



Drug Games: The International Olympic Committee and the Politics of Doping, 1960-2008

(Terry and Jan Todd Series on Physical Culture and Sports)

Thomas M. Hunt

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On August 26, 1960, twenty-three-year-old Danish cyclist Knud Jensen, competing in that year's Rome Olympic Games, suddenly fell from his bike and fractured his skull. His death hours later led to rumors that performance-enhancing drugs were in his system. Though certainly not the first instance of doping in the Olympic Games, Jensen's death serves as the starting point for Thomas M. Hunt's thoroughly researched, chronological history of the modern relationship of doping to the Olympics. Utilizing concepts derived from international relations theory, diplomatic history, and administrative law, this work connects the issue to global political relations. During the Cold War, national governments had little reason to support effective anti-doping controls in the Olympics. Both the United States and the Soviet Union conceptualized power in sport as a means of impressing both friends and rivals abroad. The resulting medals race motivated nations on both sides of the Iron Curtain to allow drug regulatory powers to remain with private sport authorities. Given the costs involved in testing and the repercussions of drug scandals, these authorities tried to avoid the issue whenever possible. But toward the end of the Cold War, governments became more involved in the issue of testing. Having historically been a combined scientific, ethical, and political dilemma, obstacles to the elimination of doping in the Olympics are becoming less restrained by political inertia.



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