



Sidelined: How American Sports Challenged the Black Freedom Struggle (Civil Rights and the Struggle for Black Equality in the Twentieth Century)

Simon Henderson

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In 1968, noted sociologist Harry Edwards established the Olympic Project for Human Rights, calling for a boycott of that year's games in Mexico City as a demonstration against racial discrimination in the United States and around the world. Though the boycott never materialized, Edwards's ideas struck a chord with athletes and incited African American Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos to protest by raising their black-gloved fists on the podium after receiving their medals. *Sidelined* draws upon a wide range of historical materials and more than forty oral histories with athletes and administrators to explore how the black athletic revolt used professional and college sports to promote the struggle for civil rights in the late 1960s. Author Simon Henderson argues that, contrary to popular perception, sports reinforced the status quo since they relegated black citizens to stereotypical roles in society. By examining activists' successes and failures in promoting racial equality on one of the most public stages in the world, Henderson sheds new light on an often-overlooked subject and gives voice to those who fought for civil rights both on the field and off.

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