



Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Exploiting College Athletes

By Walter Byers

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Unsportsmanlike Conduct: Exploiting College Athletes By Walter Byers

Walter Byers, who served as NCAA executive director from 1951 to 1987, was charged with the dual mission of keeping intercollegiate sports clean while generating millions of dollars each year as income for the colleges. Here Byers exposes, as only he can, the history and present-day state of college athletics: monetary gifts, questionable academic standards, advertising endorsements, legal battles, and the political manipulation of college presidents.

Byers believes that modern-day college sports are no longer a student activity: they are a high-dollar commercial enterprise, and college athletes should have the same access to the free market as their coaches and colleges. He favors no one as he cites individual cases of corruption in NCAA history. From Byers' first enforcement case, against the University of Kentucky in 1952, to the NCAA's 1987 "death penalty" levied against Southern Methodist University of Dallas, he shows the change in the athletic environment from simple rules and personally responsible officials to convoluted, cyclopedic regulations with high-priced legal firms defending college violators against a limited NCAA enforcement system. This book is a must for anyone involved in college sports--athletes, coaches, fans, college faculty, and administrators.

"There has been no other executive in the history of professional, college, or amateur sports who has had such an impact in his area." --Keith Jackson, ABC Sports

"Walter Byers has done more to shape intercollegiate athletics than any single person in history. He brought a combination of leadership, insight, and integrity to intercollegiate athletics that we will never again see equaled." --Bob Knight, Head Basketball Coach, Indiana University

As NCAA executive director, Byers started the enforcement program, pioneered a national academic rule for athletes, and signed more than fifty television contracts with ABC, CBS, NBC, ESPN, and Turner Broadcasting. He oversaw the growth of the NCAA basketball tournament to one that, in 1988, grossed \$68.2 million. As the one person who has been inside college athletics for forty years, Walter Byers is uniquely qualified to tell the story of the NCAA and today's exploitation of college athletes.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The most shocking feature of this expose of American college athletic programs is that it comes from the man who oversaw those programs as executive director of the NCAA from 1951 to 1986. Written with freelancer Hammer, Byers's depiction is a uniformly dismal one principally regarding football and, to a lesser degree, basketball. At the top of the heap are college presidents, whom Byers terms "world-weary cynics" and who hold their jobs for relatively short periods compared with tenured faculty members; then there are head coaches, often greedy self-promoters, and their ever-expanding staffs, who take a huge bite out of athletic budgets; at the bottom are the athletes, who actually earn the money but get nothing in return, least of all a good education. Byers points out the sham of calling a multibillion-dollar industry "amateur," but, in a disappointing conclusion, he stops short of advocating salaries for players, proposing instead an unrealistic program of increased job opportunities for athletes. In his nostalgia for the days when academics ruled the campus, Byers comes across as a man of high principles who appears to have expended his energy on a useless cause. Photos not seen by PW.

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From Library Journal

From 1951 to 1966, Byers was executive director of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which oversees the conduct of college sports by its 1,099 members. Focusing on big-time NCAA football and basketball, he records abuses of admission and academic standards, the influence of television revenues, and misconduct by coaches and others. Citing his own reform efforts, he concludes that playing college sports is often not an amateur but a professional matter and that athletes should be better rewarded. Like Francis X. Dealy Jr.'s *Win at Any Cost* (LJ 10/15/90), this offers radical solutions and is well recommended. Morey Berger, St. Joseph's Hosp. Medical Lib., Tucson, Ariz.

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From the Back Cover

Here Byers exposes, as only he can, the history and present-day state of college athletics: monetary gifts, questionable academic standards, advertising endorsements, legal battles, and the political manipulation of college presidents.

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Shawn Hunter:

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