

Sport in American Society

Teacher Seminar, 15 May 2009

Speaker: Dr. Martin Öfele, LMU

Organizer: Amerika-Haus-Bibliothek, B.A.Z. Amerika-Haus

Sport has been a central part of American society and culture for more than a century. From the invention of baseball, later to become the “National Pastime,” in the mid-nineteenth, to deserted streets and towns during Super Bowl games today, Americans have determined their lifestyle and popular culture to a good degree through physical activities and sports. On its way to a highly competitive society, the United States began to cherish famous teams and sports heroes who embodied physical fitness and team spirit. At the same time, developments in sports have often mirrored and even predicted changes in a multicultural society, such as the integration of immigrants or the revolutionary “breaking of the color line” by African American baseball player Jackie Robinson. The lecture will trace the history of sport in American society and culture and highlight some of its heroes by discussing the role they played in this context.

Program:

9:00 – 10:30:

- history and exceptionalism of American sports from the nineteenth century
- why baseball?
- the importance of teams and heroes

10:30: break

11:00 – 13:00:

- famous players and their role in society
- sport and minorities
- competition and violence in American sports