



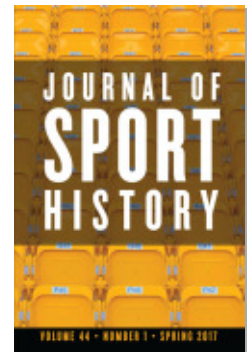
PROJECT MUSE®

Redskins: Insult and Brand by C. Richard King (review)

Marcy S. Sacks

Journal of Sport History, Volume 44, Number 1, Spring 2017, pp. 117-118
(Review)

Published by University of Illinois Press



➔ For additional information about this article

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/651112>

decision to participate in the Maccabiah despite serious security concerns presented by the Second Intifada cast him as a role model of Jewish courage. Nonetheless, most Maccabiah participants are not elite athletes, and the caliber of the competition has elicited criticism.

Beyond the unevenness of athletic performance, Kaplan acknowledges the perennial problems of Maccabiah organization, shortcomings that extend to finances, the point system, transportation, and food. Moreover, Maccabiah has had limited success in encouraging *Aliyah*. Nonetheless, Kaplan finds substantive Maccabiah achievement in fostering links between Israel and the Diaspora, connecting Diaspora Jews with one another and heightening the Jewish consciousness of participants.

Certain caveats emerge. Occasional factual errors and grammatical miscues survived the editing process. Several of the lengthy verbatim newspaper quotes merit pruning. Absent institutional records and documents, footnote citations pertain largely to newspapers and Kaplan's interviews. And there is neither a concluding synthesis nor a bibliography.

The Jewish Olympics is neither definitive nor monographic. Informative and engaging, *The Jewish Olympics* provides a benchmark and encouragement for future Maccabiah research. The book will appeal to readers interested in the intersection of Judaism and international sport.

—William M. Simons

State University of New York at Oneonta

King, C. Richard. *Redskins: Insult and Brand*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2016. Pp. 226. Illustrations. \$24.95, hb.

In April 2016, the Washington R*dskins organization filed a special petition with the Supreme Court seeking to overturn the revocation of six trademark registrations issued two years prior by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. The 2014 cancellation resulted from that body's conclusion that the moniker violates the "disparagement clause" of federal trademark law. Despite mounting criticism, the team's ownership continues to fight for the name, insisting that it honors native people. In a new twist, this latest petition also claims (erroneously) that, since Native Americans failed to object to the team name during previous patent applications, they had missed their chance to denounce it now.

In his timely, important, and eminently readable book, C. Richard King examines the cultural significance of the defiant attachment to a team name and brand rooted in a racist slur. In the face of growing discomfort and active opposition, team owner Dan Snyder has vowed to NEVER change the moniker ("you can use caps," he declared in 2013). Much more than simply adherence to tradition, the intransigent defense of the name, King tells us, reflects the deep-seated resentment felt by white men toward "multiculturalism, feminism, and postindustrialization" (9). Indeed, he argues, the use of the word "R*dskins" speaks much more to notions of whiteness (and masculinity) than to ideas about Indians.

King traces the nearly century-long history of the Washington (formerly Boston) professional football team's use of invented and ahistorical Indianness that effectively

constructs a framework for white male identity. Positioning itself as the “team of the South,” the R*dskins staunchly resisted racial integration until pressured to do so by the federal government under the Kennedy administration. At that time, the team toned down the most patently offensive Indian imagery, but the owner continued to reify and commodify the stereotype as a way to foster fans’ identification with the team and promote fierce, passionate, and lucrative loyalty to “R*dskin Nation.”

The name itself and the associated iconography not only perpetuate stereotypes and outright racism, but they also promote the erasure of Native Americans in contemporary society. Invented Indians like the D.C. team’s mascot have become accepted as more real and authentic than actual, living people. And the blindness extends to anti-Indian racism itself; when devotees of the name insist on their own noble intent, they deny the legitimacy of claims of offense and harm. As King powerfully demonstrates, the moniker’s persistence has the effect of entrenching the disparagement and dehumanization of Indigenous people, regardless of its proponents’ objective. It simultaneously affirms the racial order premised on the privilege of everyday, unremarkable whiteness. “It’s not me they are honoring,” explained Autumn White Eyes, a Lakota Indian. “[T]hey are honoring themselves for doing such a good job on killing all the Indians” (106).

King methodically dismantles the organization’s disingenuous claim that they are honoring and respecting Indigenous people by retaining the team’s moniker. Through an array of contemporary examples that demonstrate harm caused by the name and an effective grounding in the history of both the term and the team’s adoption of it, King makes a powerful case that the term *r*dskin* should be retired as other offensive epithets have been. As it is, the team’s self-serving myth-making only serves to perpetuate “the ownership of Indianness, the denial of history and power, and the preservation of [white] privilege” (28). It does absolutely nothing to genuinely esteem Indigenous people in the United States.

—Marcy S. Sacks
Albion College

McConnell, Jim. *Bobo Newsome: Baseball’s Traveling Man*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2016. Pp. xi + 256. Photos, notes, bibliography, and index. \$35.00, pb.

The history of baseball is filled with colorful personalities, from Dizzy Dean and Yogi Berra to “Spaceman” Bill Lee and Bryce Harper, but few rival pitcher Bobo Newsome’s circus-like, almost three-decade career in organized baseball. From the time he signed his first professional contract in 1928 to the time he hung up his cleats in 1953, Newsome battled the establishment to play baseball on his terms and by his rules. He was “the ultimate outsider” (57), writes Jim McConnell in his enjoyable and engrossing biography of the pitcher who was determined to make baseball fun.

A three-time twenty-game winner and four-time All-Star, Newsome owned a heater and a wicked slider that helped him stick around for twenty years in the majors, log in