

Jacobus conducted more than 250 interviews to inform this oral history of integrating Texas football. The book is encyclopedic in nature, yet lightly editorialized, so that the book reads as a series of stories, often directly quoted, from those who participated in breaking racial barriers as high school or college student athletes. Through the chorus of voices a few refrains rise. Many remembered coaches hustling them from the field to the bus as spectators from another town hurled insults or threats. While virtually all the interviewees were denied seating, if not food, at restaurants when the team traveled, several shared the same experience of white teammates refusing to sit or eat without them, applying pressure on the bulwarks of Jim Crow mores.

However, the diversity of experiences and opinions is the strength of the book. Readers are swept across the state and must reckon with stark disparities between how school integration was implemented from the Gulf Coast to the Texas Panhandle, in urban centers and rural communities. The memories of Latino football players underscore how those racial lines blurred for Latinx students. Although football fields in Texas integrated with more “deliberate speed” than public schools in other southern states, as evidenced by a “fully integrated” game between Robstown High School and Refugio High School in September 1955, Jacobus’s interviewees remind readers that it was far from a seamless transition (p. 66).

After their high school careers, black Texas football players realized few opportunities to play in their home state, beyond historically black colleges and universities like Texas Southern University. An exodus of those seeking better scholarships and services from postsecondary institutions on the West Coast or in the North, especially in the Big Ten Conference, followed. These oral histories document both push and pull factors, including a network of coaches who began recruiting black student athletes from Texas high schools in an “Underground Railroad” to Big Ten programs (p. 182). But even at these integrated institutions, the persistence of racial conflict over issues from positional stacking—excluding black players from positions typically associated with leadership roles—to restricting facial hair resulted in team boycotts and player expulsions. These oral histories, without explicitly stating it, intersect with Harry Edwards’s *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York, 1969) and make these Texas memories part of a national narrative. *Black Man in the Huddle* is a valuable resource for new interview material at the nexus of race, sport, and education in Texas that scholars and students can use to forge broader connections across time and space.

Nichols College

ANDREW R. M. SMITH

Blood, Sweat, and Tears: Jake Gaither, Florida A&M, and the History of Black College Football. By Derrick E. White. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019. Pp. [xiv], 303. \$30.00, ISBN 978-1-4696-5244-3.)

While Martin Luther King Jr. and his Southern Christian Leadership Conference were winning civil rights victories, Alonzo “Jake” Gaither and his Florida A&M University football team were winning championships. Derrick E. White’s *Blood, Sweat, and Tears: Jake Gaither, Florida A&M, and the History of Black College Football* demonstrates that while the latter might not be the equivalent of the former, sporting success was not inconsequential in the

era of the civil rights movement. White makes his case through a description of “sporting congregations,” emanating from “the faith in Black-controlled athletics for the betterment of the university and the community” (p. 9). These secular mirrors of the bodies led by ministers like King reflected the push for quantifiable achievement and for improved educational institutions. The successful black college football programs that those congregations supported also demonstrated the tensions between a desire for the structural benefits of integration without the sacrifice of cultural autonomy that typically came with it.

White describes football’s role in and representation of such dilemmas by telling the story of Gaither, who grew up in the upper South in the early twentieth century and attended Knoxville College during the 1920s. He joined the coaching staff of Florida A&M the following decade, eventually became the program’s head coach and athletic director, and served at the helm of one of history’s most successful football programs during the volatile civil rights era, winning seven national titles while King and his congregations were winning victories of their own.

Gaither and his Florida A&M team are perfect vehicles for White’s narrative, as they were on the tip of the spear for the potential costs involved with integration. To build his congregation, Gaither’s program graduated future high school coaches and placed them around Florida. He created a system whereby segregated education served as a pipeline to athletic and academic success for generations of students. It was a system that collapsed under the weight of integration, so when Gaither balked at some of integration’s dictates, some saw him as part of the problem. The Black Power movement was no more charitable, seeing Gaither as a comfortable middle-class power broker who benefited from the racial status quo. That criticism was not entirely unjust, but White’s narrative makes it clear that the story was far more complicated. After all, “[Florida A&M] spent the last three decades of the twentieth century chasing Gaither’s coaching legend” (p. 222). Such chasings were not the result of incompetence in hiring or coaching. As white universities in the South sought integration to feather their own athletic nests, the attendant media story of triumph often hid the erosion of those historically black college and university (HBCU) programs that were so central to White’s “sporting congregations.” In other words, Gaither’s wariness proved prescient.

White also uses Gaither and Florida A&M to tell the much broader tale of the rise and fall of HBCU athletics, the ancillary casualties of the push for integration, and the role of racial assumptions in state educational funding and sports media priorities in the creation of hierarchies, which always gave preference to whiteness but at the same time left space for the creation of legitimate and meaningful black sporting congregations. And though Florida A&M is the principal subject of the book, the congregations at Morgan State University, Grambling State University, Tennessee State University, and Southern University all play a role in the narrative. White’s story is not a hagiographic one of triumph that sometimes enters the genre of sport history. The ebbs and flows of Florida A&M’s success, and the racial and representational reasons for such movements, are incredibly instructive for anyone

interested in either black college athletics or the larger story of integration, or for anyone who appreciates a great football story.

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THOMAS AIELLO

New Orleans Sports: Playing Hard in the Big Easy. Edited by Thomas Aiello. Sport, Culture, and Society. (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2019. Pp. xxiv, 328. Paper, \$29.95, ISBN 978-1-68226-100-2.)

New Orleans Sports: Playing Hard in the Big Easy is a collection of thirteen diverse chapters linked by an attempt to explain the unique sporting culture and the broader history of New Orleans from the nineteenth century to the recent past. This work is part of the excellent University of Arkansas Press series Sport, Culture, and Society, which uses the study of sport to illuminate diverse aspects of history, including race, economics, gender, urbanization, and much more.

The book's editor, Thomas Aiello, is well positioned to oversee the construction of this work. Aiello serves as an associate professor of history and African American studies at Valdosta State University. He is the author of several excellent works, including *Bayou Classic: The Grambling-Southern Football Rivalry* (Baton Rouge, 2010). The chapters in *New Orleans Sports* are written by seventeen authors in addition to Aiello. Aiello has assembled a diverse collection of contributors from a wide array of academic disciplines, backgrounds, and career stages. In general, each chapter is written by an author or team of authors who appear well equipped to tackle the topic.

This book makes an important contribution to the scholarship. The historiography on sports in New Orleans has long been dominated by Dale A. Somers's monograph, *The Rise of Sports in New Orleans, 1850-1900* (Baton Rouge, 1972). Aiello and the other authors attempt to "pay homage" to Somers's work while also expanding on it, primarily by discussing the twentieth century, an era outside Somers's scope (p. xii). *New Orleans Sports* is divided into three sections, each focusing on a theme and each consisting of four or five chapters.

The first section in the book, "Victorian Sensibilities," focuses on "the class dynamic of sports in the city" (p. xvi). In recognition of Somers's influence, the first chapter is a reprint of Somers's "A City on Wheels: The Bicycle Era in New Orleans." Somers explains the transmission of bicycling from the urban middle class of New York to New Orleans and explores the gendered dynamic of one of the few sports in which women competed against men. The next chapter, by Katherine C. Mooney, argues that horse racing in the city had roots in slavery. Randy Roberts writes the book's third chapter on the longest boxing match in history, a more than six-hour struggle between New Orleans "mulatto" Andy Bowen and "Texas" Jack Burke (p. 36). Aiello writes the final chapter in the section on the complicated class-based "restrictive exclusivity" of tennis in New Orleans (p. 46).

The volume's second section, "Institutions of the City," explores how important institutions shaped and were shaped by "the city's infrastructure and civic development" (p. xviii). This section begins with a chapter by Richard V. McGehee on the influential New Orleans Athletic Club. Chad S. Seifried, Kasey Britt, Samantha Gonzales, and Alexa Webb write the work's next chapter on Tulane Stadium, which they claim provides an example of the relationship between physical structures and technologies in the creation of a

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