



The Sport Star: Modern Sport and the Cultural Economy of Sporting Celebrity (Published in association with Theory, Culture & Society)

Barry Smart

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Why are sport stars central to celebrity culture? What are the implications of their fame? Proceeding from a broadly based discussion of heroism, fame and celebrity, Smart addresses a number of prominent modern sports and sport stars, including Michael Jordan (basketball), David Beckham (football), Tiger Woods (golf), Anna Kournikova and the Williams sisters (tennis). He analyses the development of modern sport in the UK and USA, demonstrating the key economic and cultural factors that have contributed to the popularity of sport stars, while examining issues such as race and gender, the impact of professionalization, growing media coverage, the role of agents and the increasing presence of commercial corporations providing sponsorship and endorsement contracts. This book situates the sport star as the embodiment of the various tensions of age, class, race, gender and culture. It argues that sporting figures possess an increasingly rare quality of authenticity that gives them the capacity to lift and inspire people. The book is a major contribution to the sociology and culture of sport and celebrity.

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