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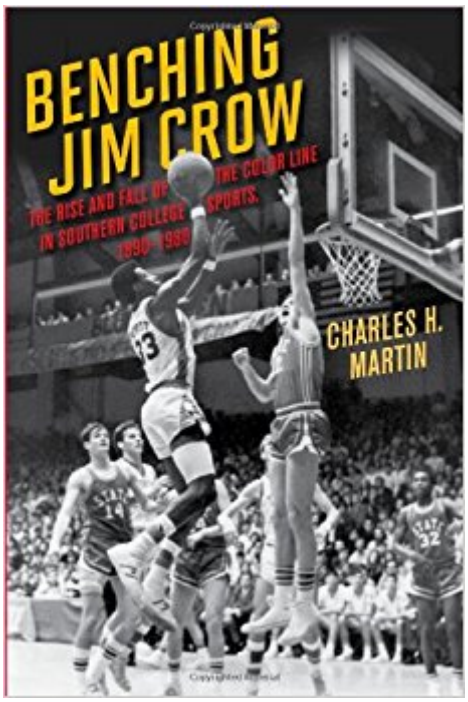
# Benching Jim Crow: The Rise And Fall Of The Color Line In Southern College Sports, 1890-1980 (Sport And Society)

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## Synopsis

Chronicling the uneven rise and slow decline of segregation in American college athletics, Charles H. Martin shows how southern colleges imposed their policies of racial exclusion on surprisingly compliant northern teams and explains the social forces that eventually forced these southern schools to accept integrated competition. Martin emphasizes not just the racism prevalent in football and basketball in the South, but the effects of this discrimination for colleges and universities all over the country. Southern teams such as the University of Alabama, University of Mississippi, and the University of North Carolina were obsessed with national recognition, but their Jim Crow policies prevented them for many years from playing against racially mixed teams from other parts of the country.Â Devoting special attention to the Southeastern Conference, the Atlantic Coast Conference, and teams in Texas, Martin explores the changing social attitudes and culture of competition that turned the tide and allowed for the recruitment of black players and hiring of black coaches. He takes a close look at the case of Texas Western College (now the University of Texas at El Paso), the first major white university in an ex-Confederate state to recruit African American athletes extensively. Martin skillfully weaves existing arguments and documentation on the integration of college sports with wide-ranging, original research, including previously unpublished papers and correspondence of college administrators and athletic directors uncovered in university archives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"An impressive achievement, one of the most useful titles recently published on the history of race and sport."--The Journal of American HistoryÂ "[Martin] provides moving descriptions of individual athletes who braved open hostility and threats of violence and of the coaches who insisted that the teams be integrated.Â  And he is masterful in weaving all this material into the broader social history of the South.Â  The result is an impressive, profound piece of scholarship.Â  Essential."--ChoiceÂ Â "Should be a standard text in sport history classes for many years."--Southwestern Historical QuarterlyÂ "Martin has written this valuable history -- the first of its kind -- documenting the process of integrating the playing fields of Southern universities and colleges.Â  It's an important book."--El Paso TimesÂ Â Â "A well written historical analysis of the development of sport institutions at all-white colleges and universities in the South. . . . Thought provoking, and accessible."--The Journal of African American HistoryÂ "Given the perennial pertinence of racial issues in the United States, the attachment to intercollegiate athletics in the South, and the presence of African-American athletes, this subject begs for attention. Charles H. Martin is well-versed in college sports and academic archives, and the scope and depth of his research is astounding."--William J. Baker, author of Jesse Owens: An American Life"Historians, sports scholars, and students will refer to Benching Jim Crow for many years to come as the standard source on the integration of intercollegiate sport."--Mark S. Dyreson, author of Making the American Team: Sport, Culture, and the Olympic Experience and Crafting Patriotism: America at the Olympic Games"Benching Jim Crow is a powerful indictment of a racist system, much of which has been dismantled by law, social pressure, and the belated recognition by southern coaches and athletic directors that recruiting white athletes exclusively would doom their universities to teams that might aspire to mediocrity on their most optimistic days."--Bill Littlefield, Only a Game

A benchmark study of racial exclusion in college athletics

Charles H. Martin has written a much needed explanation of how intercollegiate sports programs finally accepted black athletes as part of college games. If you like the Jackie Robinson story in the film "42", you will be enlightened by BENCHING JIM CROW. Jim Crow laws in the South prohibited blacks from "social" occasions such as dances, games and schools that mixed the races.1. The South insisted that northern teams leave black players at home when visiting the South to play games.2. A "good Negro" was a black player who did not complain about being dropped from a game just to suit southern racists.3. Southern "culture" was to be respected by the North, even though that culture was full of hate and racism.4. Northern universities were also very slow in finding

places for blacks on their teams.5. Black athletes in the South could not eat or sleep with their white teammates.6. Blacks could not play basketball in the South because their sweat would touch white players and because more of their bodies were exposed by abbreviated uniforms.7. Southern racists feared that black players would increase the rate of "mixed marriages."8. Southern universities finally allowed black participation when their teams could gain more fame and fortune if they could play against good intersectional teams from the North.9. The football bowl games earned big bucks for colleges, so these bowl games included more and more teams who had black football players.10. Southern colleges used the term "Gentlemen's Agreement" to describe the North's willingness to drop black players off their teams when playing southern schools.11. Boston College and the University of Virginia were especially willing to ignore racism.12. Author Martin briefly mentions the civil rights movement and the Viet Nam protests as other influences changing the color line in sports.13. But, mainly, money and greed by the universities' athletic departments led to the acceptance of blacks in sports.

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