



The Native American Identity in Sports: Creating and Preserving a Culture

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On October 15, 1964 Billy Mills became the only American to win an Olympic Gold Medal for the 10,000 meters. It was but one notable triumph in sports by a Native American. Yet, unlike Mills's achievement, most significant contributions from Native Americans have gone unheralded. From individual athletes, teams, and events, it is clear that the "Vanishing Americans" are not vanishing—but they are sadly overlooked.

The Native American Identity in Sports: Creating and Preserving a Culture not only includes, but goes beyond the great achievements of Billy Mills to note numerous other instances of Native American accomplishment and impact on sports. This collection of essays examines how sport has contributed to shaping and expressing Native American identity—from the attempt of the old Indian Schools to “Americanize” Native Americans through sport to the “Indian mascot” controversy and what it says about the broader public view of Native Americans. Additional essays explore the contemporary use of the traditional sport *Toka* to combat obesity in some Native American communities, the Seminoles’ commercialization of alligator wrestling—a “Native” sport that was, in fact, only developed as a sport due to interest from tourists—and much more.

The contributions to this volume not only tell the story of Native Americans’ participation in the world of sports, but also how Native Americans have changed and enriched the sports world in the process. For anyone interested in the deep effect sport has on culture, *The Native American Identity in Sports* is an indispensable read.

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William Marshall:

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