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Fallen Sports Heroes, Media, & Celebrity Culture

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About the Author

Lawrence A. Wenner (Ph.D., University of Iowa, 1977) is the Von der Ahe Professor of Communication and Ethics in the College of Communication and Fine Arts and the School of Film and Television at LMU, where he directs the Forum on Media Ethics and Social Responsibility and teaches media ethics in Philosophy and narrative ethics in the University Honors Program. His earlier notable appointments include serving as the William Evans Fellow at the University of Otago, the Diederich Distinguished Visiting Scholar at Marquette University, the Louise Davies Professor of Contemporary Values in America at the University of San Francisco, and as a University Fellow at the University of Iowa. He has served as Professor of Communication and Media Studies, Executive Director of the Graduate Program in Sports and Fitness Management, and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of San Francisco.

About the Author’s Work

Fallen Sports Heroes, Media, and Celebrity Culture focuses on the increasingly ubiquitous phenomenon whereby notable figures from the sporting world fall from grace in full public view on the main stages of media. While such falls are of remarkably varied character, they fuel questions about the role of the sports hero, the co-mingling of sport and celebrity culture, and the changing nature of moral fault lines in contemporary society. In examining the «hero to villain arc» of sport celebrity, this volume features
leading scholars from the fields of media, sport, and cultural studies who bring diverse vantage points to understanding how contemporary sport celebrities become heroes and gain fame and then fall precipitously from grace through a variety of «sporting offenses.» The sagas of star athletes as well as coaches and sportscasters are examined running the gamut from substance abuse (from performance-enhancing and recreational drugs to alcoholism) to sexual «improprieties» (from bad sexual manners to sexual assault to sex addiction to homophobia to questions over verification of sex) to routine thuggery (aimed not only at opponents but seen in extracurricular gun play and dogfighting) to questionable politics (demonstrating loyalties ranging from «good» nationalism to «bad»). The intriguing analyses featured here make us think about our cultural preoccupation with sports, the prospects for finding heroes in celebrity culture, and the moral complexities that are engaged as sport heroes fall and sometimes rise again redeemed.