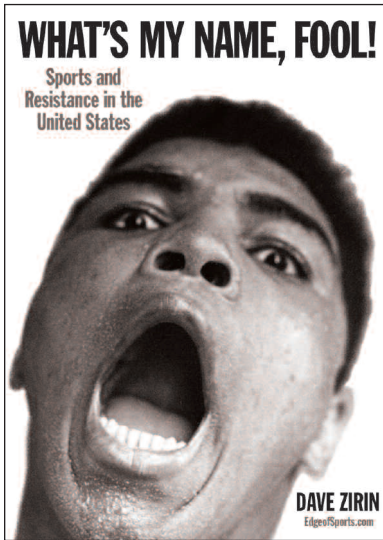


NEW FROM HaymarketBooks



WHAT'S MY NAME, FOOL?

Sports and Resistance in the United States

DAVE ZIRIN

In *What's My Name, Fool?* sports writer Dave Zirin shows how sports express the worst — and at times the most creative, exciting, and political — features of our society. Zirin's sharp and insightful commentary on the personalities, politics, and history of American sports is unlike any sports writing being done today.

Zirin explores how NBA brawls highlight tensions beyond the arena, how the bold stances taken by sports unions can chart a path for the entire labor movement, and the unexplored political stirrings of a new generation of athletes who are no longer content to just "play one game at a time"

What's My Name, Fool? draws on original interviews with former heavyweight champ George Foreman, Olympic athlete John Carlos, NBA player and anti-death penalty activist Etan Thomas, antiwar women's college hoopster Toni Smith, Olympic Project for Human Rights leader Lee Evans and many others.

It also unearths a history of athletes ranging from Jackie Robinson to Muhammad Ali to Billie Jean King, who charted a new course through their athletic ability and their outspoken views.

Popular sportswriter and commentator Dave Zirin is the editor of the *Prince George's Post*, for which he writes the weekly column, "Edge of Sports" (edgeofsports.com). He is the regular sports commentator for Air America's national radio show "So What Else is News?" Zirin is a Senior Writer at Basketball.com and regular columnist for *Sports Fan Magazine*. Zirin's sports journalism has also appeared in *The Source*, *Common Dreams*, *The College Sporting News*, *CounterPunch*, *AlterNet*, *The Afro-American*, *International Socialist Review*, *The Black Sports Network*, *War Times*, *The San Francisco Bay View*, and *Z Magazine*.

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Distributed to the trade by
CBSD www.cbsd.com
1-800-283-3572 (phone)
651-221-0124 (fax)
SAN: 2006049

ISBN 1-931859-20-5 \$15 paper July 2004 290 pp.

PRAISE FOR **Dave Zirin** and *What's My Name, Fool?*

"Zirin is America's best sportswriter."

—Lee Ballinger, *Rock and Rap Confidential*

"Zirin is one of the brightest, most audacious voices I can remember on the sports writing scene, and my memory goes back to the 1920s."

—Lester Rodney, *N.Y. Daily Worker* sports editor 1936–1958

"Zirin has an amazing talent for covering the sports and politics beat. Ranging like a great shortstop, he scoops up everything! He profiles the courageous and inspiring athletes who are standing up for peace and civil liberties in this repressive age. A must read!"

—Matthew Rothschild, *The Progressive*

"Zirin has unique wit, vast sports knowledge and delightful candor. It is refreshing to see someone who can cut through the fluff and get to the heart of any sports issue. You want sports with an edge? You picked the right book."

—Ed DeMayo, CEO basketball.com

"Dave Zirin is that rare thing—a writer who combines a passion for sport, deep knowledge of its history and a fearlessly radical critique of the role the rich and powerful play in it. This is cutting-edge analysis delivered with wit and compassion."

—Mike Marqusee, *Redemption Song: Muhammad Ali and the Spirit of the Sixties*

"Too often writers on the Left take a priggish attitude toward sports, huffing that an examination of the political economy of baseball or boxing is beneath serious commentary. It's a self-defeating posture. Sports are played by the poor and followed by working class fans, while the games themselves (and the profits) are controlled by a small cabal of super-rich owners and an oligarchy of media behemoths. As Dave Zirin shows in his riveting new book, *What's My Name, Fool?: Sports and Resistance in the United States*, these days you're much more likely to learn about the dynamics of class struggle, the power of unions and the persistence of racism by watching the Red Sox play the Yankees, than hours spent amid the visual backwash of CNN. Here you will find vividly written stories of exploitation and resistance, courage and collective action: from Tommy Smith and John Carlos's lone stance in Mexico City to the great Curt Flood's heroic break from the confines of baseball's plantation house. Zirin doesn't get bogged down in heavy theorizing. He writes with compassion, humor and a saber-like sharpness that deftly shreds owners and mainstream sportswriters alike. He's the new Lester Rodney. And that's very high praise, indeed."

—Jeffrey St. Clair, co-editor, *CounterPunch*

"Dave Zirin is truly an amazing writer. At BlackSportsNetwork.com we had been looking for writers who could deliver sharp and insightful stories that speak first and foremost to African American sports fans. Dave has continually delivered thought provoking ideas that offer a unique difference from the mainstream sports landscape. A rare talent indeed!"

—David Cole CEO/Publisher **Black Sports Network**

"Dave Zirin is that rarest of commodities in sports writing: an original voice. His writing reveals the ever present but ignored bridge between sports and struggle. *What's My Name, Fool?* will be loved by both Athletes who hate politics and activists who hate sports. As for progressives who are closet sports fans, finally here is a book for you."

—Mary Ratcliff, Editor, *San Francisco Bayview* (National Black Newspaper of the Year)

“Sports is far more than bread and circuses, far more than a mere distraction. Dave Zirin shows us not only that sports can be a window through which we can examine the complex workings of race and class in this twisted, commercialized culture, but that it can also be a site of resistance. Zirin finds that resistance in each and every sport, at both amateur and professional levels, and he even traces a history of struggle that informs today’s battles. If I was a religious believer, I’d say that Dave Zirin is the second coming of Lester Rodney, but I’m not, and, besides, they’re both Jewish. But I have no doubt that Rodney’s spirit fills Zirin’s soul. Lucky us!”

—Peter Rachleff, Author, *Hard-Pressed in the Heartland*

Too many progressive and caring people are hostile to sports per se. We need to understand the flaws and faults of corporate dominated, sexist, and racist sports, of course. But we also need to appreciate the artistry and excellence of sports both to understand why so many like it and appreciate it ourselves as well. In these respects, sports is rather like art, music, food, travel, movies, holidays, and everything else in a capitalist society. It is corrupted by profit and markets but it also has a heart, mind, and soul that we can appreciate. Dave Zirin looks at all sides of sports. He loves the essence, but he hates the corporate stench. He explains both with a clear, concise, caring, and wise style that is well worth reading.

—Michael Albert, *ZNet*

Zirin’s far-reaching essays and interviews with athletes who refused to stay quiet in the face of injustice are true profiles in political courage. In showing them that they are not alone, Zirin’s work will offer solace to athletes who have already taken a stand, and inspiration to others who might need to be reminded that the history of the activist-athlete is a long and proud one. With unusual flair and acuity Zirin trains his eye on the political dimensions of sport, beautifully illustrating its potential to transform culture. Both witty and incisive at turns, Zirin’s unique take on the political dimensions of sport makes for fascinating reading. Positioning himself at the intersection of major sports and mass media, Zirin explores the opportunity for social transformation presented by this junction. *What’s My Name, Fool?* is a must-read for the politically-interested sports lover. When it comes to the intersection of sports and politics, Dave Zirin is the wittiest and most engaging essayist writing today. This book belongs on the shelves of all sports-lovers who believe that athletes are people, too.

—Bryan Sacks, sportswriter, *Breakaway Monthly Magazine*, professor, Drexel University.

In *What’s My Name, Fool?* Dave Zirin proves that he is the only sports writer working who can stand tall where athletes and ideas meet and deliver a knockout.

—Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Light Heavyweight champion and founder of the boxing union J.A.B.

Sport in the US today is big business, and no one exposes the powerful interests who use it for profit and propaganda better than Dave Zirin. He identifies with and gives voice to those athletes and players who have become symbols of resistance. Zirin represents the very best of a new generation of radical journalists—a committed campaigner for social justice as well as a passionate writer. Whether or not you are a sports fan, you owe it to yourself to read this book.

—Professor Phil Gasper, contributor to *International Socialist Review* and *CounterPunch*

In the tradition of Lester Rodney and Ralph Wiley, Dave Zirin bridges the gap between social issues and pop culture with a smooth blend of radical passion and street smart prose. He’s the thinking man’s sports fan and the sports fan’s thinking man.

—Mickey Z, author, *The Seven Deadly Spins: Exposing the Lies Behind War Propaganda*

Dave Zirin is the rare writer who treats athletes as citizens, not as spectacles. Worldly but not cynical, political but not preachy, never sentimental and frequently hilarious, Zirin’s columns show a side of sports that the owners and the marketing execs do not want you to see.

—Chris Toensing, Editor, *Middle Eastern Report*