



The Rise and Fall of Olympic Amateurism (Sport and Society)

Matthew P Llewellyn, John Gleaves

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For decades, amateurism defined the ideals undergirding the Olympic movement. No more. Today's Games present athletes who enjoy open corporate sponsorship and unabashedly compete for lucrative commercial endorsements.

Matthew P. Llewellyn and John Gleaves analyze how this astonishing transformation took place. Drawing on Olympic archives and a wealth of research across media, the authors examine how an elite--white, wealthy, often Anglo-Saxon--controlled and shaped an enormously powerful myth of amateurism. The myth assumed an air of naturalness that made it seem unassailable and, not incidentally, served those in power. Llewellyn and Gleaves trace professionalism's inroads into the Olympics from tragic figures like Jim Thorpe through the shamateur era of under-the-table cash and state-supported athletes. As they show, the increasing acceptability of professionals went hand-in-hand with the Games becoming a for-profit international spectacle. Yet the myth of amateurism's purity remained a potent force, influencing how people around the globe imagined and understood sport.

Timely and vivid with details, *The Rise and Fall of Olympic Amateurism* is the first book-length examination of the movement's foundational ideal.

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