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Sports Violence

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Springer-Verlag
New York Berlin Heidelberg Tokyo

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With 6 Figures

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Main entry under title:

Sports violence.

(Springer series in social psychology)

Bibliography: p.

Includes indexes

Contents: Introduction / Jeffrey H. Goldstein—Roman sports violence / Allen Guttman—Unsporting behavior / Wray Vamplew—[etc.]

1. Violence in sports—Addresses, essays, lectures.
2. Aggressiveness (Psychology)—Addresses, essays, lectures. I. Goldstein, Jeffrey H. II. Series.
GV706.7.S66 1983 796 83-6574

© 1983 by Springer-Verlag New York Inc.

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1983

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Typeset by Publishers Service, Bozeman, Montana.

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

ISBN-13: 978-1-4612-5532-1

e-ISBN-13: 978-1-4612-5530-7

DOI: 10.1007/978-1-4612-5530-7

Preface

Books about sports, even those written by scholars, are frequently little more than hagiography. They extol the virtue of athletics for participant and spectator alike. Of greater rarity are those that look critically at the political, social, economic, and psychological underpinnings of contemporary sports. Violence in sports is among the relatively neglected issues of serious study. *Sports Violence* is perhaps the first collection of scholarly theory and research to examine in detail aggression within and surrounding sports. As such, it seeks to present the broadest possible range of interpretations and perspectives. The book is, therefore, both interdisciplinary and international in scope.

Two chapters, by Guttmann and Vamplew, are concerned with historical analyses of sports violence. Definitions and perspectives on aggression in general, and sports-related aggression in particular, are the topics of Chapters 4 through 7 by Smith, Bredemeier, Mark, Bryant, and Lehman, and Mummendey and Mummendey. Here, a wide variety of social and psychological theories are brought to bear on the conceptualization of aggression on the playing field and in the stands. Dunning and Lüschen, both sociologists of sport, examine the origins, structure, and functions of violence, of sports, and of their interconnections. Psychological interpretations and research are presented in chapters by Russell and Keefer, Goldstein, and Kasiaz, while Bryant and Zillmann examine the portrayal and effects of aggression in televised sports.

Just as sports violence is not confined to one inevitable perspective, it is not confined to one geographical location. Scholars from Europe, Australia, and North America have contributed to *Sports Violence*, and their discussions are not limited merely to the forms that violence in sports take in contemporary America. Included are accounts of sports aggression in ancient Rome, crowd disorders at British soccer and horse racing, player violence in soccer, and the relationship between Olympics participation and international conflict.

Sports Violence attempts to define, explore, and evaluate what we know about the origins, dynamics, and effects of sports-related aggression. It is intended to serve as a sourcebook for scholars interested in the current state of knowledge about the topic. Throughout the book are summaries and critical evaluations of relevant literature, original research, and suggestions for the direction of future theory and research. The book contains explicit suggestions and many implications for the reduction and control of aggression on and near the playing field. The book will prove useful, as well, to students of aggression and of physical education.

Editing *Sports Violence* has been made all the more enjoyable and easy a task through the support and advice of Bob Kidd and the enthusiastic and professional staff at Springer-Verlag. Mary Hegeler and Bob Keefer ably assisted with the indexing.

J.H.G.
April 1983

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