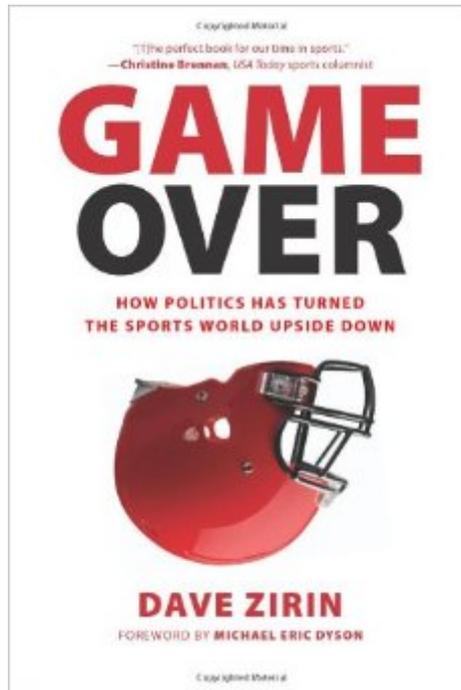


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Game Over: How Politics Has Turned The Sports World Upside Down



Synopsis

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.

Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: The New Press (January 29, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1595588159

ISBN-13: 978-1595588159

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 0.8 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (33 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #352,057 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #129 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > Sociology of Sports](#) #1865 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > General](#) #22394 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences](#)

Customer Reviews

Dave Zirin does certainly not have writer's block. He has been churning out books virtually every year since 2005 when he published "What's My Name, Fool? Sports and Resistance in the United States." He gives voice to my frustrations with his leftist take on sports, politics, and society in modern America. Zirin is at his best, as in the case with this book, when he does not try to write history but instead comments on current issues. Too often, unfortunately, Zirin's historical work is a bit less sophisticated than I would like. That is not the case with this book. He focuses in "Game Over" on a series of recent events in the incursion of politics into sports, mostly in the U.S. but also with some discussion of events elsewhere. The book opens with a narrative of how NFL and NBA owners both sought at essentially the same time a massive transfer of the proceeds of these games from players to the owners. This is greed run amok, not unlike the greed that led to the global meltdown in 2007-2008. The NFL owners locked out the players, but the players' association was able to draw connections to the Occupy Wall Street demonstrations and helped themselves get past the general meme that billionaires and millionaires were duking it out over who got more of the lucrative NFL pie. The players especially tied themselves to the thousands of service industry workers who made their livings at the stadiums, bars, restaurants, and other work associated with game day. By emphasizing that the players were working stiffs, albeit well-paid ones for very short average careers, as opposed to those who own the teams and suck local communities dry in stadium deals and exploit workers across the board, the players gained the upper hand in negotiations.

The lesson I learned from this read is that a good book can be ruined by too much soap-box. Game Over by Dave Zirin is mostly a well-written, engaging book. It looks at the sports-world, both in America and abroad, and its relationship with politics. These are connections that need to be better recognized and Zirin does a good job of drawing the lines to make the connections. The first chapter begins with the Green Bay Packers – so of course, how could I not love that – and the connections between the Packers, the NFL Lockout, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker and the Occupy Movement. Other chapters cover soccer and the Arab Spring, the Olympics and a global movement towards police states, and the NCAA and labor. The most powerful chapter is the one on Joe Paterno and the sports world's willingness to turn its eyes from very terrible wrongs. As Zirin points out, "this is what happens when a football program becomes the economic, social, and spiritual heartbeat of an entire region." I have no doubt that had this book been written a few months later, that chapter would have included conversation about St. Ignace as well. The chapter on "Sexuality and Sports" highlights far more than just your average "woman aren't

treated equallyâ • view. Zirin gets into everything from the ultra-sexualization of some women athletes to the full gender spectrum that includes more than those on the outer edges of masculine and feminine. If you were to pick up this book and only read 2 chapters, Iâ™d definitely suggest this one and the one on Paterno. As I said, Game Over is mostly well-written. Itâ™s sprinkled throughout with a little too much of Zirinâ™s own politics. These things can be glossed over for the most part, until you get to the last chapter.

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