

curriculum “that included the history and contributions of racial and ethnic groups” (145). Unfortunately, it has taken almost fifty years for the Oxnard School Board to carry out this remedy by making ethnic studies a graduation requirement.⁴

Overall, *Strategies of Segregation* succeeds in rendering an indictment of the Oxnard school system and its white architects, who bore much of the responsibility for the mis-education of Mexican and black students. Learning about this history is the first step toward social change, as demonstrated recently when sixth-grade students at Haydock Academy of Arts and Science read this book.⁵ When they learned of Superintendent Haydock’s racist activities, they launched a campaign to rename their school. After students read passages of García’s book to them, school board members voted unanimously to change the school’s name. After a year-long survey for potential names, the school board decided to name the academy in honor of former Oxnard mayor Manuel Lopez.

Amid the racial reckoning and protests that have swept this country, *Strategies of Segregation* is a timely and invaluable contribution to California history, Chicano/a studies, and ethnic studies. It is also a reminder of the need to incorporate ethnic studies into California’s high schools, and to rethink naming schools for those whose names are tainted by racism. Now more than ever, black and brown communities need to learn from their shared experiences in order to stand together for future struggles.

José M. Alamillo

NOTES

1. George Lipsitz, *How Racism Takes Place* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011); Laura Pulido, *Black Brown, Yellow and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).
2. Natalia Molina, “Examining Chicana/o History through a Relational Lens,” *Pacific Historical Review* 82, no. 4 (2013): 520–541.
3. Daniel Martinez Hosang, “The Changing Valence of White Racial Innocence: Black-Brown Unity in the 1970s Los Angeles School Desegregation Struggles,” in John Kun and Laura Pulido (eds.), *Black and Brown in Los Angeles: Beyond Conflict and Coalition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 115–142.
4. Shahbano Raza, “Ethnic Studies Now a Requirement,” *Camarillo Acorn*, July 24, 2020.
5. Wendy Leung, “Oxnard Seeks New School Name as Haydock’s Racist Past Comes to Light,” *Ventura County Star*, January 25, 2020.

Nicholas Evan Sarantakes. *Fan in Chief: Richard Nixon and American Sports, 1969–1974*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019. 368 pp. Paperback \$26.95.

Richard Nixon loved sports. Although never a gifted athlete, he bowled, played ping-pong, and golfed. He became the first president to attend the Kentucky Derby and the first Republican president to court enthusiasts of automobile racing, a political demographic later known as “NASCAR Dads.” He tried hard, albeit without success, to land the 1976 Summer Olympics for Los Angeles. Mostly, he proved an avid fan of spectator sports, particularly football and baseball, where he displayed encyclopedic knowledge. Historians and biographers have largely overlooked this aspect of Nixon’s presidency, which makes Nicholas Evan Sarantakes’s new book a welcome addition to the scholarly canon. In the

tradition of the best and the boldest of the Nixon revisionists, Sarantakes is unafraid to portray this controversial president as a three-dimensional figure. “Nixon and sports,” Sarantakes argues, “is the story of political theater, but the president was a real fan, and nothing about his interest was manufactured” (3).

Sarantakes shows how the shy, square, and socially awkward Nixon “used sport as a way for the American people to understand him through his values and theirs” (2). The president’s passion for sports surfaced in sundry ways. He hosted Major League Baseball All-Stars at the White House, attended Washington Senators games, cheered for the Washington Redskins, and suggested plays to Miami Dolphins coach Don Shula. In 1969, he journeyed deep into the heart of the South to watch a clash between the collegiate football powerhouses Texas and Arkansas. Nixon’s spot-on prediction of a Texas come-from-behind victory, expressed during a television interview at halftime, exemplified his keen analysis of the game, a talent he demonstrated often in regard to football and baseball (hockey, basketball, and most Olympic sports failed to catch his interest). The president’s private messages to injured athletes revealed another side of his personality: his capacity for “generous acts of kindness” (43). And the tradition of a president telephoning congratulations to Super Bowl and World Series champions, something that this reviewer recalls Ronald Reagan doing with aplomb, actually began with Nixon. Make no mistake, though: even in sports, the thirty-seventh president played political hardball. Following the 1972 election, Nixon discussed inflicting petty payback on Redskins owner Edward Bennett Williams, who “was a power in the Democratic party and the lawyer for the *Washington Post*” (111).

Team sports, with their exaltation of preparation, drive, sobriety, poise, grit, victory, and persistence in the face of defeat, congealed with Nixon’s cultural sensibilities and life story. “To Nixon,” Sarantakes stresses, “sport showed the importance of hard work and personal resiliency.” Athletic contests also “allowed the individual to be part of a cause larger than one’s self” and to transcend “material” concerns (210). The president thus had little affinity with celebrity athletes such as New York Jets quarterback Joe Namath, a sex symbol and exemplar of youthful rebellion and modish fashions. Nixon predictably gravitated toward older, no-nonsense, masculine competitors, such as National Football League coaches Vince Lombardi and George Allen, Green Bay Packers quarterback Bart Starr, and Ted Williams, whose Hall of Fame baseball career included a stint managing the second incarnation of the Washington Senators. All of these men proved friendly either to Nixon’s political outlook or to his Republican Party.

According to Sarantakes, electoral considerations led Nixon to amplify his love of sports, usually with positive results. During the 1972 campaign, the president connected with average voters when he took the time to compile and publicize a list of baseball’s greatest players. His presence at baseball’s 1970 All-Star Game in Cincinnati and at a ceremony to honor Bart Starr in Green Bay generated good press, as did his impromptu visit to a Redskins practice a year later. On the hustings, audiences never complained when Nixon peppered his speeches with praise for local teams. And his vow “to be for the team in the city [in which] I happen to be living” seems to embody the essence of fandom (133). (Although not always: shifting work locations have failed to dampen the zeal of this reviewer, born in western New York, for the Buffalo Bills, Buffalo Sabres, and New York Yankees.)

Nixon's involvement in sports at times stirred controversy, a point Sarantakes concedes. Penn State football coach Joe Paterno resented the president's decision to give a plaque to undefeated Texas, deeming it White House meddling in the annual canvas to select college football's national champion. Sports references helped little when Nixon sought common ground with college students critical of the war in Vietnam. Other stumbles—or fumbles—followed. Free-spirited, outspoken Billy Kilmer of the Redskins complained that the president's rooting for the team went too far. And during 1972's Super Bowl VI, journalists and NFL enthusiasts guffawed after the "Fan in Chief" proposed to the Miami Dolphins a passing play that Dallas's Mel Renfro thwarted in the Cowboys' 24–3 victory. Yet even that episode yielded some favorable publicity and good-natured ribbing. In a gesture of profound gratitude, the Dallas City Council designated Nixon "assistant coach of the year" (146).

Less fruitful were Nixon's efforts to use sports to woo African American voters. His once-close relationship with the former Brooklyn Dodger Jackie Robinson soured following the 1960 campaign, as Nixon increasingly courted conservative white southerners. Sarantakes notes that Gayle Sayers of the Chicago Bears supported Nixon in 1972, but the author misses the Nixon endorsement that came from Jim Brown, the Cleveland Browns fullback-turned-actor. In the end, Robinson's concerns about the president's political priorities proved prescient and backing by Sayers and Brown mattered little. African Americans voted overwhelmingly against Nixon in 1968 and 1972.

An excellent book such as this one inevitably leaves the reader wanting more. Nixon's rootlessness, perhaps even his opportunism, might have been explored through his "I pull for the home team" dictum, which endured after the former president relocated to the New York City area. Greater attention to Nixon's ties to sports before and after his presidency would have been welcome. And Sarantakes's observations about the cultural continuities of spectator sports during the "traumatic" 1960s and '70s cry out for elaboration and further analysis (209). Yet these quibbles must not distract from the achievement of *Fan in Chief*. This book is thoroughly grounded in pertinent sources, from the most recent scholarship on Nixon to the Nixon Papers at Yorba Linda, among other archival collections. Sarantakes writes with clarity, vigor, ease, and insight. *Fan in Chief* is a delight to read, and apt to please both specialist and general readers.

Dean Kotlowski

Barry Siegel. *Dreamers and Schemers: How an Improbable Bid for the 1932 Olympics Transformed Los Angeles from Dusty Outpost to Global Metropolis*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2019. 272 pp. Illustrations. Hardcover \$29.95.

The 1932 Olympic Games were certainly an "improbable" feat. They occurred against a backdrop of economic calamity and mounting international tensions. The unemployment rate peaked as the Great Depression reached full swing. Angry Californians marched on the state capitol, calling for "Groceries not Games" (118). The events also commenced just two days after President Herbert Hoover ordered infantry, cavalry, and police, supported by six tanks, to disperse the Bonus Army from the U.S. Capitol. Amid this tumult,