.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

About the Author

One of the *UTNE Reader*'s “50 Visionaries Who Are Changing Our World,” **Dave Zirin** is a columnist for *The Nation*, *SLAM* magazine, and *SI.com*. He is the host of Sirius XM's popular weekly show *Edge of Sports Radio* and a regular guest on ESPN's *Outside the Lines* and on MSNBC. His previous books include *A People's History of Sports in the United States* and *Bad Sports: How Owners Are Ruining the Games We Love* (both available from The New Press). He lives near Washington, D.C.

Users Review

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David Sweet:

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