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Religion and Sports: An Introduction and Case Studies

Rebecca T. Alpert

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Like religion, playing and watching sports is a deeply meaningful, celebratory ritual enjoyed by millions across the world. The first scholarly work designed for use in both religion and sports courses, this collection develops and then applies a theoretically grounded approach to studying sports engagement globally and its relationship to modern-day issues of violence, difference, social protest, and belonging.

Case studies explore the place of sports in mainstream faiths, such as Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity, and lesser-known religious groups, particularly in Africa. It covers football, baseball, and basketball but also archery, soccer, bullfighting, judo, and track. Essays reflect all skill levels, from amateur to professional, and find surprising affinities among practices and cultures in locations as disparate as Germany and Japan, Spain and Saudi Arabia. Thoroughly examining a range of phenomena, this collection fully captures the unique overlap of two universal institutions and their interplay with human society, politics, and culture.

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