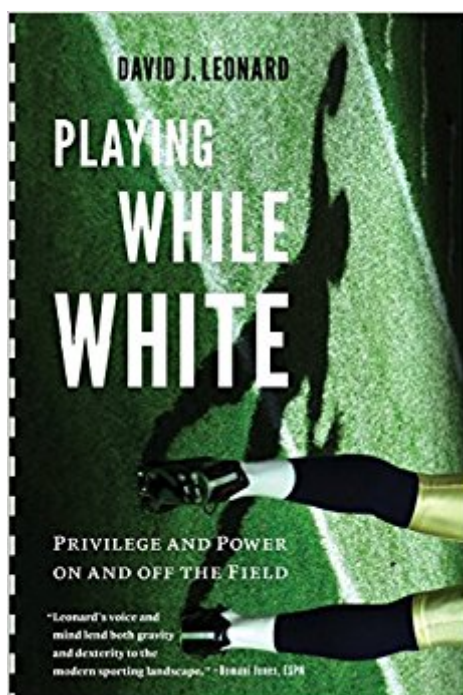


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Playing While White: Privilege And Power On And Off The Field



Synopsis

Playing While White argues that whiteness matters in sports culture, both on and off the field. Offering critical analysis of athletic stars such as Johnny Manziel, Marshall Henderson, Jordan Spieth, Lance Armstrong, Josh Hamilton, as well as the predominantly white cultures of NASCAR and extreme sports, David Leonard identifies how whiteness is central to the commodification of athletes and the sports they play. Leonard demonstrates that sporting cultures are a key site in the trafficking of racial ideas, narratives, and ideologies. He identifies how white athletes are frequently characterized as intelligent leaders who are presumed innocent of the kinds of transgressions black athletes are often pathologized for. With an analysis of the racial dynamics of sports traditions as varied as football, cycling, hockey, baseball, tennis, snowboarding, and soccer, as well as the reception and media portrayals of specific white athletes, Leonard examines how and why whiteness matters within sports and what that tells us about race in the twenty-first century United States.

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Customer Reviews

"Examines the effects of the dominant racial ideology on American sports and highlights the ways that whiteness is privileged above other racial identities. Playing While White will appeal to sports fans interested in ways to explain the racial disparities in American sports." —Lori Martin, author of *Big Box Schools: Race, Education, and the Danger of the Wal-Martization of Public Schools in America* Issues of white privilege, and broader considerations of 'whiteness' as social

construction, are critical to contemporary US social and political discourse. In *Playing While White*, Leonard expertly explicates the extent to which sport plays an important role in constructing and privileging white identity politics in American society."~Joshua Newman, author of *Embodying Dixie: Studies in the Body Pedagogics of Southern Whiteness*"For years, Leonard has demonstrated an understanding of the modern sporting landscape and a touch for applying academic insight to this most secular world. His voice and mind lend both gravity and dexterity on these topics."~Bomani Jones, ESPN"Leonard's in-depth investigation at how whiteness operates in sport (and, in turn, our society at large) is smart, cutting, nuanced, and, above all, important. It is a necessary work for this time."~Jessica Luther, author of *Unsportsmanlike Conduct: College Football and the Politics of Rape*"Few have talked about race and sports with the passion and critical acuity of David J. Leonard. With *Playing While White*, he takes the road less paved and turns his attention to Whiteness, exploding the myths of privilege and entitlement that we are all too willing to assign to Black Athletes."~Mark Anthony Neal, author of *Looking for Leroy: Illegible Black Masculinities*"David Leonard is one of our most brutally honest truth tellers. He uses sports as a lens to understand how sports can both challenge and perpetuate institutionalized racism. It's a book for the conscious sports fan and people unafraid to discuss these issues ..with candor and clarity. I can't recommend it enough."~Dave Zirin, sports editor, *The Nation*"Systemic racism is often explored within the contexts of many of our institutions: government, education, criminal justice. *Playing While White* thoughtfully engages in a discourse around the privilege that whiteness affords, highlighting the ways that white athletes and whiteness are profiled as innocent, desirable, smart, and exceptional. This is in sharp juxtaposition to the way that Black bodies continue to be policed and profiled, demonized and denigrated both on and off of the field. This poses the following query: do Black lives matter in the world of sports? Leonard's brilliant and thorough analysis of the institutionalized racism that is perpetrated in sport is one that we must all delve deeper into, and grapple with, as a society."~Michael Eric Dyson, author of *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*

David J. Leonard is a professor at Washington State University. He is the author of *After Artest: The NBA and the Assault on Blackness* and coeditor of *Commodified and Criminalized: New Racism and African Americans in Contemporary Sports*. Follow him on Twitter at @drdavidjleonard.

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