

ate philosophy, kinesiology, or sport studies course. In addition, it would be a beneficial read for coaches, fans, and athletes with a thoughtful interest in the game on another level, or anywhere “outside the paint.”

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WESTCOTT, RICH. *The Mogul: Eddie Gottlieb, Philadelphia Sports Legend and Pro Basketball Pioneer*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008. Pp. ix+310. Black-and-white illustrations, notes, and index. \$35.00 cb.

Russian-Jewish immigrant Eddie Gottlieb was an American original, a colorful and fascinating sports personality of a by-gone era in American social history. Thanks to Rich Westcott, well-published Philadelphia writer and sports historian, this long-overdue first full-length study of Gottlieb enables us to both understand and appreciate the incredibly driven and talented “Mogul” who became one of the most powerful non-playing sports figures in Philadelphia and nationally from the 1920s until his death in 1979. Drawing upon dozens of interviews with surviving friends and players and a rich selection of archival sources, Westcott expertly illustrates how Gottlieb was the equivalent of sports Renaissance man—“owner, general manager, coach, player, entrepreneur, promoter, booking agent, schoolteacher, and sporting goods salesman (p. 1).”

One of the founders of the legendary SPHAS (South Philadelphia Hebrew Association) basketball team, he went on to coach and later serve as owner of the city’s first major professional basketball team, the Philadelphia Warriors. He was one of the founders of the Basketball Association of America (BAA), which later formed the basis for the National Basketball Association (NBA). Called by many, “The Father of Professional Basketball,” it is widely believed that without his determination, intelligence, and creativity, there would be no NBA.

Westcott skillfully chronicles how Gottlieb struggled to put the fledging NBA on its feet, which took the kind of drive and ingenuity for which “the Mogul” was famous. Gottlieb figured out annual schedules by himself every summer, using only a pen and paper. As chairman of the NBA Rules Committee for twenty-six years, Gottlieb had a major impact on championing several innovations in the sport, including the twenty-four-second clock, which he rightly felt would make modern basketball faster, higher-scoring, and more entertaining.

A key figure in Negro League Baseball, Gottlieb served as promoter and booking agent for African-American teams from the 1920s to the late 1940s. He also became the owner and financier of the Philadelphia Stars, a Negro League team that he was connected to until it disbanded in the early 1940s. Exhibiting admirable objectivity, Westcott details the complex relationship Gottlieb had with black athletes during this period. While he was also the Harlem Globetrotter’s promoter in the 1940s, the Mogul expressed reservations about the integration of the NBA, which finally took place in 1950. Once stating that “black players can’t play basketball (p. 190),” Gottlieb modified his views and saw

integration as a financial hardship. “Your players will be 75 percent black in five years,” he warned the owner of the New York Knicks, Ned Irish, “and you’re not going to draw people. You’re going to be a disservice to the game (p. 190).” Yet after Gottlieb signed his first African-American player for the Warriors in 1955, he treated him no differently than the white players. “Ultimately, the Warriors had more black players than anybody else,” Westcott quotes Sonny Hill in praising Gottlieb’s civil rights efforts. “He [Gottlieb] was a role model for all of us in the Philadelphia area. To have someone of his magnitude take an interest in us was something that all of us cherished. He was ahead of his time” (p. 196).

Undoubtedly, the defining moment in Gottlieb’s career was in signing Wilt Chamberlain to play for the Philadelphia Warriors. According to Westcott, “[R]eaching this point was an arduous task. It required perseverance, guile, guts, aggressiveness, intelligence, and possibly even a little bit of deception (p. 218).” To accomplish this, Gottlieb pushed through a rule that allowed teams to draft high school players who played in their area. As a result, four years after graduating from Overbrook High School in Philadelphia in 1959, Chamberlain would become a Warrior. And just to make sure no other NBA owners laid their hands on his prize athlete, Gottlieb strongly encouraged Chamberlain to attend the University of Kansas. Since there was no professional basketball team within 300 miles of the Lawrence campus, Gottlieb “reasoned his choice of Chamberlain would then be totally without a challenge” (p. 223).

Among the many honors Gottlieb received over the years, he was especially proud of his induction into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame and the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. Following his death, the NBA honored his memory by naming the Rookie of the Year Award, “The Eddie Gottlieb Trophy.” Westcott’s richly detailed biography is an entertaining read and highly recommended. The Mogul himself, a promoter extraordinaire, would be proud of the result.

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YOUMANS, GARY B. *The Onion Picker: Carmen Basilio and Boxing in the 1950s*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Campbell Road Press, North, 2007 (distributed by Syracuse University Press). Pp. xii+ 214. Thirty-eight photographs, appendix, and bibliography; no index. \$24.95 cb.

At barely 200 pages Youmans’ account is a quick and easy read and a lavishly illustrated history of the post World War II era. The author provides some contextualization to the period in brief chapter introductions as he parallels the careers of Carmen Basilio and Sugar Ray Robinson. Basilio is portrayed as a caring, loyal, compassionate, and honest man with an intense work ethic and a sense of humor. The treatment of Robinson is more balanced but less than the glowing tribute accorded to his rival.

Basilio, born Carman (instead of the feminized Carmen taught to him by older sisters) on April 2, 1927, was the sixth of ten children born to Italian onion farmers. Basilio shared his immigrant father’s interest in boxing and joined school boxing teams before enrolling in the marines at age sixteen. In 1948 he turned professional to pursue his ath-