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Learning to Win: Sports, Education, and Social Change in Twentieth-Century North Carolina

Pamela Grundy

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Over the past century, high school and college athletics have grown into one of America's most beloved--and most controversial--institutions, inspiring great loyalty while sparking fierce disputes.

In this richly detailed book, Pamela Grundy examines the many meanings that school sports took on in North Carolina, linking athletic programs at state universities, public high schools, women's colleges, and African American educational institutions to social and economic shifts that include the expansion of industry, the advent of woman suffrage, and the rise and fall of Jim Crow. Drawing heavily on oral history interviews, Grundy charts the many pleasures of athletics, from the simple joy of backyard basketball to the exhilaration of a state championship run. She also explores conflicts provoked by sports within the state--clashes over the growth of college athletics, the propriety of women's competition, and the connection between sports and racial integration, for example. Within this chronicle, familiar athletic narratives take on new meanings, moving beyond timeless stories of courage, fortitude, or failure to illuminate questions about race, manhood and womanhood, the purpose of education, the meaning of competition, and the structure of American society.

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