

Public Heroes, Private Felons: Athletes and Crimes Against Women

Jeff Benedict

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While arrests of celebrated college and professional athletes for crimes against women escalate at an alarming rate, popular sports figures routinely escape accountability for their offenses. Shielded by a lucrative sports industry that fosters the athlete's positive image as role model to the nation's youth, few players are successfully prosecuted in the courts and they rarely face sanctions on their eligibility to play. In a work that is sure to generate heated debate, Jeff Benedict thoroughly investigates for the first time athletes' abusive behavior, delving into the full spectrum of complex factors that give rise to and perpetuate the disturbing pattern of frequent sexual and domestic violence toward women. Drawing on extensive and unprecedented interviews with athletes, victims, attorneys, coaches, team officials, and others, Benedict provides an in-depth examination of several incidents of rape, gang rape, and assault by successful sports figures, including the cases of Mike Tyson, Christian Peter and other members of the University of Nebraska football team, and former Boston Celtic Marcus Webb. Benedict's probe confronts such controversial issues as race, class, the groupie phenomenon, the sexually permissive lifestyle of many athletes, the consensual sex defense, and the sports industry's indifference to recruiting or drafting talented athletes with prior criminal records. Benedict concludes with sound proposals for implementing tougher measures and sanctions at both the college and professional levels in order to stem the disquieting number of athletes who commit violent crimes against women.



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