
FOREWORD

Nothing defines the City of Philadelphia more than its passion for sports. In fact, we are known nationally, somewhat unfairly, for being raucous fans who are often tough on our own.

Though it is true that we can hold our players to a high level of expectation, I believe we are truly a city of great sports fans. We are extremely knowledgeable and incredibly passionate. While we can be critical of our players and teams, we respect effort and have an almost infinite amount of patience if we believe a team is truly undergoing a rebuilding effort that is headed in the right direction.

And our passions. Oh my, you can never, ever discount the interest of Philadelphia sports fans. I have witnessed the passion time and time again and have seen it, in some cases, change the outcome of a game. In 1977 in the National League playoffs, the incredible noise from the crowd unnerved Burt Hooton and drove him from the game. In 1995 the fans literally willed the Eagles to make an amazing series of crucial fourth-down stops against the hated Barry Switzer-led Cowboys. And the excitement of a Villanova-St. Joe's or Penn-Princeton basketball game at the Palestra is raw emotion that creates a deafening crescendo unrivaled anywhere, even at Duke's Cameron Gymnasium, Phog Allen Fieldhouse, the Deandome, or Pauley Pavilion.

And we have had our champions to reward that loyalty. I know we are currently in a famine, but remember the great moments—as Rich Westcott so graphically reminds us—the incredible triumphs and the exhilarating wins. Remember the Whiz Kids of 1950, the World Champion “You Gotta Believe” Phillies of 1980, and the Krukker-led blue-collar gang of 1993.

Think back to Franklin Field in 1960 and remember Chuck Bednarik's tackle of Jim Taylor preserving the Eagles' NFL Championship. And who could forget Dick Vermeil almost willing our beloved Birds into Super Bowl XV. How about the glorious parades celebrating our still unbelievable Flyers' two Stanley Cups or the great Sixers led by Doc and, yes, Moses in the “four-five-four” run to the championship in 1983. And then there is Villanova's incredible run to the 1985 NCAA Basketball Championship. What great memories to treasure!

And our stars! We've had plenty. From Tom Gala to Dr. J, from Tommy McDonald to Reggie White, from Bobby Clarke to Eric Lindros, from Robin Roberts to Mike

Schmidt to Scott Rolen. Vic Seixas in tennis, Carl Lewis in track, Joe Frazier in boxing, and John B. Kelly in rowing: the whole world watched and saw their excellence.

It is safe to say that we fans have had plenty of magic moments in this century. We've had great friends to tell us about them—Bill Campbell, Les Keiter, By Saam, Al Meltzer, Harry Kalas, Andy Musser, Merrill Reese, Gene Hart, and Whitey. And in what other city could an Angelo make WIP so much a part of our lives or a Comcast SportsNet have such instant popularity?

Rich Westcott has successfully caught all this magic and put it in the proverbial bottle. He has adeptly chronicled the highs and the lows, the triumphs and the disasters (1964 Phils), and has wonderfully evoked the spirit of sports in Philadelphia. So sit back and enjoy.

Edward G. Rendell

INTRODUCTION

Among cities of the United States, none has had a more significant role or is more deeply immersed in American history than Philadelphia. The “Cradle of Liberty” in its more than 300 years of existence overflows with important historical events, places, and people.

The same kind of statement can be made about the city’s sports history. Philadelphia has a long and illustrious background in sports that is second to none. New York, Boston, and maybe even Chicago have equally rich pasts, but at the risk of sounding a bit provincial, they don’t outrank Philadelphia.

How could they? After all, this is a city where sports were played long before Philadelphia became the birthplace of the nation. It’s a city where major events, prominent athletes, and spectacular performances—not to mention the woeful, the inept, and the calamitous—have been going on, it sometimes seems, forever.

Philadelphia sports have been especially prominent in the 20th century. From pro teams to college teams to independent teams, from champions to incompetents, from the great to the mediocre to the terrible, Philadelphia and its surrounding counties have had a little bit of everything during the century just past.

In the 20th century, the Philadelphia area produced four Heisman Trophy winners, five Sullivan Award winners, a two-time U.S. Open golf champion, 11 members of the Boxing Hall of Fame, and countless numbers of Olympic champions. Basketball players from Philadelphia have won 12 National Basketball Association (NBA) scoring championships and five national collegiate scoring titles. Twelve professional ice hockey teams, including a National Hockey League (NHL) team in 1930, have played in the city. Philadelphia is the only city ever to have Most Valuable Players in baseball in both the American and National Leagues in the same year, when Jimmie Foxx and Chuck Klein won the awards in 1933.

The Philadelphia area was the birthplace of the best tennis player (Bill Tilden), the best basketball player (Wilt Chamberlain), and the best rower (John B. Kelly, Sr.) of all time. The best race horse of all time (Man o’ War) was raised here. Baseball’s best third baseman, (Mike Schmidt), played here. So did the game’s best second baseman (Eddie Collins). The first Olympian (Alvin Kraenzien) to win four gold medals in the same year, ran here. The last of pro football’s 60-minute

players and one of the greatest gridiron battlers of all time (Chuck Bednarik), performed here.

Numerous other great athletes such as Steve Van Buren, Carl Lewis, Robin Roberts, Tom Gola, Bobby Clarke, Joe Frazier, Anne Townsend, Julius Erving, Jay Sigel, Grover Cleveland Alexander, Paul Arizin, Willie Mosconi, Bob Montgomery, Syliva Wene Martin, Walt Bahr, Joe Verdeur, Vic Seixas, Eddie Plank, and many, many more either came from or played here. And a like number that ranges from Goose Goslin to Reggie Jackson, from Danny Murtaugh to Tom Lasorda, and also includes Earl Monroe, Franco Harris, Dawn Staley, Emlen Tunnell, Mickey Vernon, Leroy Kelly, Roy Campanella, and Tara Lipinsky were Philadelphia-area natives who went on to perform superbly in other places.

Legendary coaches and managers also made their marks in Philadelphia. Earle (Greasy) Neale, Alex Hannum, Jack Ramsay, Lon Jourdet, Cathy Rush, Jim (Jumbo) Elliott, Harry Litwack, Fred Shero, Herb Magee, Connie Mack, George Munger, John Chaney, Glenn Killinger, Gene Mauch, and Dick Vermeil were just a few of them. Philadelphia was the place where Eddie Gottlieb, Paul Owens, Keith Allen, Bert Bell, Bob Carpenter, and Ed Snider ran organizations with particular skill. And Bill Campbell, Harry Kalas, Byrum Saam, and Gene Hart in broadcasting, as well as Damon Runyon, Red Smith, Sandy Grady, Larry Merchant, and Bill Lyon in sports-writing all worked here for varying lengths, spinning their own particular brands of brilliance.

Philadelphia has been the home of six World Series winners, four NBA champions, four NFL titlists, and two Stanley Cup winners. It has two NCAA champions (La Salle and Villanova) and four NIT winners (Temple twice, La Salle, Villanova) in major college basketball, and scores of other national collegiate champs, including the pioneering three-time winner, Immaculata College. The city is the home of a nationally famous institution called the Big Five. Philadelphia area golf clubs have been the sites of some 50 national championship tournaments, including seven U.S. Opens. Haverford College played in the nation's first intercollegiate soccer game. In football, Penn played in the Rose Bowl and Temple in the Sugar Bowl. And there have been more than 50 professional teams calling Philadelphia home, including long-gone pillars such as the Athletics, the Warriors, the Ramblers, and the Frankford Yellowjackets, the city's first NFL championship team.

The Philadelphia area is where the Army-Navy game was played for 75 of its 100 years, where the Penn Relays, the Dad Vail Regatta, and the Devon Horse Show are held, and it was the home of some great Negro League baseball teams, including the Giants, the Daisies, and the Stars. It is where such legendary sports structures as Shibe Park, Baker Bowl, the Palestra, the Arena, Franklin Field, Convention Hall, Penmar Park, Garden State Park, Langhorne Speedway, and JFK Stadium have been

located. The Schuylkill River is one of the world's major racing sites for rowers. The Manayunk Wall has become famous in professional bicycle racing. For the entire century, the city has been one of the most important centers of boxing in the country. In 1952 alone, there were three world championship fights in Philadelphia. At one time heavyweight champions Joe Walcott, Sonny Liston, Joe Frazier, and Muhammad Ali all lived in the Philadelphia area.

Philadelphia and its surrounding environs have produced the Mighty Mites and the Mighty Macs, the \$100,000 Infield, the Destiny Backfield, and the Five Ironmen. The city provided the Whiz Kids, the Wheeze Kids, and Macho Row. It gave us Wham Bam, the Owl Without a Vowel, Dipper, Smokin' Joe, White Shoes, and Losing Pitcher. It even had its own mythical hero, the unforgettable Rocky Balboa.

Most of the world's greatest athletes have competed in Philadelphia. Jim Thorpe, Red Grange, Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, Bobby Jones, Ted Williams, Sugar Ray Robinson, Jesse Owens, Arnold Palmer, and Michael Jordan are just a few who have performed in the area. Many of them displayed their talent in especially memorable events here.

Philadelphia has also had its share of turmoil, heartbreak, and disaster, as well as artless klutzes and atrocious teams. The Phillies are the losingest team in the history of sports in the United States. They once went 31 seasons with just one winning team. They have had two former owners banned from baseball for life. One season they lost more consecutive games—23—than any team in baseball history. And then there was the infamous collapse of 1964, which left scars on the city's psyche for years.

The Athletics finished in last place a higher percentage of times (18 in 54 years) than any other baseball team. The Eagles once had 11 straight losing seasons, went 28 years without having anybody gain 1,000 yards in rushing, and haven't won an NFL championship in 40 years. In 1972-73, the 76ers had a 9-72 record, the worst mark in NBA history. The Flyers have bombed out of the Stanley Cup finals five disappointing times. Temple had just two winning seasons in football in the 20 years between 1979 and 1999. Villanova once went scoreless during an entire football season.

Disasters and tragedy have also shadowed Philadelphia's sports history. A balcony collapsed at Baker Bowl, sending 12 baseball fans to their deaths and injuring 232 others. Part of the roof blew off at the Spectrum. Garden State Park burned down. Connie Mack twice sold off pennant-winning teams, then a third time sold off the entire team, each time jilting fans who loyally followed his club. And in front of a national television audience, a railing collapsed at an Army-Navy game, plummeting nine students to the ground where they suffered various injuries and the city suffered excruciating embarrassment.

Scandal has been a part of the local scene, too. A point-shaving scandal involving three players from St. Joseph's and one from LaSalle rocked college basketball in 1961. Villanova and La Salle in basketball and Temple in football had their seasons ruined by the improprieties of players or coaches. Drugs have played a role in local sports, most conspicuously involving Phillies players in the late 1970s. Nothing was more scandalous, though, than the Phillies' refusal to sign black players until nearly 10 years after Jackie Robinson had entered the major leagues.

Quite possibly, the worst of Philadelphia sports has been demonstrated by the conduct of some of the city's fans. In a city known nationally for its boo birds and poor behavior among fans, Philadelphia is a place where spectators have thrown snowballs and other objects not only at Santa Claus but at opposing players and coaches. They have cheered when opposing players were injured, booed home team players such as Del Ennis, Gus Zernial, and Dick Allen unmercifully, and become so unruly at Eagles games that a temporary court had to be set up on game days at Veterans Stadium.

Philadelphia has also been the home of colorful characters such as public address announcer Dave Zinkoff; exotic characters such as the Phillies' Jim Konstanty, who often summoned an undertaker friend to diagnose his pitching problems, and Athletics hurler Rube Waddell, who was known to leave the mound to chase fire engines; and silent characters, such as Steve Carlton, who refused to talk to the press through most of his career. It is a city where Joe Kuharich, Ben Chapman, Roy Rubin, William Baker, Norman Braman, and Mitch Williams would not be candidates for a local Hall of Fame. And it is a city about which Mike Schmidt made the often-quoted remark: "Philadelphia is a place where you have the ecstasy of winning, and the agony of reading about it the next morning."

Undoubtedly, that was not the case in earlier days of sports in Philadelphia. The city's first known athletic activity was recorded in 1732 when rowers sloshed along the Schuylkill River in crude shells. Crew continued to be a major athletic endeavor in the city for the next century, and in 1854 the first rowing club, known as the University Barge Club, was established for Penn oarsmen. Four years later, with 10 clubs in operation on Boathouse Row, the Schuylkill Navy of Philadelphia was founded. It is now the oldest amateur athletic governing body in the United States.

Another sport entered the local scene in the 1830s. Called base ball or town ball, it was first known to have been played in Philadelphia in 1833. By the 1850s the sport was becoming increasingly popular, and in the early 1860s amateur teams existed throughout the city. In one of the earliest recorded results, a team called Equity beat Pennsylvania, 65-52. Baseball teams manned by black players were numerous in Philadelphia in the 1860s and for the rest of the 19th century, among them the Excelsiors, the Pythians, the Mutuals, and the Orions. During the Civil War

northern soldiers also played the game while encamped on a ball field later to be known as Recreation Park.

Philadelphia can lay claim to having the first professional baseball player when in 1865 a team called the Athletics signed a lefthanded second baseman named Al Reach to a contract that paid him \$1,000. Reach, after he'd become the owner of a sporting goods company, would later become the first owner of the Phillies when the team moved in 1883 to Philadelphia from Worcester, Massachusetts, where it had been known as the Brown Stockings.

In 1871 another team called the Athletics won the first championship of the newly formed National Association, the first professional baseball league. Pitching for Philadelphia, Joe Borden, a resident of Yeadon and later West Chester, hurled the first known professional baseball no-hitter in 1875. After the National Association folded in 1875, a circuit called the National League was formed in 1876, and yet another team called the Athletics was among the charter members. Now pitching for Boston, Borden won the first National League game ever played, defeating Philadelphia, 6-5, at Jefferson Park. Still another team called the Athletics (all were different teams) joined the new American Association in 1882. Harry Stovey, the team's first baseman, led the league in home runs five times. In 1890 Philadelphia had three major league teams—the Phillies, the American Association Athletics, and the Quakers in the Players League—a circuit formed by players who temporarily quit the National League.

While baseball thrived in Philadelphia in the second half of the 19th century, other sports had also emerged. By the 1850s cricket had become a major sport. Germantown Cricket club was formed in 1842 by a group of English hosiery weavers. Five more clubs opened in the following decade, including Philadelphia Cricket Club, which was founded on rented grounds in Camden in 1854 by William R. Wister, who has been called “the Father of American Cricket.” Merion Cricket Club opened in 1865. By the mid-1870s some 120 cricket clubs existed in the Philadelphia area.

In 1857, Philadelphian Domick Bradley claimed the world's heavyweight boxing championship after defeating Sam Rankin of Baltimore in the 157th round of bare-knuckled bout. Thereafter, boxing became increasingly popular and soon clubs sprouted all around the city. Polo and horse racing were also popular, with races often held in Fairmount Park, Nicetown, and Camden. Horse racing had been staged in the Philadelphia area since the 1770s.

Also gaining ground was football. Penn fielded its first team in 1876. Swarthmore followed in 1878, with Haverford and Pennsylvania Military College taking to the gridiron in 1879, La Salle and Ursinus in 1893, and Temple and Villanova in 1894. Penn, which opened its first format playing facilities at 37th and Spruce Streets in 1885,

played the world's first indoor football game in 1887 when it defeated Rutgers, 13-10, at Madison Square Garden. By then Penn was a national powerhouse. Quakers guard T. Truxton Hare made the All-American team four straight years from 1897 to 1900. The Quakers, under legendary coach George Woodruff, posted a 124-15-2 record between 1892 and 1901, registering marks of 12-0 in 1894, 14-0 in 1895, and 15-0 in 1897, each time being considered the top team in the nation.

Tennis was gaining a hold in Philadelphia, too. By the late 1870s, lawn tennis was popular at Germantown Cricket Club. An early proponent of the sport was Frederick Taylor, a fine player, who was a member of the winning U.S. doubles team in 1881 and an efficiency expert who invented time and motion studies while working at Midvale Steel Company. In 1883, Joseph Clark, father of the future Philadelphia mayor and U.S. senator, and his brother Clarence became the first Americans to play at Wimbledon. That year, Joseph won the first intercollegiate singles tournament, and he and Clarence captured the national doubles title. In 1887 the first U. S. Women's National Tennis Tournament was played at Philadelphia Cricket Club, and in 1894 the Pennsylvania Lawn Tennis Championship began at Merion.

Golf was also developing an avid following in the 1890s. In 1891, Philadelphia Country Club introduced golf to its members as an activity to be undertaken when they weren't watching tennis, cricket, or polo on the club's grounds then located in Bala Cynwyd. The first professional tournament in Philadelphia was held in 1898 at Huntingdon Valley Country Club with 10 players competing. That same year, Aronimink Country club, then located at 52nd Street and Chester Avenue, hired what may have been the first club pro when it employed John Shippen, a black minister's son who had been raised on an Indian Reservation on Long Island. Also in 1898, Bill Smith won Philadelphia's first Amateur Championship, a title he repeated in 1901 and 1902.

Basketball made its grand entrance in the 1890s with numerous local colleges fielding teams. In the first local intercollegiate game, Haverford defeated Temple, 6-4, in 1895. That year, while playing mostly a combination of club, YMCA, and high school teams, the Owls totaled 59 points to their opponents' 33 in 11 games.

Penn, which fielded its first baseball team in 1875, staged its first relay race in 1893, competing against Princeton. The Penn Relays were launched in 1895, the same year the Devon Horse Show began. The Army-Navy game was held for the first time in Philadelphia in 1899. By the turn of the century, sports had become an integral part of the social fabric in Philadelphia. It would get even better in the 20th century.

A Century of Philadelphia Sports is an attempt to describe the highlights of 100 years of the city's sports activities. Each chapter is devoted to a single 10-year period of that history. Within each chapter, I offer sketches on the major events or individuals of the decade, followed by a general, chronological discussion of other

highlights of that period, and concluding with a brief profile of the top athlete of that decade. The top athletes were chosen from among those who participated during most of the decade.

To keep this book to a reasonable length, some parameters had to be established. First, this is not a critique of or commentary on the city's sports history but a factual presentation of its most prominent features. It was not possible to chronicle every athlete, every team, or every event of significance. Therefore, I have made some arbitrary choices, which I realize will not be met with unanimous agreement. So be it. I have also restricted the area of coverage to Philadelphia, the surrounding four counties (Bucks, Montgomery, Chester, and Delaware), and the nearby parts of South Jersey. In so doing, I have not included material about sports played in places that fall beyond the borders of those areas. Nor have I included high school sports except in a few instances of special significance.

What is included, though, is a summation of the major aspects of a city's marvelous sports history. What a grand and glorious history it has been.