

SPORTS HISTORY

ISSUE 7, SUMMER 2020

MAGAZINE

PAGE 30

INTERVIEW

WITH

RACING LEGEND

MARIO ANDRETTI

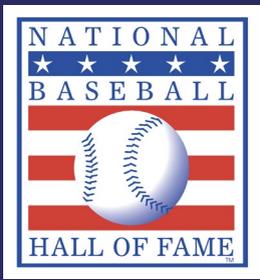
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THE IRONMAN EXPLODES



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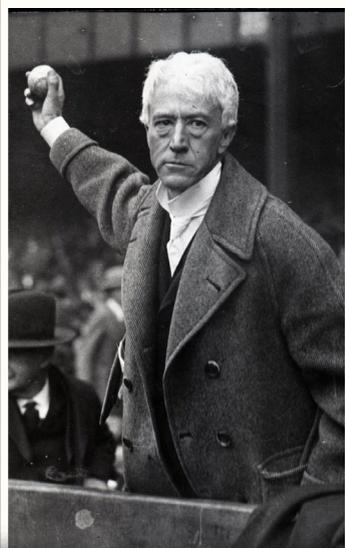




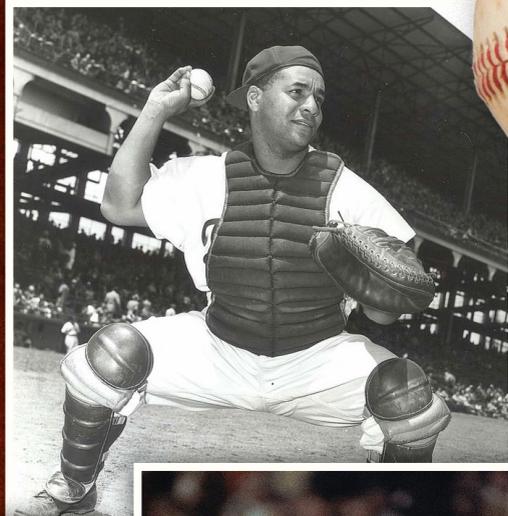
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1ST COMMISSIONER OF
BASEBALL.

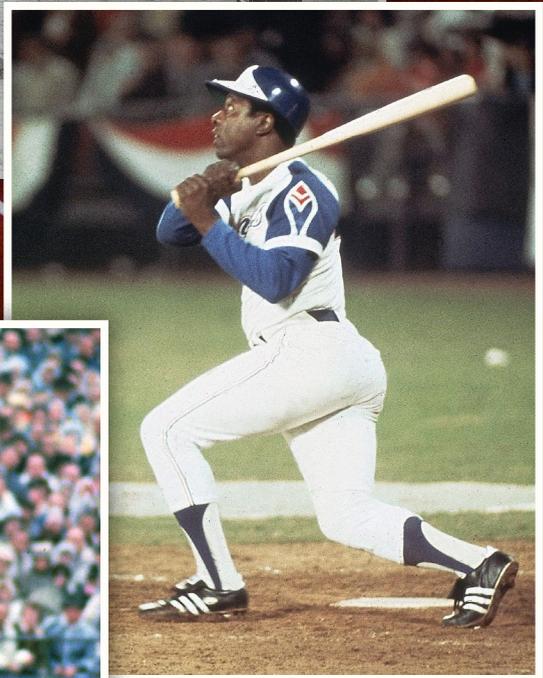


ROY CAMPANELLA (1969).
BROOKLYN DODGERS, CATCHER.



LOU GEHRIG (1939).
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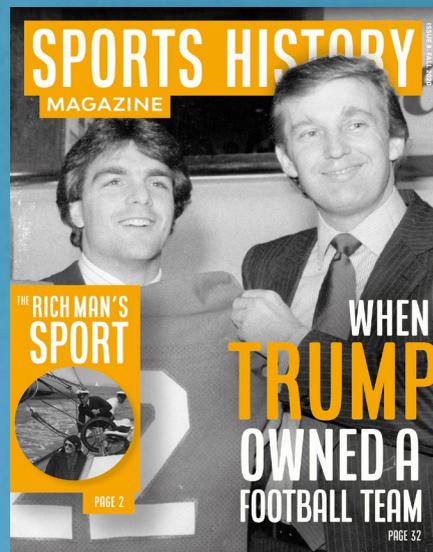
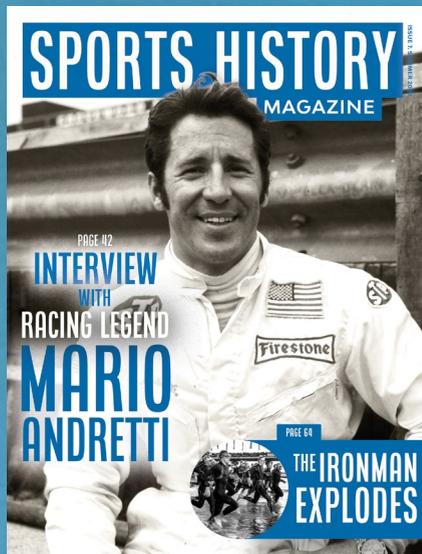
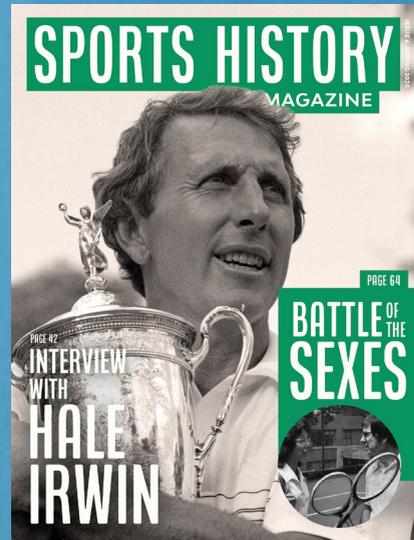
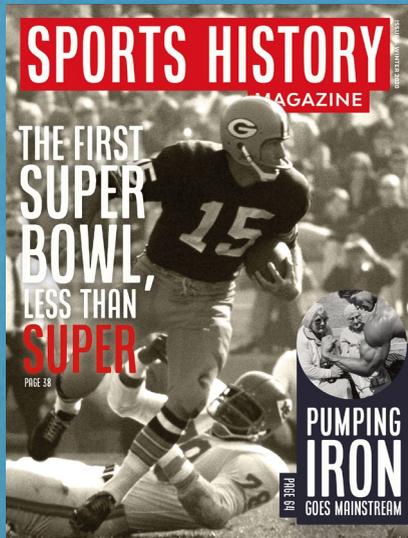


HANK AARON (1982).
MILWAUKEE BRAVES,
RIGHT FIELD.

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CONTRIBUTORS

HANK GOLA, KEVIN SHEA,
RON KAPLAN, DAVID PIERCE,
KEVIN MITCHELL, KEVIN BURKE,
JONATHAN YATES, ROB RUCK,
RUSS COHEN, RICHARD NAUGHTON,
CHRIS WILLIS, KEITH HIRSHLAND,
MICHAEL RENOUF, RON CURTIS,
MITCHELL NATHANSON
AND JIM DUCIBELLA.

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NEW ZEALAND, PUNCHING ABOVE ITS WEIGHT



58



Mo Berg, the **Spy** Behind Home Plate

SHMagazine

A PROFESSIONAL BALL PLAYER

turned international spy resonates like a best-selling novel, or a thriller out of a Hollywood script. But in the case of Moe Berg, it was the true tale of a major league catcher who mixed baseball with espionage. An enigmatic athlete-scholar, Berg spent 15 short seasons with the Brooklyn Robins, Chicago White Sox, Cleveland Indians, Washington Senators and Boston Red Sox. He played only 662 career games and averaged .243 at bat with 441 hits. While he didn't make it to the Hall of Fame, Berg remains the only pro to have his baseball card on display at the CIA Museum.

In sport, this son of Russian immigrants never received more than a handful of induction votes at Cooperstown. But for country, he was awarded the Medal of Freedom even though he decided to turn it down. Born in New York City's Harlem neighborhood, the future cloak & dagger handler mixed brains and brawn in life's pursuits. He attended Princeton University where he captained the baseball team his senior year. Majoring in linguistics, the ivy-leaguer communicated plays in Latin with his teammates to throw off runners making their way around the bases. An astute observer of the sport, Berg's cerebral side seemed out of place with America's favorite pass-time. Dodgers Manager Casey >>

Moe Berg in catcher position (1933).



Stengel described Berg as “the strangest man ever to play baseball”. Though a solid catcher in the majors, his slugging performance left much to be desired. In one anecdote, after hearing that Moe speaks seven languages, Senators outfielder and roommate Dave Harris remarked “Yeah, I know, and he can’t hit in any of them”.

Joining the Brooklyn Robins (Dodgers) in 1923, his first game was a summer header against the Philadelphia Phillies where he took the field in the 7th inning. Berg handled 5 plays at shortstop without an error and caught a long drive to start a game-ending double play. He only played 47 games his rookie season and then took off for Europe on his first trip abroad. When he returned, he was demoted to the minors due to his hitting handicap. One major league scout who was evaluating Berg for the Dodgers sent out a now-memorable, pithy line: “Good field, no hit”. But within a year, Berg’s offensive numbers began to improve and he was brought up to the White Sox where he spent the next 6 years building his

Below: In Japan (right) when he joined an All-Star exhibition trip (1934).

HOBNOBBING AROUND EUROPE, THE HANDSOME, CHARMING AND MULTILINGUAL EX- BASEBALL CATCHER SUCCEEDED IN INGRATIATING HIMSELF INTO EUROPEAN CIRCLES.

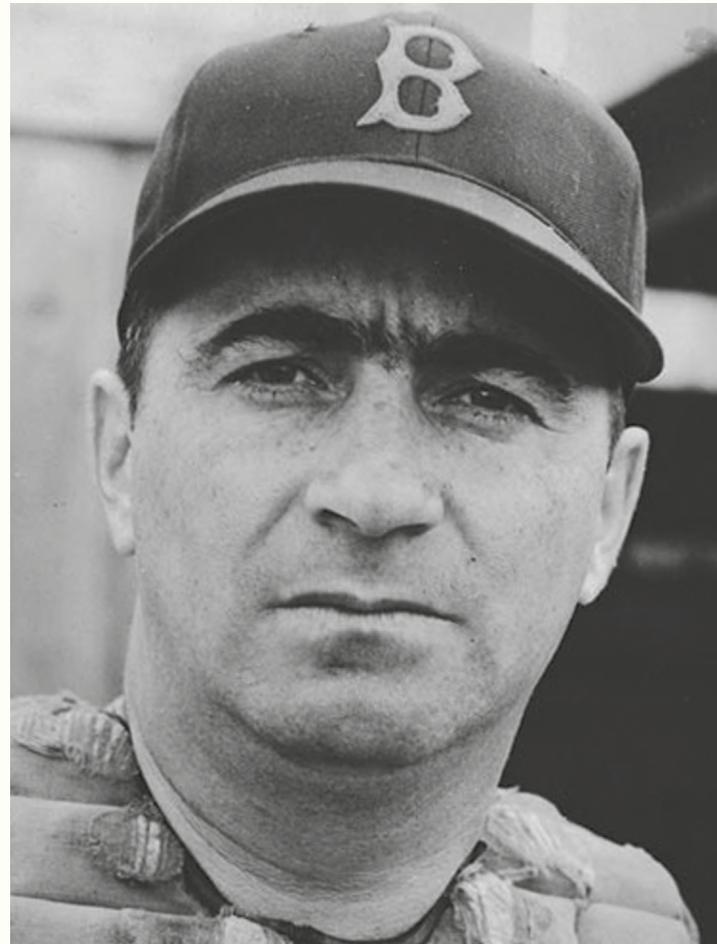
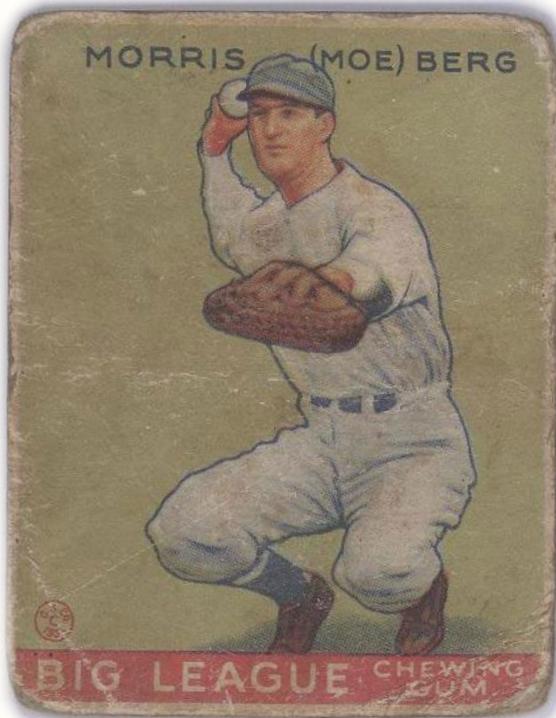
reputation as a catcher. Berg assumed the starting position behind the plate in 1927 after a series of injuries hobbled the team’s lineup of catchers. In his debut, he faced the Yankees’ ‘Murderers Row’, which included Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Earl Combs. With Ted Lyons on the mound, the White Sox beat the Yankees 6-3 and held Ruth to no hits. Berg made the defensive play of the game when he caught a poorly thrown ball to tag out New York’s Joe Dugan at the plate.



Right: Mo Berg pictured at Red Sox Camp in 1941.

Berg's baseball career peaked in 1929 when he played 107 games and swung .287, his best as a professional. His fielding remained strong and between 1932 and 1934, the 6'1, 185 lb. savant set an AL record by catching in 117 consecutive games without an error. Still, despite loving the game, the native New Yorker never embraced a full commitment to the sport since his interests lay in multiple areas. His hitting remained erratic and he never played an entire season. In 1931, he stepped on the field for only 10 games. A man of mystery off the field as much as on it, he never settled into family life and often disappeared on jaunts around the world. He even found time to earn a law degree from Columbia University. By the time Berg retired in 1939, he was already a bench warmer for several years due to a knee injury. He went on to coach the Red Sox for two seasons before jumping off to pursue his spy-craft talents.

Below: Berg's baseball card on display at CIA headquarters.



The intellectual ball player made his foray into intelligence in 1934, seven years before the U.S. entered WWII. That season, he joined Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and a team of All-Stars on an exhibition trip to Japan. Without much play time, Berg roamed around Tokyo and utilized his proficiency in Japanese to make his way to the roof of a hospital where he filmed the city's harbor and industrial landscape with a hidden 16-mm Bell & Howell camera. His excuse for entering the facility was that he was visiting the ambassador's daughter, but he never saw her. Years later when the war was raging, he screened the film footage in front of U.S. military intelligence officials.

But the stuff of legends came in 1943 when Berg became a paramilitary operations officer for the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the predecessor >>



TIMELINE
OF A
CLOAK AND
DAGGER
BASEBALL PLAYER

**SIGNS WITH
BROOKLYN ROBINS**
WEAK BATTER AT FIRST,
RECEIVES EVALUATION
FROM A SCOUT:
"GOOD FIELD, NO HIT"

1923

FIRST TRIP TO JAPAN
PLAYS SPORADICALLY
FOR THE CLEVELAND
INDIANS AND THEN
JOINS THE WASHINGTON
SENATORS

1932

1903

BORN IN NYC

1919

**TRANSFERS TO
PRINCETON FROM NYU**
CAPTAINS PRINCETON
BASEBALL TEAM HIS SENIOR
YEAR

1926

**STARTS COLUMBIA
LAW SCHOOL**
JOINS CHICAGO
WHITE SOX

1934

**SECOND TRIP TO JAPAN
WITH AN ALL-STAR
BASEBALL TEAM**
SECRETLY FILMS TOKYO HARBOR
AND LANDSCAPE WITH 18 MM
BELL & HOWELL CAMERA

WHILE HE DIDN'T MAKE IT TO THE HALL OF FAME, BERG REMAINS THE ONLY PRO TO HAVE HIS BASEBALL CARD ON DISPLAY AT THE CIA MUSEUM.

Left: With Joe Cronin during their time with the Red Sox.

to the CIA. He carried out dangerous missions behind enemy lines, including parachuting into Yugoslavia to evaluate the different resistance groups fighting the Germans. Hobnobbing around Europe, the handsome, charming and multilingual ex-baseball catcher succeeded in ingratiating himself into European circles. His mission was to recruit German and Italian scientists to the allied side. In Zurich, Berg managed to chat up Werner Heisenberg, the head of Nazi Germany's atom bomb project. He was to kill Heisenberg if the scientist revealed that Germany was close to producing the bomb. The American spy determined that they weren't and no assassination was carried out. >>

SIGNS WITH BOSTON RED SOX

SPENDS 5 YEARS WITH THE RED SOX, AVERAGING LESS THAN 30 GAMES A SEASON

1935

JOINS THE OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

PARACHUTES INTO YUGOSLAVIA, MEETS RESISTANCE GROUPS, EVALUATES SCIENTISTS INCLUDING GERMAN A-BOMB PHYSICISTS

1943

LIVES WITH BROTHER FOR 17 YEARS

LEADS A RECLUSIVE LIFE WITH NO JOB, NO FAMILY, AND IS EVENTUALLY EVICTED BY BROTHER

1950^S-60^S

1940

TAKES A COACHING POSITION WITH THE RED SOX

JOINS OFFICE OF INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS AFTER ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

1952

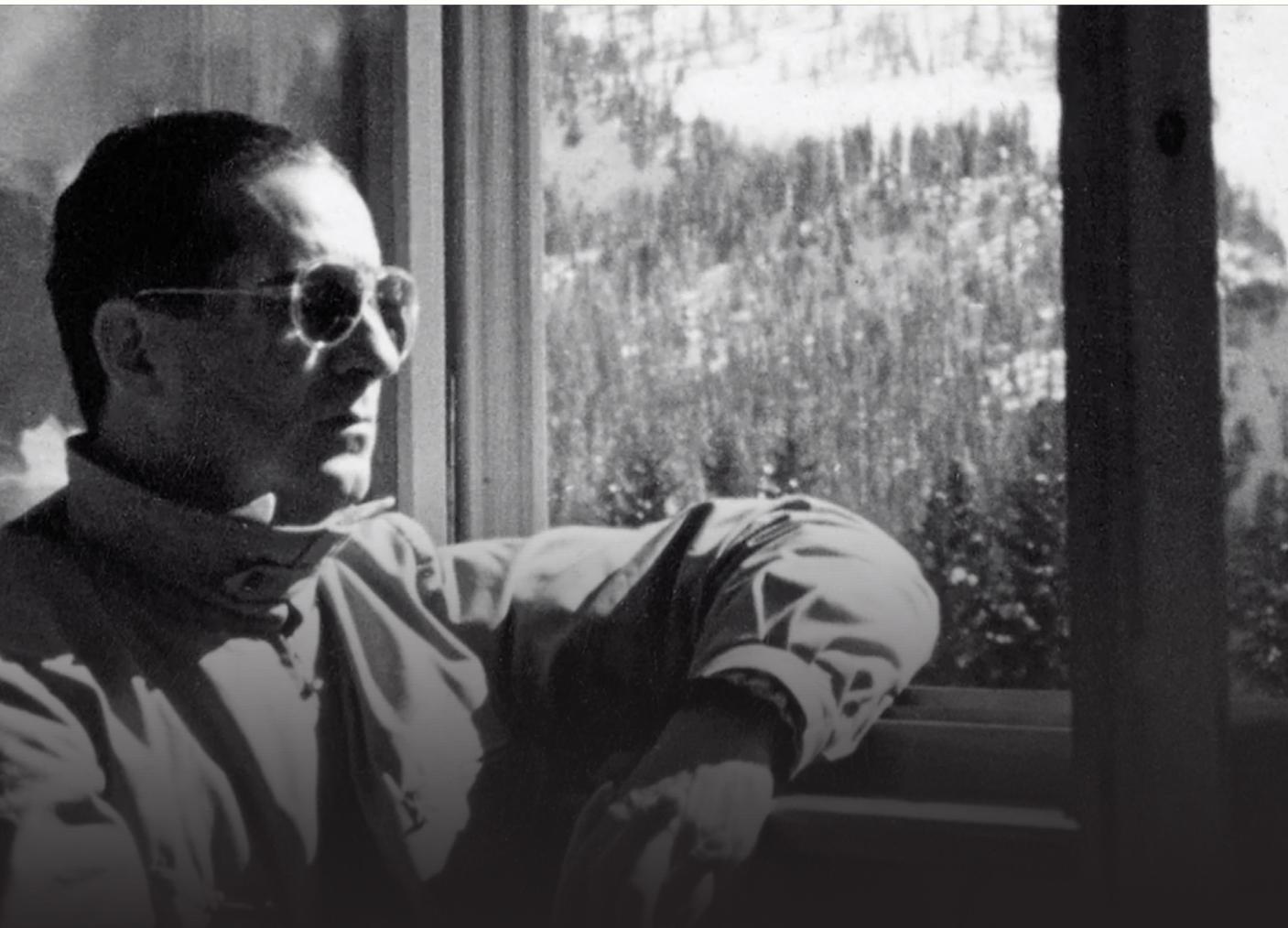
RETURNS TO EUROPE TO GATHER INFORMATION ON SOVIET A-BOMB EFFORTS

CIA GETS LITTLE FROM BERG'S ACTIVITIES IN EUROPE AND CALLS HIM A "FLAKE"

1972

DIES IN BELLEVILLE, NJ

BERG'S SISTER ACCEPTS HIS WWII MEDAL OF FREEDOM WHICH HE TURNED DOWN IN LIFE

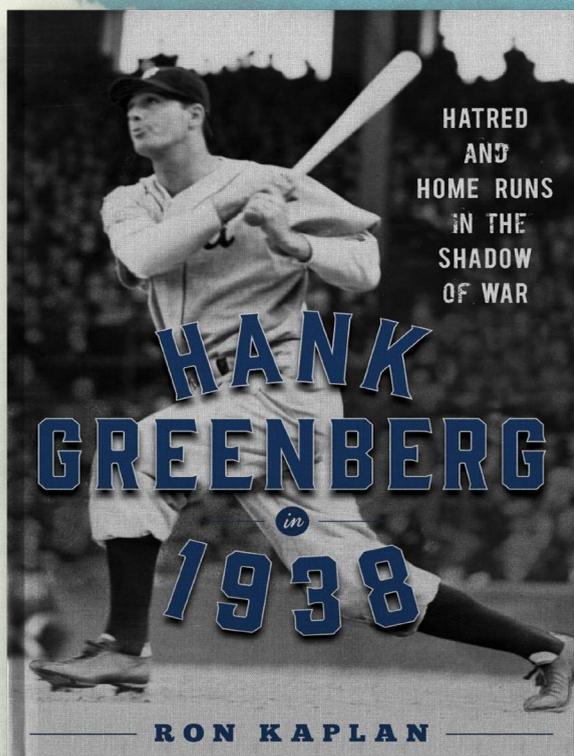


"...I'M HAPPY I HAD A CHANCE TO PLAY PRO BALL AND AM ESPECIALLY PROUD OF MY CONTRIBUTIONS TO MY COUNTRY. PERHAPS I COULD NOT HIT LIKE BABE RUTH, BUT I SPOKE MORE LANGUAGES THAN HE DID."

Above: Post war and post baseball, the enigmatic Berg shown in Switzerland (1946).

Post-baseball and post-war, Berg remained a puzzling, if not an eccentric figure. In the early 1950s, the CIA hired him to tap his old contacts in Europe and gather information about Soviet research into the atom bomb. He returned with little valuable information and was dismissed by the agency as "flaky". For the remainder of his life, Berg led a jobless existence and lived off family and friends. Reflecting on his life before he died in 1972, Berg said: "...I'm happy I had a chance to play pro ball and am especially proud of my contributions to my country. Perhaps I could not hit like Babe Ruth, but I spoke more languages than he did." ●

HANK GREENBERG IN 1938: HATRED AND HOME RUNS IN THE SHADOW OF WAR



"Jewish icon Hank Greenberg preferred to let his bat do the talking—and it never spoke louder than in 1938, when he chased Babe Ruth's single-season home run record while Hitler and Nazi Germany ramped up their persecution of Jews. Ron Kaplan recounts the story of Greenberg's heroic season with insight, humor and a firm grasp of its greater historical context."

—**DAN EPSTEIN**, AUTHOR OF 'BIG HAIR AND PLASTIC GRASS' AND 'STARS AND STRIKES'

"Ron Kaplan tells the story with the same dignity and grace that Greenberg exhibited on the field and in his life...*Hank Greenberg in 1938* is a wonderful baseball book, loaded with anecdotes and statistics. Whether you love baseball, history or both, you will want to read it."

—**BOOK REPORTER**

"Ron Kaplan does first-rate work, giving us a deeper appreciation of one of baseball's most thrilling performances."

—**JONATHAN EIG**, AUTHOR OF 'LUCKIEST MAN' AND 'OPENING DAY'

"Ron Kaplan has this subject cornered. With diligent research woven into a very entertaining read, he has nailed Hank Greenberg's most important and controversial season into a book for the ages."

—**MARTY APPEL**, AUTHOR OF 'PINSTRIPE EMPIRE' AND 'CASEY STENDEL'

"Kaplan offers a detailed analysis of the season and Greenberg's quest for the record"

—**NEW YORK JOURNAL OF BOOKS**

Vin Scully, a Memory Worth Savoring

By Keith Hirshland

ON SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2016 VINCENT EDWARD “Vin” Scully sat behind the microphone in a Dodger Stadium broadcast booth and called a Dodgers home game for the last time. 67 glorious seasons earlier, Scully announced his first baseball match in Ebbets Field, the Dodgers’ New York home at the time. Back in 1950, he joined Red Barber and Connie Desmond as a junior broadcaster for the team. Three years later,

at the age of 25, Vin became the youngest person ever to announce a World Series game. Despite the myriad of voices that came out of basements, barrooms, and broadcast schools, Scully’s tenure behind the mic constitutes the longest run of any broadcaster associated with a single professional sports team. Among the earliest recollections I have as a kid was being tucked into bed and my parents setting a transistor radio in the room to lull me into sleep. At a low volume, the radio was tuned to the Dodgers game on KFI 640 am. I didn’t know much about baseball but I knew I liked it. Rocking back and forth, working up a sweat and trying to tire myself out, I listened to Vin Scully. 30 years later, in a remarkable twist of fate, I met and worked with that same night time radio voice of my childhood years. The best in baseball and one of the best in the entire business

Scully (left) with Dodgers Manager, Walter Alston, and fellow broadcaster, Connie Desmond.



for years, Scully would be the lead announcer for a made-for-television golf match on which I was lucky enough to work. It was Thanksgiving weekend just outside of Palm Springs, California and The SKINS Game was underway. I was an Associate Producer and one of my roles was to write and edit the opening tease for the broadcast and all of its features. I was on the job for a little more than a year and had worked

WHILE ALL OF THEM WERE TALENTED, NONE OF THEM WERE VIN SCULLY.

with a number of professional broadcasters. While all of them were talented, none of them were Vin Scully. The SKINS Game featured four of golf's biggest names that gathered every fall for a "hit and giggle" competition. It was the highest rated golf program on TV other than the Masters Tournament and I was charged with copywriting for Scully. Was I nervous? You bet. Was I intimidated? Thanks to Vin, not a chance. After laboring over every word, I handed the finished product to Vin who accepted it graciously.

SKINS Game director Steve Beim introduced us earlier in the week. Days later in the booth, as he slipped the headset off his left ear, he acted like he'd known me for years. "Thanks Keith," he said with a smile. He slipped the headset back over his ear, gave the copy a glance and informed the control room he was ready to "give it a try." Every word I wrote he read and it came out a million times better than I could have ever imagined. That was a quarter century ago. I have seen Vin on a couple of occasions since then and he still remembers our short time together. Working with the greatest in the field remains among my most treasured memories. There are excellent announcers in the business today and many others coming up the ranks, but none will ever match the illustrious broadcaster and his 67 years of incomparable work. Though baseball and America said goodbye to Vin Scully when the Dodgers made the final out of their 2016 season, the play-by-play radio legend will be remembered and exalted for generations. ●

Keith Hirshland is an award-winning author and former media executive.



The 'voice of the Dodgers' in his early days on the West Coast.

Pete Gray, Baseball's One-Armed Wonder

SHMagazine

PETE GRAY SPENT LESS THAN 6 months in the majors and averaged only .218 at the plate, but the native Pennsylvanian was one of the most celebrated World War II replacement figures on the baseball field. A one-armed ball handler, Gray played the game during a critical time in our history when the national pastime was not just a sport, but an entertainment outlet for a country that was fighting and dying overseas. An inspiration to thousands of soldiers who were left disabled after the war, Gray was nevertheless dismissed by his teammates as a sideshow instead of a serious athlete, an experience that left him bitter for the rest of his life.

Gray debuted with the St. Louis Browns on April 17, 1945, five months before WWII ended. The U.S. had entered the war in December, 1941 and along with the millions of Americans who were called up for the draft, baseball's luminaries were no exception. Renowned sluggers like Joe DiMaggio, Ted Williams and Hank Greenberg were just a few of the hundreds of major leaguers who traded their team jerseys for military uniforms. Not surprisingly, the professional game was sapped of its talent and teams filled their rosters with military rejects, quasi-pros, and hopeful amateurs. One-armed Pete Gray joined the Browns after two seasons with the Memphis Chicasaws, a minor league >>



Above: Pete Gray playing for the St. Louis Browns.



Gray's original glove, which is on display at the Baseball National Hall of Fame and Museum.

HAVING LOST HIS RIGHT ARM ABOVE THE ELBOW IN A CHILDHOOD ACCIDENT, THE SON OF LITHUANIAN IMMIGRANTS NONETHELESS FOLLOWED HIS BASEBALL DREAM AND PUSHED AWAY SYMPATHIES THAT INEVITABLY CAME HIS WAY.

team in the Southern Association. The Chics finished last in 1943 but Gray showed promise, playing 126 games and batting .289. The following season he swung .333, prompting a group of Philadelphia sports writers to honor the handicapped sportsman with the 'Most Courageous Athlete' recognition. Gray humbly responded: "Boys, I can't fight and so there is no courage about me. Courage belongs on the battlefield, not on the baseball diamond". In fact, Gray tried to enlist in the army after the attack on Pearl Harbor but was denied because he was an amputee. Later on, he visited hospitals and rehabilitation centers to boost morale among wounded veterans.

On the field, Gray's style of play was as fascinating as it was inspirational. Having lost his right arm

Career of a Baseball Amputee

1942

**TROIS-RIVIERES
RENARDS**

1943

**MEMPHIS
CHICKSAWS**

1944

**MEMPHIS
CHICKSAWS**

1945

**ST. LOUIS
BROWNS**

1946

TOLEDO MUD HENS

1947

-

1948

ELMIRA PIONEERS

1949

DALLAS EAGLES

above the elbow in a childhood accident, the son of Lithuanian immigrants nonetheless followed his baseball dream and pushed away sympathies that inevitably came his way. Baseball wasn't just fun for kids, but it was a popular way for immigrants to assimilate to their new country. As a youngster, he practiced with a rock and stick every day for hours to "develop a quick wrist". Hitting was easier than fielding, since the latter required more steps to perform than it would be for a two-armed player. The baseball marvel learned to hit with rapid swings of his left arm and bunted by resting the knob of the bat against his side. In defense, he removed most of the padding from his glove and developed an effective outfielding technique. After catching the ball, he would insert the mitt under his stub

APRIL 17-
SEPTEMBER 30, 1945

GAMES PLAYED		HITS	RUNS
77		51	26
AT BATS	BATTING AVERAGE		RBI
234	.218		13

arm, squeeze the ball out along his chest, and then grab and throw, all with remarkable speed.

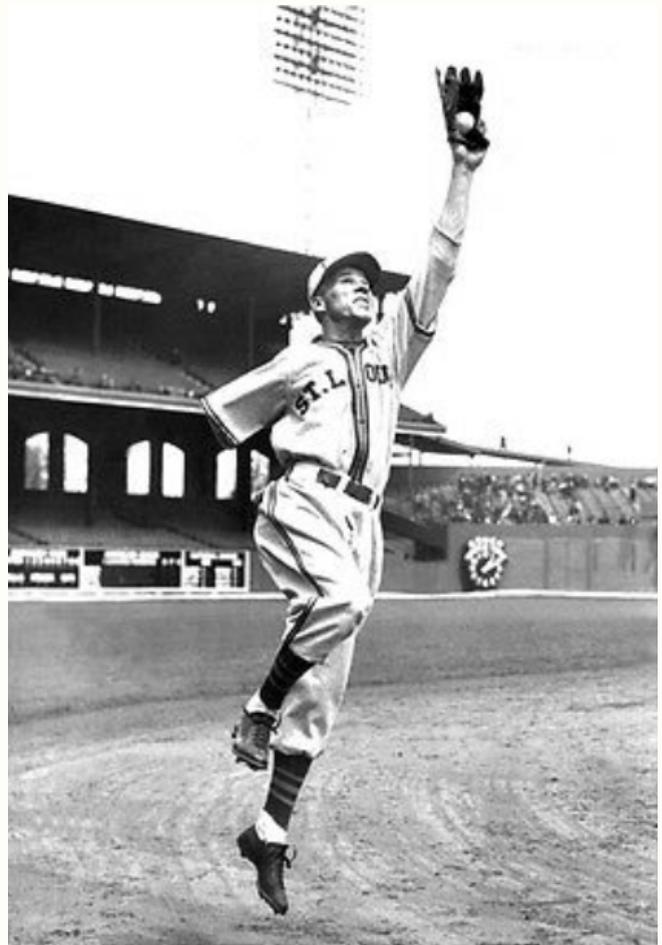
At 6'1 with an unusually strong forearm and bicep, Gray was able to swing a 38-ounce bat, which was heavier than average. He pursued the sport aggressively and in one of his minor league games he broke his collar bone trying to steal third base in a head-first slide, putting him out for the rest of the season. After winning the Southern Association's MVP award, Scouts from the pros started coming around and the St. Louis Browns picked up his contract for \$20,000, the largest sum paid for a Southern League player at the time. His first hit at the >>

THE BASEBALL MARVEL LEARNED TO HIT WITH RAPID SWINGS OF HIS LEFT ARM AND BUNTED BY RESTING THE KNOB OF THE BAT AGAINST HIS SIDE.

majors was a single against the Detroit Tigers and a month later, Gray fulfilled his lifelong dream of playing at Yankee stadium. He collected 5 hits and 2 RBI in a double header that saw St. Louis sweep New York in both games.

The one-armed wonder got his break in MLB but emotions in the clubhouse ran mixed whenever

**Below: Pete Gray fielding for the St. Louis Browns.
Right: Leaping for a catch.**



he hit the field. The Browns won the AL pennant the previous year but struggled financially after drawing only half a million fans to their stadium. Among his teammates, Gray was seen as a management concoction that was meant to boost fan attendance and raise ticket sales at the gate. But that sentiment wasn't shared by everyone. Years later, Don Gutteridge, one of the Browns' infielders who played with Gray, pointed out that the team delivered a winning percentage of .60 when Gray was on the field and a losing one of .425 when he sat on the bench. Additionally, at the end of the 1945 season, St. Louis finished 3rd in the AL and in 1946 after Gray was gone, the team was 7th.

In his only tenure with MLB, Gray ended up playing just 77 games, delivering 51 hits and 13



***AMONG HIS TEAMMATES,
GRAY WAS SEEN AS A
MANAGEMENT CONCOCTION
THAT WAS MEANT TO BOOST
FAN ATTENDANCE AND RAISE
TICKET SALES AT THE GATE.***

Above: Taking the one-armed swing in front of a packed stadium.

RBI. After the war ended, he was sent back to the minors where he spent a few more years before eventually settling into a life outside baseball. Conflicted and prone to gambling and drinking, he struggled with his legacy as an exploited, one-armed ballplayer. Nevertheless, asked once how he thought he would do if he hadn't lost his limb, he replied "Maybe I wouldn't have done as well. I probably wouldn't have been as determined". Gray died on June 30, 2002. ●

The Ironman Explodes

SHMagazine

“SWIM 2.4 MILES! BIKE 112 MILES! Run 26.2 miles! Brag for the rest of your life”. A registered trademark today, that was a hand-written exhortation in the rules pages that were handed out to competitors when they set out on the first Ironman Triathlon on February 18, 1978. That day, fifteen non-qualifying participants took up the seemingly insurmountable challenge of conquering 140.6 miles of sea and land around Hawaii’s island of Oahu. Two decades on, the triathlon would find its place in the Olympics and the Ironman competition, the elite grind for the elite human, would remain its own exclusive club. Tapping into a physical addiction that borders on the insane, the sporting world had discovered the ultimate individual test of athletic punishment.

No image captured the Ironman competition more profoundly than that of Julie Moss, the 23-year old graduate student who collapsed in the third stage of

the race and subsequently crawled her way to the finish line. Moss entered the 1982 Hawaii Ironman Championship as part of her thesis on physiology and training. She was in the lead at the marathon run when her body simply gave out and shut down. Moss was suffering from dehydration, malnutrition, and extreme exhaustion. With just 100 meters to go, she prostrated on all four limbs and managed to drag her lifeless body to a 2nd place finish. Kathleen McCartney, who was 20 minutes behind Moss before she caved in, ended up winning the race. The sight of Moss with her hands and knees on the ground, digging for every ounce of energy remaining in her system, struck a chord among millions of viewers who saw her on ABC’s Wide World of Sports when the event was telecast.

The Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii was the brainchild of U.S. Navy officer John Collins, who along with his wife Judy, took part in off-beat swim/bike/run exercises. The first >>



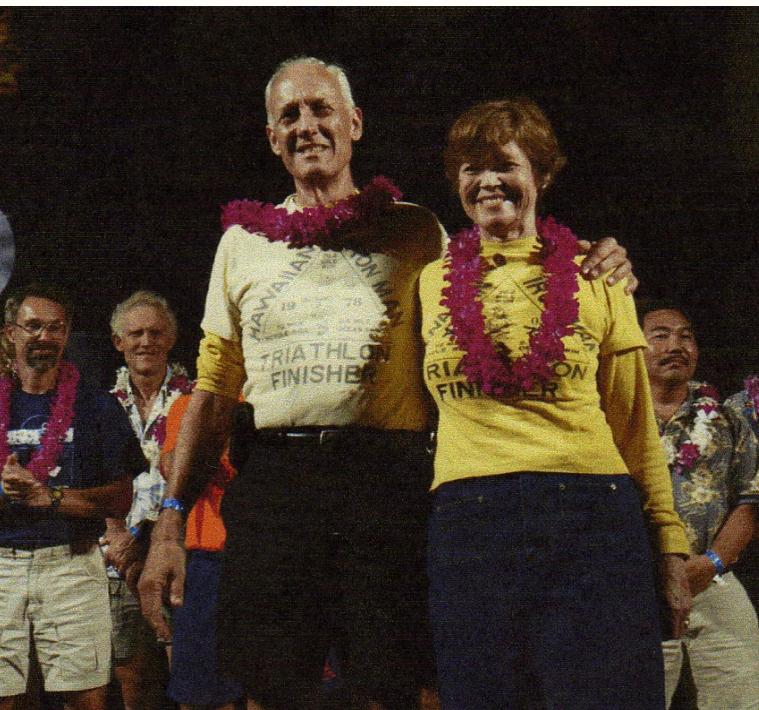
Start of the swimming competition at the 2005 Ironman Triathlon.



“SWIM 2.4 MILES! BIKE 112 MILES! RUN 26.2 MILES! BRAG FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE”

of those was held in 1974 by the San Diego Track Club whose members were searching for lighter workouts to complement the rigors of training for marathons. The three-part discipline back then comprised of a 10k run, 8k cycle, and 500-meter swim, or just a fraction of what the future Ironman Triathlon would demand. When Collins and his wife moved to Hawaii in 1975, they suggested combining the three long-distance competitions that already existed on the island: the Waikiki Roughwater Swim (2.4 miles), the Around-Oahu Bike Race (115 miles) and the Honolulu Marathon (26.2 miles). The idea came up after the Collins and fellow

Below: Founders of the Ironman Triathlon, Commander John Collins and his wife, Judy.



recreational athletes were debating which athletes were the fittest. Cycling came into the mix when it was pointed out that Belgian cyclist Eddie Merckx was reported to have the highest oxygen consumption rate (VO₂) of any sportsman.

As if a marginal community of extreme athletes was waiting to be discovered, it didn't take long for the Ironman Triathlon to explode. By chance in 1979, Sports Illustrated was covering a golf tournament in Hawaii when they also decided to write an article about an obscure grueling contest they referred to as possibly being the supreme fitness test of the day. ABC caught the story and eventually flew a crew out to Hawaii to stitch a 43-minute segment on a group of unknown athletes who were competing in an unknown sport. The risk paid off and the results were spectacular. Viewers were awestruck by the three-part endurance race where victory could be defined by just crossing the finish line and not necessarily by taking first place. In 1982, the year Julie

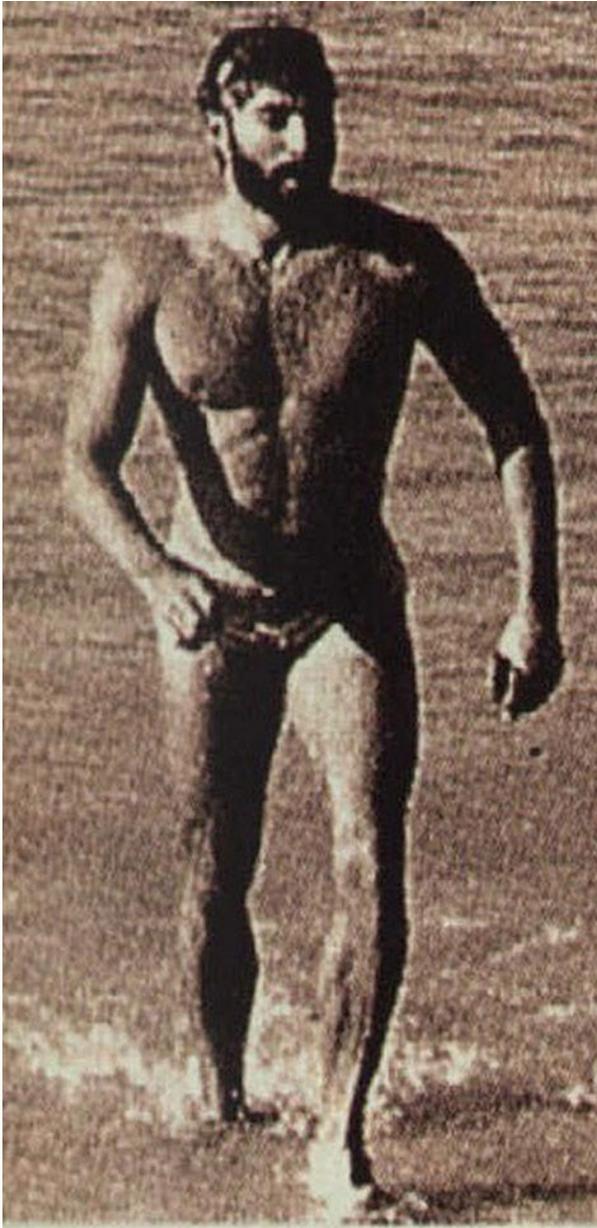
WITH JUST 100 METERS TO GO, SHE PROSTRATED ON ALL FOUR LIMBS AND MANAGED TO DRAG HER LIFELESS BODY TO A 2ND PLACE FINISH.

Moss assumed iconic status, the event became the top-rated show at ABC's Wide World of Sports. A year later, a thousand competitors were signing up and another thousand were being turned away. By 2012, the Ironman World Championship, now part of NBC as a standalone program, would win its 16th Sports Emmy Award on television. >>





Above: Julie Moss crawling on all fours at the 1982 Ironman Triathlon where she placed 2nd.



Above: Gordon Haller, winner of the first Ironman Triathlon competition in 1978.

The business property of the Ironman brand took off as well. Collins, the original visionary of the grueling human experiment and the person who coined the term “Iron Man”, stayed on for just the first year before handing the reigns over to Frank Grundman and Valerie Silk, a couple that ran a local Nautilus Fitness Center. Following her divorce, Valerie Silk continued

AS IF A MARGINAL COMMUNITY OF EXTREME ATHLETES WAS WAITING TO BE DISCOVERED, IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR THE IRONMAN TRIATHLON TO EXPLODE.

managing the Ironman until selling it in 1989 for \$3 million to ophthalmologist Dr. James Gills, who further expanded the brand and the prize money by creating the World Triathlon Corp. (WTC). By 2008, endurance sports around the world were being picked up by private equity firms and WTC, which now held the rights to 53 Ironman and half-Ironman distance events, fell into the hands of Providence Partners for an estimated \$85 million. In 2015, Wanda Group, a China-based sports and media conglomerate, purchased WTC for \$650 million.

What started as an exercise in super human feats morphed into a global phenomenon and a badge of honor. For a day's work, those who can complete the course within official time constraints- 2hrs:20min swim, 8hrs:10min bike, 6hrs:30min run- receive the official and lifelong designation of an “Ironman”. Gordon Heller, a U.S. Navy communications specialist, won the inaugural Ironman Triathlon with a time of 11hrs:46min. Four decades later, Germany's Jan Frodeno lowered the time in the World Championship to a record 7hrs:51min (2019). On the women's side, Switzerland's Daniela Ryf is the all-time greatest at 8hrs:26min (2018). Similar to the Olympics, the Ironman celebrates the spirit of athletic possibilities, but its extreme challenges allow mere mortals to leap into super men and women. ●



Above: Cyclists riding through the lava rocks landscape at the 2014 Ironman Triathlon.

The Rise and Fall of Rollerblading

SHMagazine

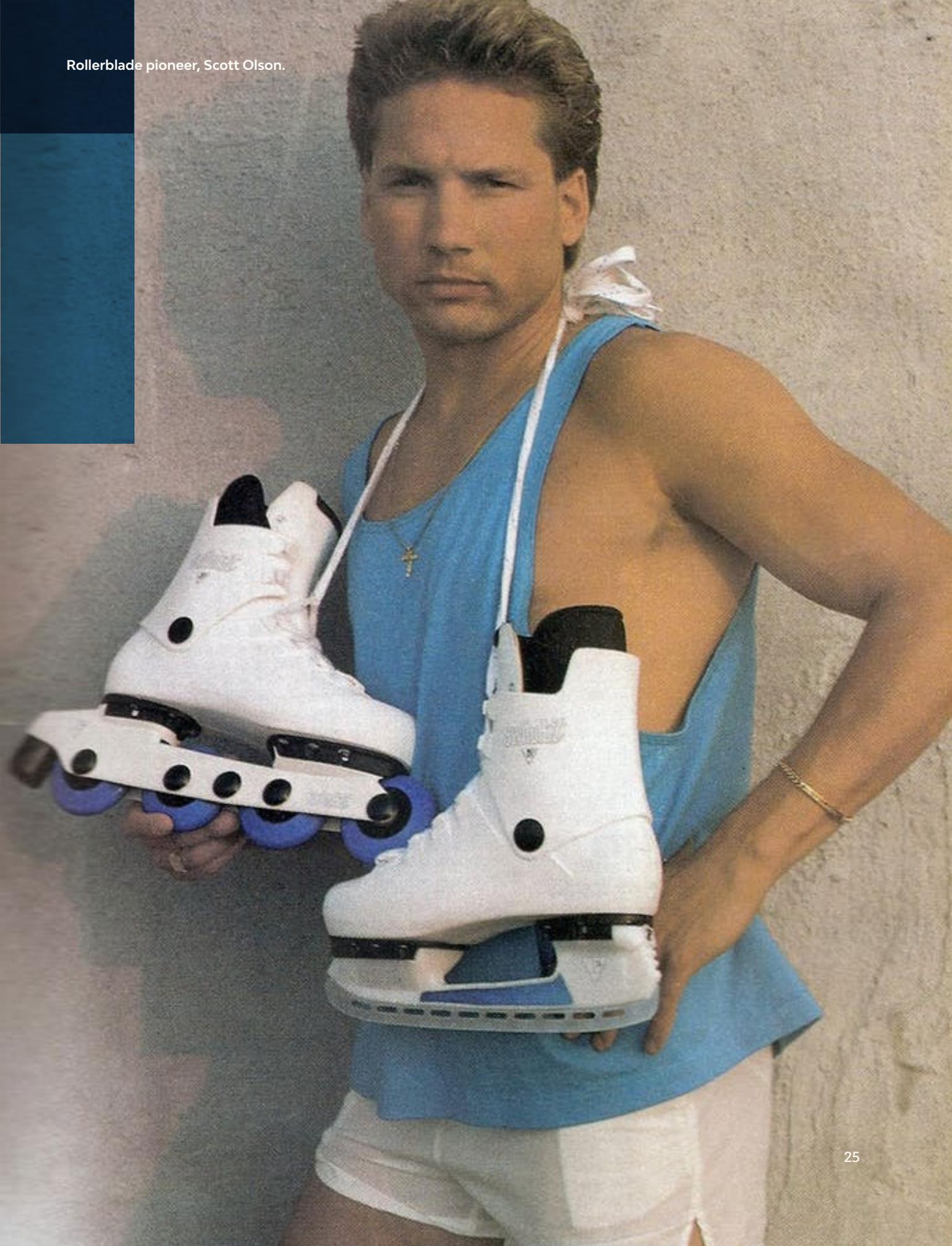
THIRTY YEARS AGO, AMERICA WAS enamored with a new outdoor activity that was quickly becoming the fastest growing sport in the country. Other than demanding two balanced feet and a fun-loving spirit, inline skating had no age limit or gender preference. On any given day in the 1990s, millions of Americans strapped on their wheeled boots and took to the streets, the parks, and any other place they could find with a smooth pavement.

However, what seemed to be the beginning of an enduring sport ended up falling flat on its feet. Inline skating turned out to be a generational fad, a short-lived novelty in the grand history of non-traditional sports. At the turn of the new millennium, 22 million Americans rolled on these rigid contraptions at least once a year. By 2017, that figure dropped

to 5 million. Inline skating ended up retreating into its own niche, remaining a training tool for serious athletes or going underground for edgy daredevils.

The single-line wheeled shoes originated in Europe and got their first patent in Paris in 1819. But they stayed as crude toys and were overtaken by the more popular 'quad' roller skates that were developed by American James Plimpton during the Civil War. A staple of teen-age life for much of the 20th century, roller skates were easier to control and were enjoyed in all forms of recreation, from roller derbies to disco skating. The inline versions remained outside the zone of mass popularity until two Midwest brothers rejiggered the design for greater comfort and maneuverability. Rollerblading, the eponym for inline skating, was named after its successful branding company, Rollerblade, Inc. The latter >>

Rollerblade pioneer, Scott Olson.





Left: An early version of inline skates (1910).

was founded in 1982 by Minnesotans Scott and Brennan Olson, hockey players who were looking for ways to practice their sport in the summer. At the time, hockey was primarily a winter discipline and few ice arenas were operating in the off-season. The Olsons retrofitted their hockey boots with polyurethane wheels in a straight line and sold the idea to their hockey friends.

THE NEW TOY ONLY TRANSCENDED THE HOCKEY WORLD WHEN ROLLERBLADE DECIDED TO LAUNCH A MARKETING CAMPAIGN AIMED AT WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

Stores were already carrying the booted inline skates before the Olsons arrived, but sales to the public were always flat. Being entrepreneurs as much as they were athletes, the Olsons sourced the wheeled tracks from a California manufacturer and pitched them as accessories, offering 5-day, money-back guarantees to skeptical buyers. The strategy worked and with time, their town was buzzing with hockey enthusiasts wearing inline skates. The new toy only transcended the hockey world when Rollerblade decided to launch a marketing campaign aimed at women and children. The skates were painted neon colors and given to rental shops on popular California beaches. The company also sponsored skating runs between towns, including one road warrior who skated the distance from Denver, Colorado to Minneapolis, Minnesota. Almost overnight, families were wobbling on wheels along Portland's waterfront park and fearless street slickers were weaving through traffic in New York City.



Above: Sharing a trail with traditional cyclists (1994).

Basketball on rollerblades, tennis on roller blades, and a multitude of other wheeled sideshows started appearing. Vying for outdoor physical space with cyclists, joggers and walkers, bladers got the ire from fitness traditionalists but the new sports phenom was unstoppable. Aggressive inline skating, which incorporated the execution of tricks in mid-action, found new homes on concrete stairs and brass railings. In popular culture, the opening scene of the 1995 *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* movie featured the Rangers hitting the streets on their inline skates to the hip tune of "Free Ride".

The same year that the Power Rangers film was released, inline skating made it to ESPN's newly-created X Games, an extreme sports tournament that lined up skateboarding, bungee jumping,

***FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS,
THERE WERE MORE INLINE
SKATING EVENTS AT THE X
GAMES THAN SKATEBOARD
OR BICYCLE COMPETITIONS.***

mountain biking, sky surfing, and street lugging. Drawing 200,000 spectators and costing \$10 million to host, the "Extreme Games" were a commercial success and served to enhance the visibility and legitimacy of skating on eight wheels. For the next few years, there were more inline skating events at the X Games than skateboard or bicycle competitions. Inline hit its >>

Playing basketball on rollerblades in New York City.





Above: Sliding down a handrail in 'aggressive' rollerblading (1996).

peak at the youth-oriented tournaments in 1998 with 4 categories: vert, vert triplets, street, and downhill.

On the business front, Rollerblade, Inc.'s revenues doubled after it started pursuing the leisure market, with California representing 1/4 of total sales and women representing 1/3 of all buyers. Due to its successful strategy, the company was an early leader in the space and by 1995, it had 40% of the \$650 million inline business in America. But competition was heating up and even Nike got into the action, acquiring the world's leading hockey equipment maker, Bauer, with an eye towards developing a following for hockey on concrete. At that point, Rollerblade, after having gone through several owners, fell into the hands of Nordica, today a division of Italy-based Tecnica Group.

But something happened as the century turned. Millennials grew up, the industry matured, and the consumer psyche shifted. Parents also never got over the injury perceptions associated with rollerblading and a new generation of kids were now pursuing athletic programs such as soccer and lacrosse. The sport's death knell arrived in 2005 when the X Games discontinued inline skating events altogether. Sponsorships were abandoned, sales were slipping, and even Nike sold off Bauer at an estimated \$195 million loss from its original purchase price.

In the world of extreme sports, rollerblading lost its cache to rivals skateboarding and snowboarding, both of which even broke into the Olympics. While a growing market around elite athletes spawned the development of new high-end skates, the inline skating popularity that defined rollerblading in the 1990s has all but disappeared. ●

Mario Andretti posing for the cameras at Brands Hatch ahead of the 1970 British Grand Prix.



Interview with Racing Legend, Mario Andretti

SHMagazine

LEGENDARY RACE CAR DRIVER MARIO

Andretti is synonymous with the sport itself. The Italian-born speed master who moved to the U.S. as a teenager with his family has claimed every major category of 4-wheel racing. To date, he remains the only driver to ever win the Daytona 500 (1967), Indianapolis 500 (1969), and the Formula One World Championship (1978). No

GROWING UP IN ITALY, MOTOR RACING WAS MORE POPULAR THAN ANY OTHER SPORT. MY BROTHER AND I WERE AT AN IMPRESSIONABLE YOUNG AGE, AND WE BOTH BECAME ENAMORED WITH THE SPORT.

other American has won an F1 chase since Andretti's victory at the 1978 Dutch Grand Prix. His accomplishments on the racetrack and popularity with generations of racing fans make him one of the most respected and well-known names in all of sports. Today, he keeps busy managing his diverse business holdings and dispensing advice to the next generation of Andrettis who followed in his racing career. Sports History Magazine caught up with the celebrated auto pilot and asked him to share his passion with our readers.

You were born in Italy where you grew up before moving to the U.S. as a teen-ager. Tell us a little about your family life in the old country. I was born in Montona, Italy (now Croatia). World War II broke out around the time I was born, at the beginning of 1940. I had a normal childhood despite the war. When the war ended in 1945, Montona became part of Yugoslavia. So, my family was inside a Communist country. We stayed for three years, >>

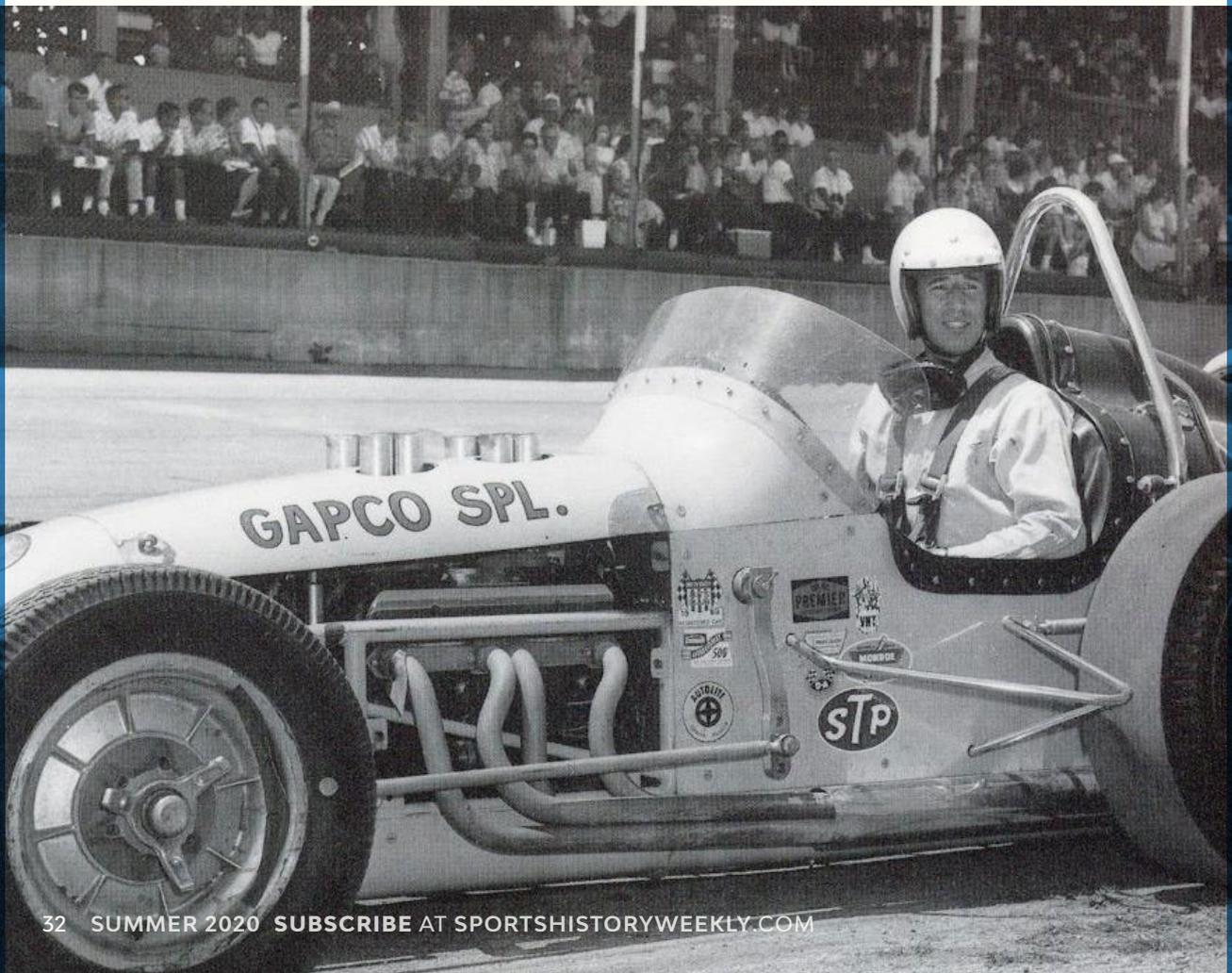
hoping things would change. But when things hadn't changed by 1948, we decided to leave Montana. For seven years, from 1948 to 1955, we lived in a refugee camp in Lucca. For me, that was age 7 to age 15. When I was 15, we moved to America.

When did you first develop a passion for motorsports? Growing up in Italy, motor racing was more popular than any other sport. The world champion at the time was Alberto Ascari – my idol. Back then, Alfa Romeo, Ferrari and Maserati were involved, and it was the golden years of drivers such as Alberto Ascari, Juan Manuel Fangio, and Stirling Moss. These drivers were incredible. My brother and I were at an impressionable young age, and we both became enamored with the sport.

Below: Competing in his first IndyCar event in 1964.

You raced and won in almost every form of automotive sport competition- stock, midget, sprint, endurance, open wheel, etc. What was your favorite? My favorite was always open wheel single seaters such as IndyCars and Formula One.

You remain the only driver in racing history to win the Indianapolis 500, Daytona 500, and Formula One races. What are the different skills needed behind the wheel of a NASCAR vehicle compared to that of an F1 car? The skillset of the driver is basically the same, but the car is different. Each racing car has its own characteristics. So, it's all about adapting. Most F1 drivers would have a tendency to overdrive a NASCAR because stock cars are slower. It's the job of the driver to understand the characteristics and adapt. A driver has to be skilled enough to be able to get the most out of each car. While it takes the



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Above: In the Holman Moody Ford, which took him to victory at the 1967 Daytona 500.

same skill, it's the handling that's different. It's like flying a fighter aircraft (F1 car) versus a bomber (NASCAR). The IndyCar is driven like a laser. The stock car is heavier and a totally different beast.

At its fundamental core, what makes a talented race car driver? fearlessness, reaction, judgement, strategy? All of the above, plus burning desire and confidence. I say burning desire because of the risk involved. If you want something so badly, you have a burning desire to do it, then you aren't distracted by fear or risk or anything else. I'm often asked what it takes to become successful in motor racing. I never know quite what to say, mostly because there is no short answer. It's just too complex.

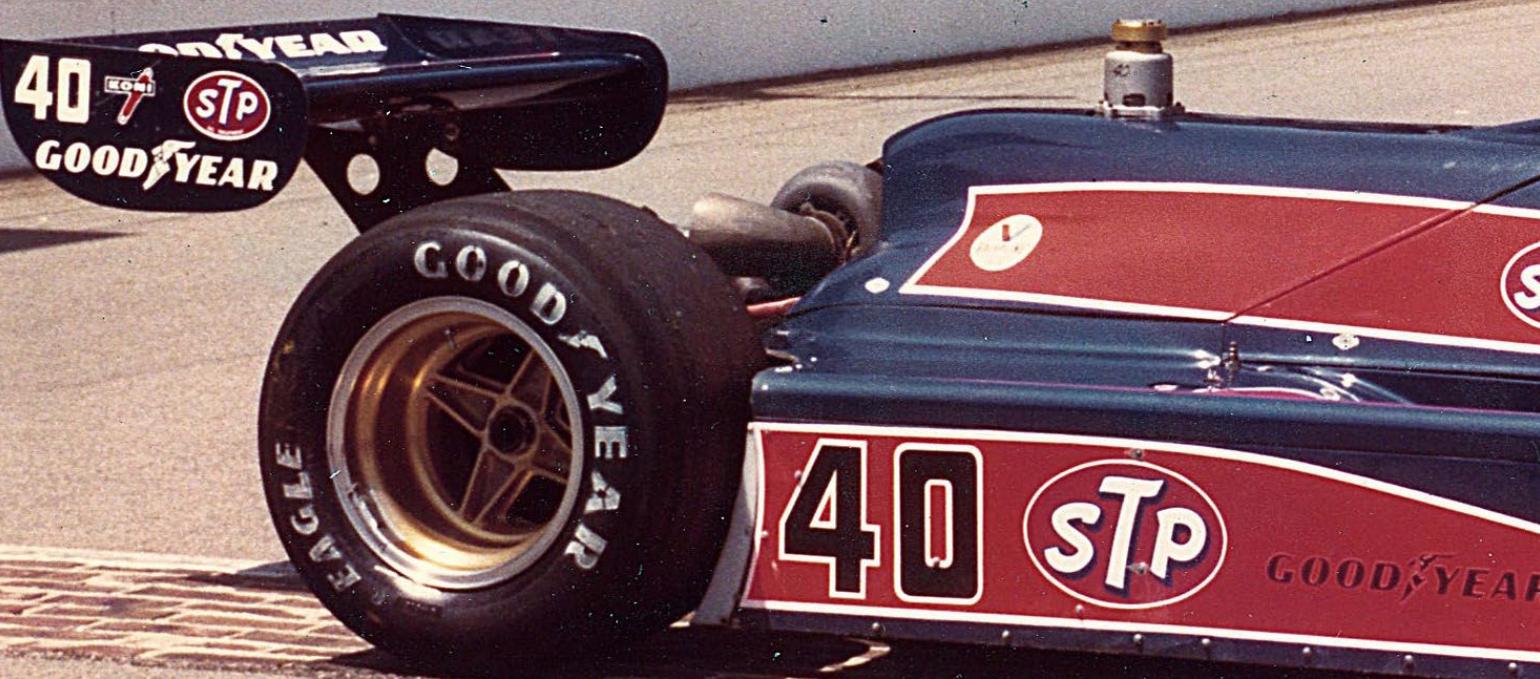
You certainly had your share of mishaps and crashes over the decades. Did you have any close calls that stand out in particular? Several. The most spectacular one happened when I flipped my son's race car in 2003 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway during a test. It can be found on

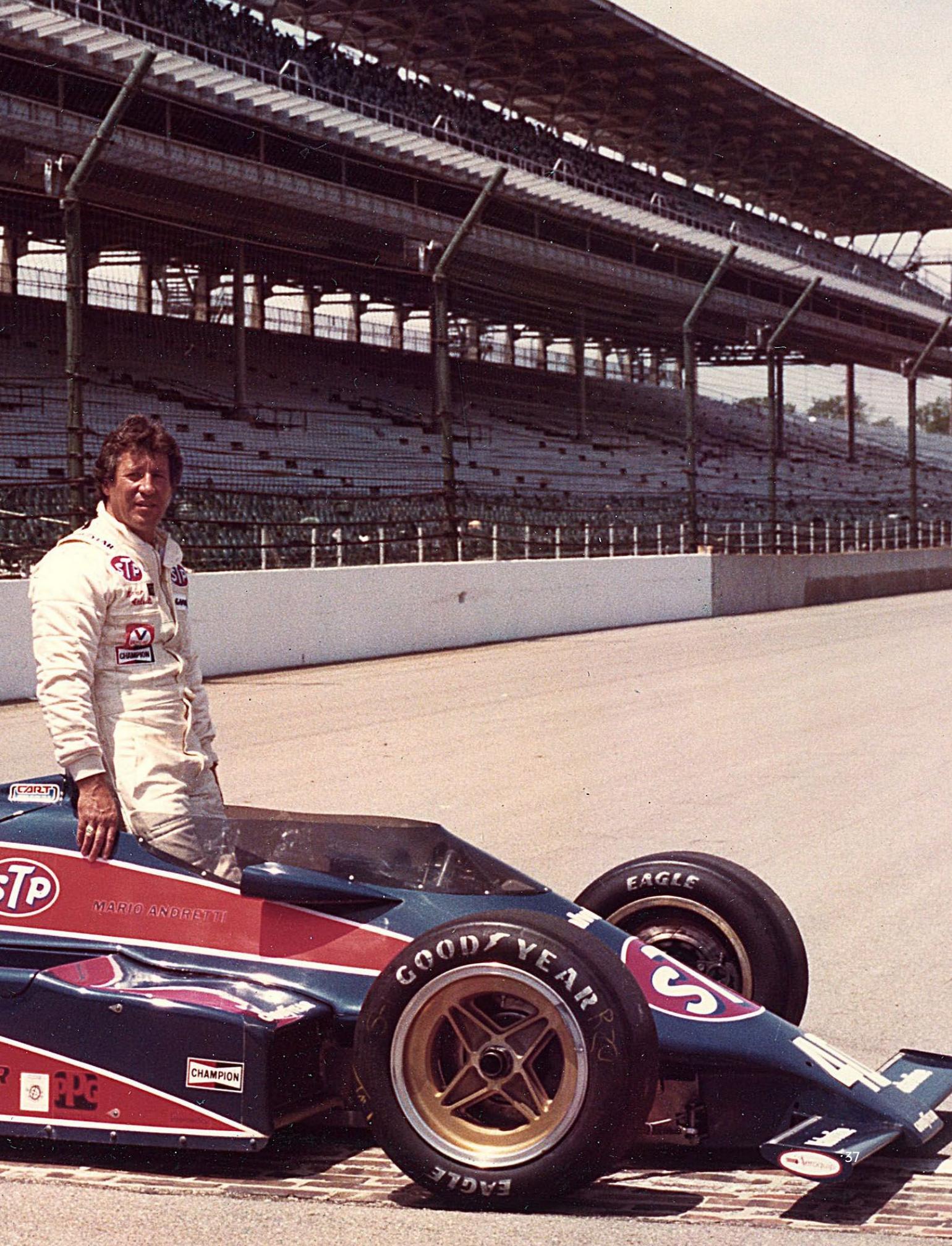
YouTube "Mario Andretti's crash at Indianapolis Motor Speedway in 2003".

You raced for five decades on six continents. In that time, you raced against legendary drivers such as Richard Petty, A.J. Foyt, Ronnie Peterson, and many others. Who did you admire most among your rivals? Because of my long career, there were many incredible opponents and so many top talents that I couldn't possibly name them all. There are just too many. I would not even begin to name drivers because I wouldn't want to leave anyone out unintentionally.

You are the last American driver to win the Formula One World Championship (1978). Why do you think Americans have been unsuccessful, or uninterested, in the world's premier open wheel race? Good question. It's simply because America is the only country on >>

Mario Andretti pictured at the 1981 Indianapolis 500.





MARIO ANDRETTI

STP

MARIO ANDRETTI

CHAMPION

GOODYEAR
EAGLE

EAGLE

S

37

*"AMERICA IS THE ONLY
COUNTRY ON THE PLANET
THAT CAN OFFER ANY
DRIVER OF ENORMOUS
TALENT A FULL CAREER
IN TOP DISCIPLINES
WITHOUT A PASSPORT"*

Mario Andretti celebrating his victory
at the 1978 Dutch Grand Prix.



HIGHLIGHTS OF A RACING CHAMPION

BORN

February 28, 1940
Montona, Italy

FORMULA ONE

1978 World Champion,
wins 6 of 12 Grand Prix,
drives for Lotus-Ford

INDIANAPOLIS 500

1969 Champion,
leads in most laps at 116,
drives for Andy Granatelli

DAYTONA 500

1967 Champion,
leads in most laps at 112,
drives for Hollman
Moody

24 HOURS OF LE MANS

1995 2nd Place,
team completes 297 laps,
drives for Courage
Competition

the planet that can offer any driver of enormous talent a full career in top disciplines without a passport. We have IndyCar, NASCAR and sports prototypes all happening in America. No other country has that at the top level. A great driver can have a satisfying career just by staying in the United States.

In 1983, you joined the Newman/Haas racing team. What was it like working with Hollywood star Paul Newman? I loved that man. Paul and I became very good friends. He was in love with life. He could do anything. He could act. He could race cars. He could raise millions of dollars for charity. He was funny. He was so famous, but he just liked being ordinary. He liked to be just one of the guys in pit lane.

Besides the advancement in technology, how

Below: Behind the wheel of a Ford Brawner Hawk that won him the 1969 Indianapolis 500.



has the sport of auto racing changed in the past 50 years? Besides technology, it has evolved tremendously especially in the safety area. If safety hadn't been taken on vigorously, the sport would not have survived.

The Andretti name has become synonymous with racing itself. Your son, nephew, grandson and others in your family picked up the speed bug as well. What advice do you give them when they're out on the track? Drive within your means. Don't go beyond your skill level. Don't try to be overly impressive.

Today, you keep busy with many activities ranging from media interviews to involvement in a number of businesses. What are you loving most? I am very busy and I love being busy. I still work with a number of companies and I have numerous engagements. I have a winery in California and a few other business interests. I go to IndyCar races because my son Michael has a race team and my grandson Marco is driving. I go to a few Formula One races. I stay healthy and fit. I still follow every race series. I'm on Twitter and Facebook and Instagram. ●

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HENRY FORD
FOUNDER OF FORD
MOTOR COMPANY



AJ FOYT
INDY500 (1961, 1964, 1967, 1977)



BRUCE MCLAREN
FOUNDER OF
MCLAREN
RACING TEAM



JULES GENOUX
FIRST FOREIGNER TO
WIN THE INDY500 (1913)

DAN GURNEY
GRAND PRIX FRANCE (1962, 1964),
MEXICO (1964), BELGIUM (1967)



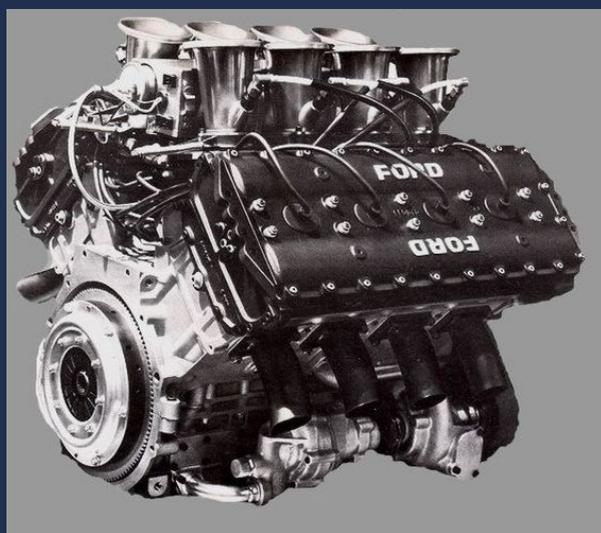
GRAHAM HILL
INDY500 (1962), F1 WORLD
CHAMPIONSHIP (1966,
1968), LE MANS (1972)

America's Legacy at Formula One, Engines

SHMagazine

IN EARLY 2017, AMERICAN MEDIA MOGUL John Malone purchased Formula One for \$4.6 billion with the idea of igniting greater interest at home in the world's premier auto race. With Americans already deeply rooted in motor sport competitions such as NASCAR and IndyCar, Formula One is not an easy sell to the red, white and blue fan base. The last U.S. national to claim a Grand Prix was Mario Andretti in 1978. That year, the Italian-born racer won the Formula One World Championship by conquering 6 of the 12 calendar races. The only other American to hoist that same trophy was Florida native Phil Hill in 1961. On the F1 list of national triumphs, the U.S. ranks 10th, or one level below Argentina, with just 33 Grand Prix victories. The UK leads the pack with 288 first place finishes. Since Malone acquired the prestigious brand over three years ago, not a single American driver sat behind an F1 car at any of the Grand Prix races. In fact, the last U.S. pilot to roar into high gear of an F1 vehicle was Alexander Rossi

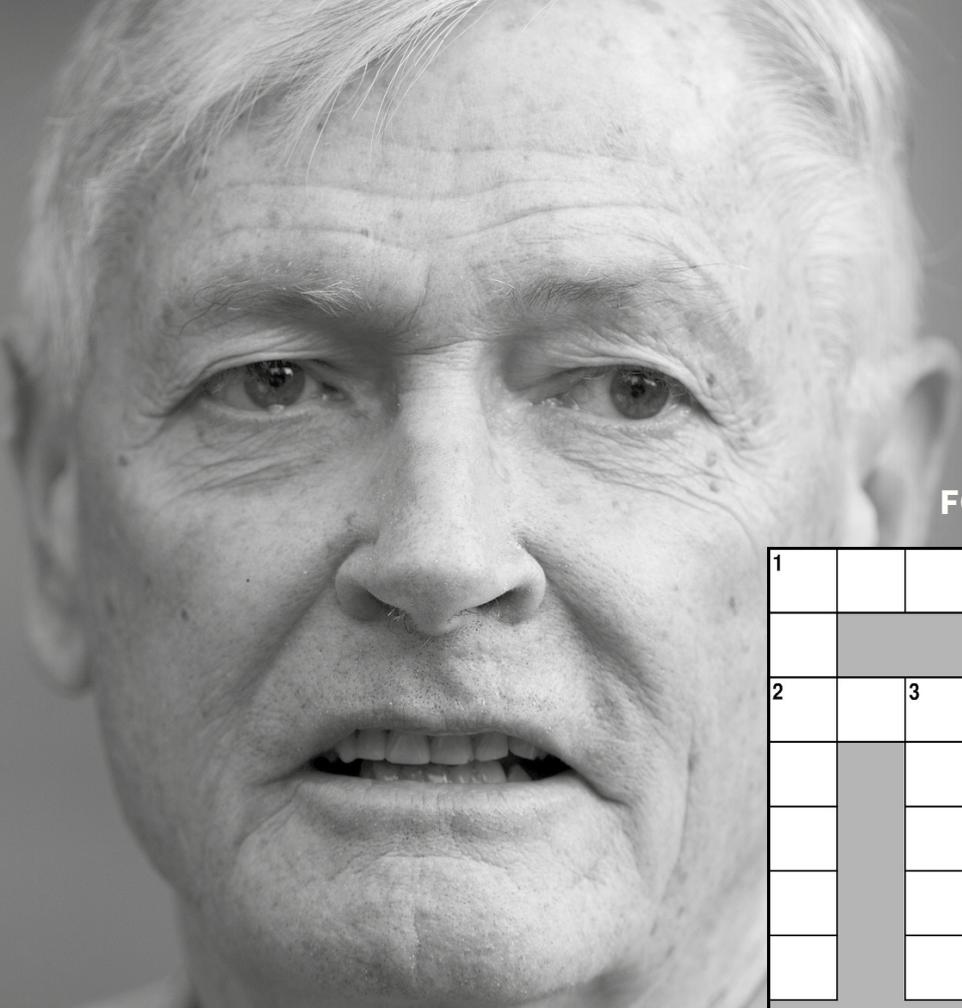
Below: Ford's Cosworth engine that won over half the F1 races from 1967-85.



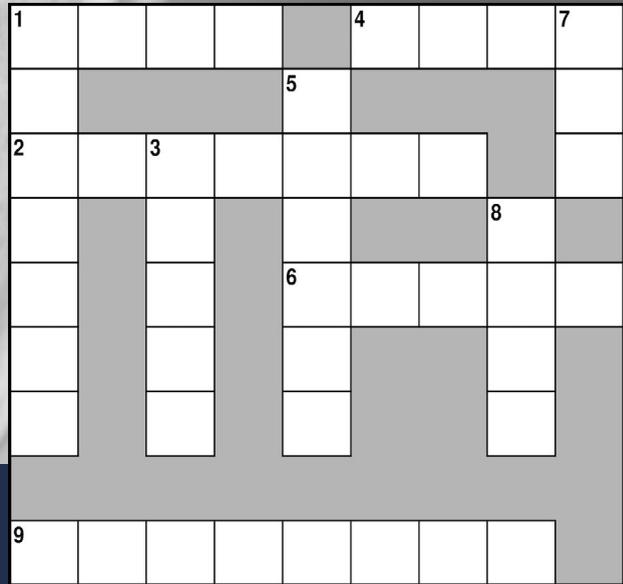
in 2015 when he placed 12th at the U.S. Grand Prix. A year later, Rossi circled back home to win the 2016 Indianapolis 500. The problem is that America's oldest and most celebrated high-speed engine chase is not part of the F1 tour. The Indianapolis

THE ROAD TO BRING F1 GRAND PRIX RACES TO AMERICAN LIVING ROOMS WILL NOT BE EASY, BUT IF ANYONE CAN ACCOMPLISH IT, THEN MALONE CAN.

500 belongs to the IndyCar racing series, the stars & stripes version of F1. But the Indy500 did count in F1's point system during the early years. From 1950-'60, Americans ruled the Indy track but still failed to win the European circuits. Notwithstanding, few foreigners also competed in the U.S. back then. Since the Euro-centric competition officially debuted in 1950, Hill and Andretti have been the only Americans to pilot an F1 vehicle to the world champion's circle. Germany's Michael Schumacher holds the record for the most at seven, followed by UK's Lewis Hamilton at 6, and Argentina's Juan Manuel Fangio at five. But the magic of Formula One goes beyond the drivers. The ear-piecing, motor-shrieking contest is also about the makers of cars, engines and tires who vie for global prestige and marketing power. America's greatest legacy at F1 might just be Ford's contribution under the hood, which started in 1966 and came to an end in 2004 when the company made a strategic decision to exit the elite sport. The Detroit-based auto giant had a significant impact in sponsoring the Cosworth Double Four Valve (DFV) engine, which became F1's dominant power unit for a number of years. From 1967-85, DFV-powered cars claimed 155 victories, or more than half of all the races on F1's program. >>



FORMULA ONE



Above: John Malone, who purchased Formula One for \$4.6 billion in 2017.

And therein also lies one of the reasons why the Formula One racing institution hasn't latched on to a nation-wide U.S. fan base. The highly complex motor pursuit is overwhelmingly about precision, detail and engineering. Formula One is simply not the top flight of America's four-wheel entertainment. It is the ultimate sport for technicians and gear enthusiasts who search for the tiniest advantage in a wing, a battery, or an engine. In contrast, NASCAR is simple to follow and provides more thrills as cars pass, bump and occasionally crash, delivering an extra layer of drama for race goers and watchers. Malone purchased Formula One through his Liberty Media holdings, which include assets such as Sirius XM Satellite Radio and Major League Baseball's Atlanta Braves. The road to bring F1 Grand Prix races to American living rooms will not be easy, but if anyone can accomplish it, then Malone can. ●

ACROSS

- 1 Grand _____
- 2 2016 champion, Nico _____
- 4 _____ Romeo
- 6 Winning car in 1960s-70s
- 9 6x champion, Lewis _____

DOWN

- 1 Italian tire maker
- 3 Brazilian driver killed in 1994, Ayrton
- 5 Flag color indicating hazard on track
- 7 _____ Dhabi Grand Prix
- 8 Austria's Red _____ Ring race track

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A New Chapter for Dakar

SHMagazine

AFTER MORE THAN FOUR DECADES of motorized thrills and spills in the vast expanses of Africa and South America, the Dakar Rally has entered a third chapter in its short but storied history. With the same elevated spirit and passion for adventure, the world's greatest man and machine rally kicked off its 42nd annual race in Saudi Arabia, the largest country in the Middle East. Piloting a variety of motorcycles, quads, cars and trucks, competitors set off in 351 vehicles on January 5th from the Red Sea port of Jeddah on a 12-stage race through the kingdom's scorched landscape, covering 7,500 km that ended in the city of Qiddiya.

"A challenge for those who go. A dream for those who stay behind." Such was the inspirational battle cry of Dakar's founder, Thierry Sabine, when he launched the famed off-road endurance race the day after Christmas in 1978. Less known in the U.S., the Paris-Dakar Rally as it was originally known got going after Sabine lost his way in the Libyan desert during the Abidjan-Nice rally.

Rescued from certain death in the sands, the French motorcycle racer and adventurer was nevertheless enthralled by the stunning desert wilderness. Wanting to share his experience in the dunes, he organized the first Paris-Dakar chase a year later. The inaugural competition drew 182 vehicles that took off from Place du Trocadero in Paris to the south of France before transferring to Africa and rumbling across the Sahara Desert to finish in Dakar, the capital of Senegal. Those who completed the journey traversed 10,000 km across Algeria, Niger, Mali, and Senegal.

The race was a time trial test of man and his 20th century technology against one of the planet's most inhospitable regions. Armed with little more than their wits and a compass, competitors braved sandstorms and harsh terrains to reach their ultimate destination. Winning Dakar's inaugural motorcycle chase was 21-year old Cyril Neveu (France) on his Yamaha 500XT. In the car class, 1st place honors went to Alain Genestier, Joseph Terbiaut, and Jean Lemordant (all France) in their Range >>

The Dakar rally moves to Peru in 2019.



*ARMED WITH LITTLE
MORE THAN THEIR
WITS AND A COMPASS,
COMPETITORS BRAVED
SANDSTORMS AND
HARSH TERRAINS TO
REACH THEIR ULTIMATE
DESTINATION.*

Cyril Neveu on his
Yamaha 500XT (1980).



Rover. Dakar grew in prestige and popularity and started drawing celebrities from other motorsport calendars such as Henry Pescarolo and Jack Ickx, both of whom were multiple champions at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

Officials kept the itinerary varied and challenging and in 1992, Dakar launched a special edition with a route that stretched the entire length of the African continent. That year, 332 motorcycles, cars and trucks roared out of Chateau de Vincennes in Paris for a 12,427 km race that ended in Cape Town, South Africa. Passing through 10 countries with all the landscape colors that Africa had to offer, 169 vehicles managed to clear the finish line in an epic 22-stage rally. In 2000, Dakar entered the new millennium with a

race that crossed the continent from west to east and ended at the foot of the Egyptian pyramids.

Thirty years into the African experience and Dakar was forced to move to South America due to security concerns. Days prior to the start of the 2008 race, four French tourists were killed by terrorists in Mauritania, prompting officials to cancel the chase and relocate it permanently. Still branding its old name and the Sahara-themed image of a desert nomad, the rally resumed in 2009 through the wilds of Argentina and Chile. Nearly 600,000 spectators lined the streets of Buenos Aires, which marked the beginning of the 9,574 km route that took racers through the Pampas, Atacama Desert, and Andean mountains. Three years later, Dakar added Peru

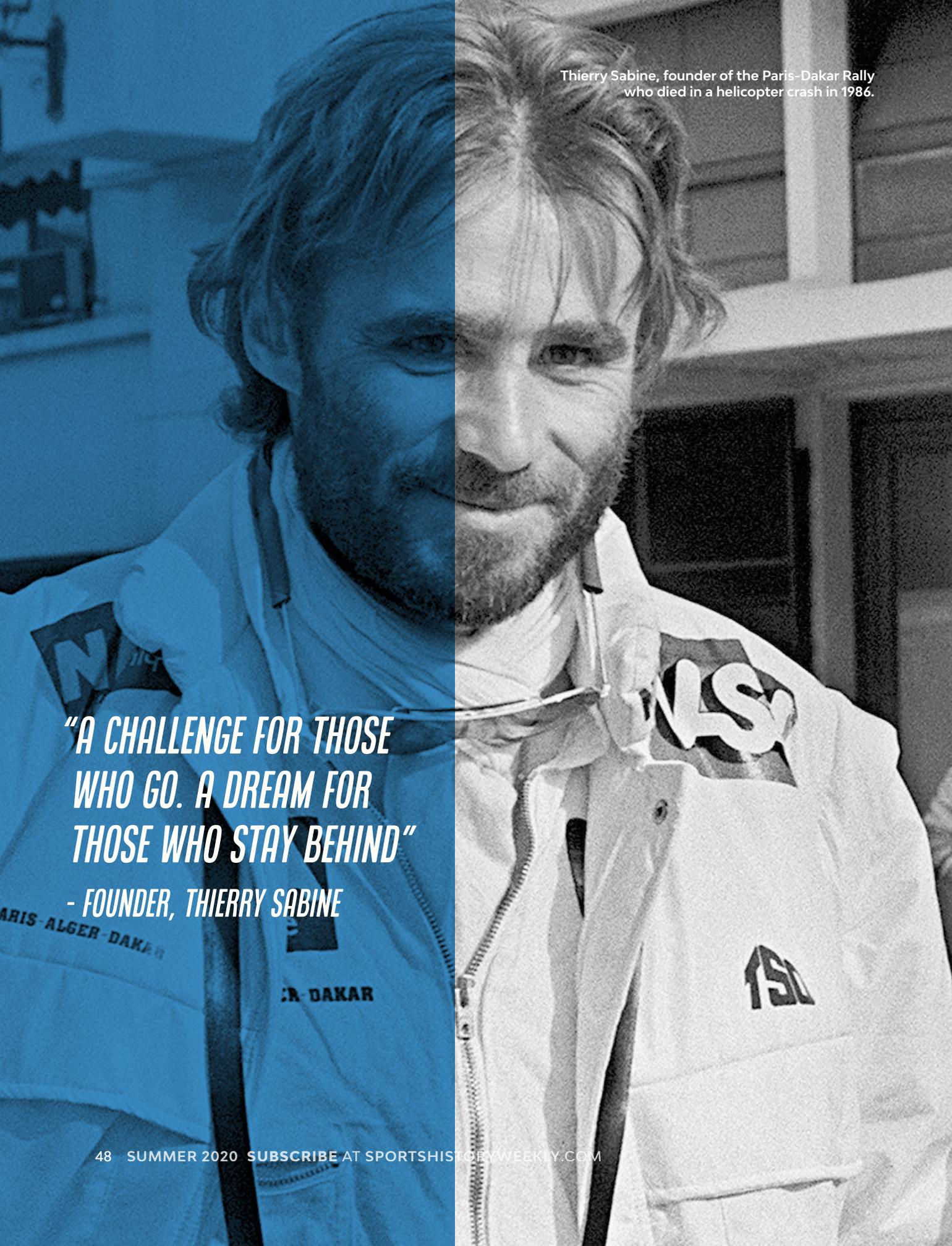
Right: Dakar's first rally map (1978).



to its club of host nations and later on, Bolivia with its 3,700m altitude stages for bikes and quads.

At the world's biggest rally-raid, drivers and riders crash, bog down, get lost and lapse into exhaustion as they blaze through hundreds of kilometers a day in grueling terrain ranging from sand dunes to oxygen-depleted mountain passes. While the sight and sound of fuel-guzzling machines roaring through the desert might resemble a post-apocalyptic "Mad Max" scene, the race evokes a mystique among off-road enthusiasts who spend their own personal money to prep and travel for the rally. Most of the participants are amateur thrill seekers rather than professional racers.

Running the show since 1989 is France-based Amaury Sport Organisation ("ASO"), which owns the Dakar trademark and organizes the event annually. ASO is also the entity behind the famous Tour de France bicycle race. The company specializes in promoting multi-stage marathon races on land and sea, often capturing the events with extraordinary aerial footages. France's Stephane Peterhansel is the most successful racer in the history of Dakar, having won 7 events in the car category and 6 in the motorcycle, including the grand Paris-Cape Town run in 1992. Siberia-born Vladimir Chagin is the all-time champion in the truck classification with 7 victories that earned him headlines as the "Tsar of Dakar". To date, the first and only woman to win Dakar was Germany's Jutta Kleinschmidt who placed 1st >>



Thierry Sabine, founder of the Paris-Dakar Rally who died in a helicopter crash in 1986.

*"A CHALLENGE FOR THOSE
WHO GO. A DREAM FOR
THOSE WHO STAY BEHIND"*

- FOUNDER, THIERRY SABINE

Below: Kamaz truck roaring through the Chilean desert (2015).



FIRST DAKAR RALLY	
START	Paris, France December 26, 1978
END	Dakar, Senegal January 14, 1979
COUNTRIES CROSSED	France, Algeria, Niger Mali, Upper Volta Senegal
VEHICLES START/FINISH	170 / 74
WINNERS: RANGE ROVER	Alain Genestier Joseph Terbiaut Jean Lemordant
MOTORCYCLES START / FINISH	90 / 34
WINNER: YAMAHA 500XT	Cyril Neveu

with a co-driver in 2001 in their Mitsubishi Pajero Evolution car. In constructors, Austria's motorcycle manufacturer KTM has dominated its category since 2000, while Russia's truck maker Kamaz has won more races than any other big hauler. Mitsubishi leads the pack with most triumphs in cars followed by Peugeot, Citroen, Volkswagen and Mini, all of whom registered multiple wins.

Despite the enthusiasm around the off-road competition, the Dakar Rally is not without its critics. Detractors claim the event generates more dust on its racing circuit than economic benefits for the local communities. Others label >>

Below: The winners of the Paris-Dakar-Cairo rally in 2000, French driver Jean-Louis Schlesser and his co-driver Henri Magne in a Schlessler-Renault buggy. The motorcycle title went to BMW's Richard Saint.



IN 2000, DAKAR ENTERED THE NEW MILLENNIUM WITH A RACE THAT CROSSED THE CONTINENT FROM WEST TO EAST AND ENDED AT THE FOOT OF THE EGYPTIAN PYRAMIDS.

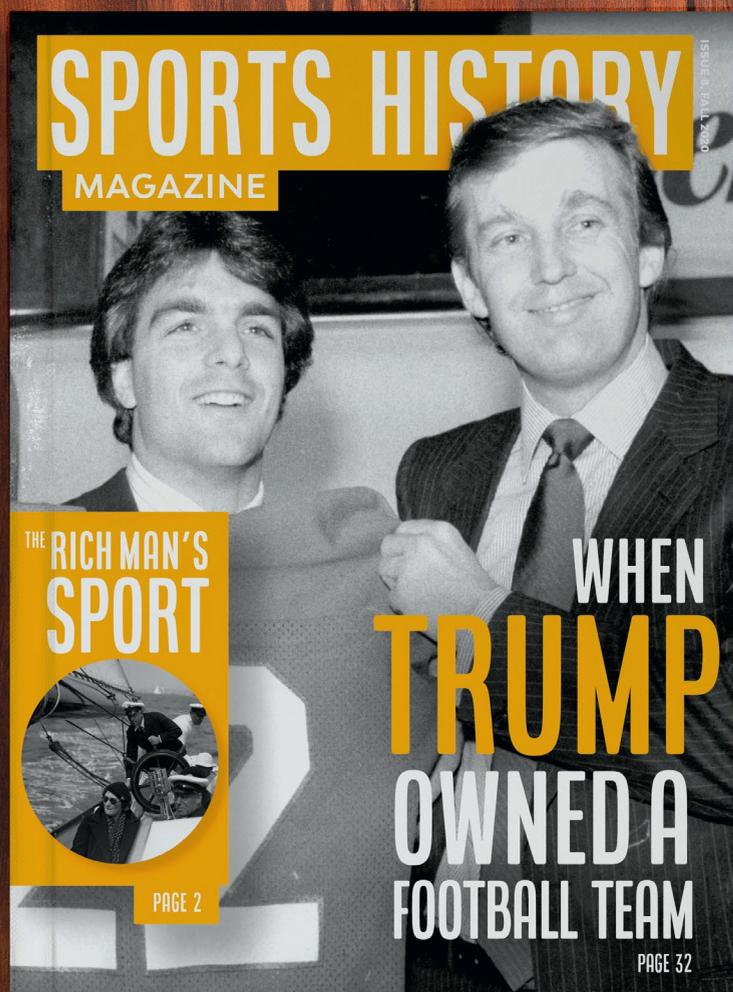
it a form of colonialism and a vulgar display of wealth and power in the face of impoverished countries. Like most high-speed motor sports, the multi-stage rally also has its share of injuries and fatalities. Since its inception, 29 competitors have died from crashes and 45 others from incidental collisions, such as roadside accidents. Founder Thierry Sabine himself and four others were killed during the 1986 race when a helicopter they were flying in over Mali crashed into a dune during a sand storm. Despite all and in a class of its own, Dakar invites racers to dare and dream. No other challenge mixes the romance for adventure with the limits of human endurance and motor performance. ●

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"The 16th Man"

By Michael Renouf

Covering the intersection of sports and politics at a critical juncture in South Africa's history, "The 16th Man" is an engaging and highly recommended documentary released by ESPN's Emmy award-winning '30 for 30' series. Emphasizing sport as a unifying force between peoples and cultures, the 52-minute film captures the profound impact that the 1995 Rugby World Cup had on a nation torn by racial violence. Narrated by Morgan Freeman and directed by Clifford Bestall, "The 16th Man" captures a moment in time that offers a lesson for humanity and a slice of history for posterity.

IN 2019, SOUTH AFRICA WON THE Rugby World Cup under the leadership of their first ever black captain, Siya Kolisi. Half a dozen players in the starting lineup were non-whites and about a third of the total 31-man squad were black or mixed race. When I saw the pictures of Kolisi with South African President, Cyril Ramaphosa, both wearing the number 6 Springbok jersey, it took me back a quarter of a century when the country raised the Webb Ellis

trophy for the first time. The indelible image of Springbok's then captain, Francois Pienaar, standing in celebration next to the country's first black President, Nelson Mandela, was a watershed moment in a tumultuous period between blacks and Afrikaners (white South Africans).

In 1995, the South African team fielded just one black player, a winger by the name of Chester Williams. For decades, the country was banned from participating in international sports tournaments due to its apartheid laws, which kept the majority black population under the yoke of a minority white government. A pariah nation, South Africa could not compete in prestigious sporting events such as the Olympics, or FIFA's soccer World Cup. In 1987, when the Rugby World Cup was inaugurated in Australia and New Zealand, the Afrikaners were shut out from their most popular sport. That all came to a head in 1990 when Mandela was released from prison and apartheid was unraveled.

South African rugby fans are as passionate about their sport as their soccer counterparts are in >>

Nelson Mandela congratulating Springboks captain, Francois Pienaar, for the team's win at the 1995 Rugby World Cup.



A sit-in demonstration on the road against the Springboks.



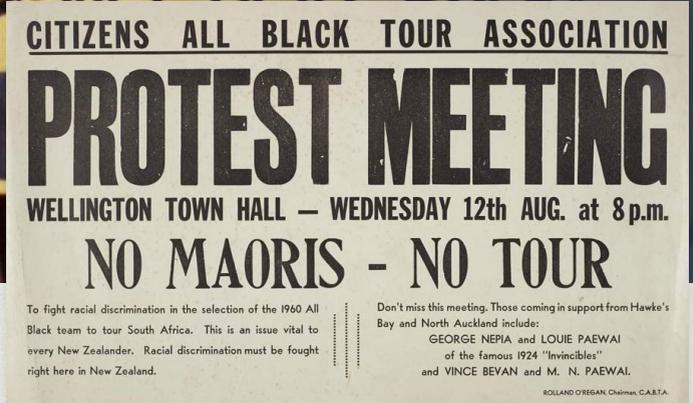
South America and Europe. Afrikaners were playing rugby as far back as 1891, competing against squads from the British Isles and the far-flung outposts of Australia and New Zealand. Nicknamed the Springboks after the native antelopes that roam the continent's southern plains, the national team racked up impressive wins around the world but the shadow of apartheid always followed. In 1967, New Zealand's All-Blacks canceled their tour to South Africa after Pretoria denied competition against Maori players. By the 1970s, the Springboks were contending with hostile demonstrations on their trips abroad, even playing behind barbed wire fences to keep protesters off the field. "The 16th Man" highlights more than just a sporting achievement for a troubled country. The film transcends the drama on the pitch and delves into what the Springboks represented to the psyche of whites and blacks before and after apartheid was dismantled.

A source of national pride for the Afrikaners, rugby for

blacks was a symbol of brutality and oppression. When Nelson Mandela emerged from prison after 27 years of incarceration, instead of showing hatred to his former jailers he reached out with an olive branch. Sport, and rugby specifically, became one of the rallying points for reconciliation. In 1993, the South African government, now a coalition led by Willem de Klerk and the black political party ANC, won the rights to host the 1995 Rugby World Cup. A shrewd visionary, Mandela managed not only to persuade whites to accept a new beginning, but he also convinced black leaders that compromise was necessary for the nation to heal its deep racial scars. Many wanted to scrap the near century-old Springbok name and moniker that they associated with the apartheid system, but he saw the bigger picture and fought against his allies to retain the uniform. In April, 1994, Mandela was elected as the first black president of South Africa. A year later, the former political



A SOURCE OF NATIONAL PRIDE FOR THE AFRIKANERS, RUGBY FOR BLACKS WAS A SYMBOL OF BRUTALITY AND OPPRESSION.



Above: Demonstrating against the Springboks' visit to the U.S. (1981). Right: A sign in New Zealand calling out South Africa's racist policies against Maori players.

prisoner was wearing the Springbok shirt in front of millions of viewers, celebrating his nation's victory at the Rugby World Cup.

15 countries descended on South Africa at the end of May, 1995 to contest the third edition of the highly anticipated rugby event. Not only was the country hosting its first such tournament, but it was also participating in it for the first time. With South African flags flying ubiquitously across cities, towns and villages, the battle cry was 'One Nation, One Team'. The opening game pitched the hosts against the reigning world champions, Australia. The Springboks defeated the Wallabies 27-18, igniting a spark of euphoria that would repeat itself through the month of June. The day after, the South African squad visited Robben Island where Mandela had spent many years >>

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holed up against his will. As Bestall notes in the documentary's interviews with players, walking through those cells and corridors brought home the significance of their moment in history.

The Boks easily put away Romania and Canada to sweep their group stage. At the quarter-finals, they once again prevailed with a wide margin by taking out Western Samoa 42-14. Cruising to the semi-finals, the weather nearly ended it all when a huge downpour hit Durban. Three times the players warmed up on the pitch and three times they returned to the changing rooms. If the game could not go ahead that night, France would be handed the victory due to their better disciplinary record in the tournament. But the match proceeded and Pienaar led his team to a 19-15 win. The showdown with New Zealand for the ultimate rugby prize was now looming.

WITH SOUTH AFRICAN FLAGS FLYING UBIQUITOUSLY ACROSS CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES, THE BATTLE CRY WAS 'ONE NATION, ONE TEAM'.

On June 24th, 60,000 fans packed Ellis Park Stadium in Johannesburg to witness 80 minutes of rugby that could help shape the future of a nation. But of course, it wasn't that simple. The back and forth drama on the field between the Springboks and the All-Blacks culminated with a 12-12 tie in regulation, sending the match into overtime. Both teams scored again, but then came Joel Stransky's drop goal that won it for the hosts, 15-12. As the stadium and the country erupted in jubilation, Mandela stepped on the >>







WORLD RUGBY HALL OF FAME

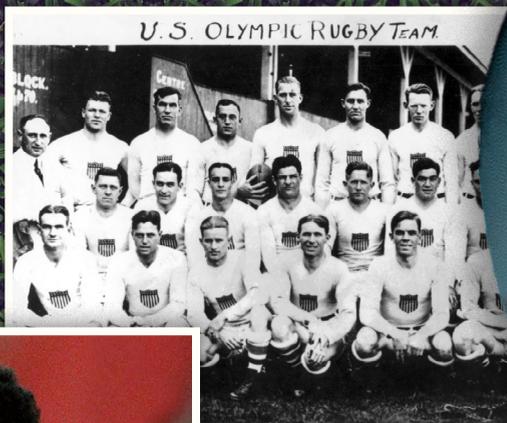
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UNITED KINGDOM

WORLD.RUGBY/HALLOFFAME

DANIE GERBER,
SOUTH AFRICA
(1980-1992).



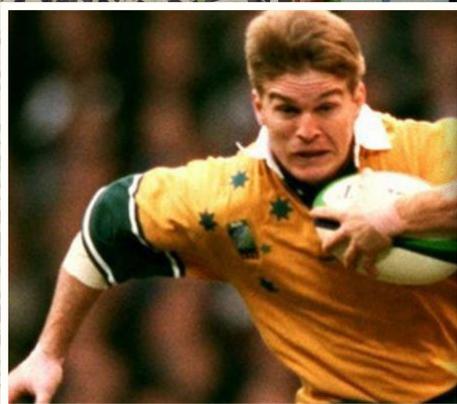
1920 & 1924 USA OLYMPIC TEAM.



SERGE BLANCO,
FRANCE (1979-1991).



TIM HORAN,
AUSTRALIA (1989-2000).



JONAH LOMU,
NEW ZEALAND (1994-2002).



JEREMY GUSCOTT,
ENGLAND (1989-1999).



*“SPORT HAS THE POWER
TO CHANGE THE WORLD”*

- NELSON MANDELA

field and waved his Springbok cap to the unified chant echoing in the stadium, “Nelson, Nelson, Nelson”. And as he presented the trophy to the team captain, the 16th man of the 15-man team said, “thank you very much for what you’ve done for this country”. ●

Michael Renouf is a freelance writer and film critic. His work can be viewed at michaelrenouf.com.



Above: 'One Nation, One Team'. Mandela waving his cap to a jubilant crowd.

New Zealand, Punching Above its Weight

By Greg Ryan and Geoff Watson

ON SEPTEMBER 25TH, 2016 VINCENT EDWARD “Vin” It is an article of faith for many New Zealanders that their country ‘punches above its weight’ in sport. Rugby union, where the All Blacks and Black Ferns, New Zealand’s national men’s and women’s rugby teams, have won over 70% of their matches and three and four World Cups respectively, is the sport most frequently cited in support of this claim, alongside other champion sportspeople such as Scott Dixon who won five Indycar titles. Why does sport mean so much to so many New Zealanders?

The enduring resonance of sport is explained by its capacity to align itself to evolving stories of community and national identity. For Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand, physical activities developed coordination and transmitted tribal lore. For European settlers who came to New Zealand during the nineteenth century, and became numerically and politically dominant by 1860, the act of playing British sports such as cricket and rugby union demonstrated a core feature of Anglo-Saxon civilization. ‘Manly’ character-building activities were shown to be transplanted to the farthest outpost of the British Empire. Moreover, the ready availability of sport affirmed another key tenet of New Zealand’s self-image: that it was an egalitarian society, upholding the best British values while avoiding the evils of urbanized and class-conscious England.

That Māori proved eager to participate in sport, particularly rugby union and horse racing,

reinforced another core belief: that New Zealand had the best race relations in the world. It was through the 1888-89 ‘Native’ rugby team that New Zealand acquired its most enduring symbol of national identity, the black jersey with a silver fern. Despite its geographical isolation, New Zealand was integrated into the circulation of people and commodities from the early nineteenth century, resulting in the movement of sportsmen such as Timarudomiciled boxer Bob Fitzsimmons to the United States during the late 1890s where he won world championships in three different weight divisions. The accessibility of sport, its almost universal endorsement from the commercial, political, educational, tribal and media sectors, along with early precedents of international achievement, created an attachment to sport that has proven enduring. As New Zealand became more multicultural in its ethnic composition and women took a greater part in sport, so too did narratives of sport evolve. Since the 1980s, the growing presence of athletes of Maori, Pacific and Asian ancestry in national teams has been cited as proof of New Zealand as a multicultural and meritocratic – albeit increasingly unequal – society where ‘anyone can make it’.

The most significant challenge New Zealand sport has encountered is its relationship with apartheid-era South Africa. The exclusion of Maori players from All Black rugby teams which toured South Africa in 1928, 1949 and 1960 became increasingly controversial, because it undermined the core principle of sport as a ‘level playing field’ for Māori and Pakeha (the name given to peoples of European ancestry in New Zealand). By the 1970s, many within New Zealand and overseas saw ongoing rugby contacts with South Africa as an endorsement of apartheid. New Zealand attained

international infamy when 28 nations boycotted the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games in protest

at the All Blacks tour of South Africa that year. The 1981 South African tour to New Zealand generated unprecedented scenes of civil unrest, with many matches taking place on grounds whose perimeters were protected by barbed wire. Within rugby union, dissent was also apparent with Graham Mourie, the incumbent captain, standing down from playing South Africa owing to his opposition to apartheid. Somewhat ironically, it would be the actions of

the protest movement that partially retrieved New Zealand's reputation, particularly in retrospective narratives positioning the anti-tour movement as upholding New Zealander's innate humanitarianism against a myopic focus on sport. The omission of South Africa from the inaugural 1987 Rugby World Cup, which New Zealand won, allowed rugby union to regain its status as the 'game for all New Zealand', a status it retains to this day. ●

Sport and the New Zealanders A History

Greg Ryan & Geoff Watson



The All Blacks performing their traditional pre-match Haka dance.



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HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR SPORTS HISTORY?

TAKE OUR SUMMER ISSUE QUIZ...



1. MARIO ANDRETTI WON ALL THESE RACES EXCEPT...

- (A) FORMULA ONE
- (B) LE MANS 24 HOURS
- (C) INDIANAPOLIS 500
- (D) DAYTONA 500

2. IN 1995, SOUTH AFRICA BEAT THIS COUNTRY FOR THE RUGBY WORLD CUP...

- (A) FRANCE
- (B) WALES
- (C) ENGLAND
- (D) NEW ZEALAND

3. THE LAST YEAR THAT INLINE SKATING COMPETITION APPEARED IN THE X GAMES...

- (A) 1995
- (B) 2000
- (C) 2005
- (D) 2010

4. THE FIRST IRONMAN TRIATHLON TOOK PLACE IN...

- (A) CALIFORNIA
- (B) HAWAII
- (C) ARIZONA
- (D) NEW MEXICO

5. VIN SCULLY WAS A LONG-TIME RADIO ANNOUNCER FOR THE...

- (A) LOS ANGELES DODGERS
- (B) BOSTON RED SOX
- (C) ST. LOUIS CARDINALS
- (D) DETROIT TIGERS

6. AFTER 30 YEARS OF RUNNING RALLIES IN AFRICA, THE DAKAR RACE MOVED TO...

- (A) ASIA
- (B) NORTH AMERICA
- (C) SOUTH AMERICA
- (D) CENTRAL AMERICA

7. IN 2017, FORMULA ONE WAS ACQUIRED BY THIS MAN...

- (A) JOHN MALONE
- (B) BERNIE ECCLESTONE
- (C) TED TURNER
- (D) RICHARD BRANSON

8. BASEBALL'S FAMOUS WAR-TIME SPY, MO BERG, PLAYED THIS POSITION...

- (A) PITCHER
- (B) CATCHER
- (C) FIRST BASE
- (D) THIRD BASE

9. SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL RUGBY TEAM IS CALLED THE...

- (A) ALL BLACKS
- (B) WINDHOOKS
- (C) SPRINGBOKS
- (D) GREYSTONES

10. THE CYCLING DISTANCE IN THE IRONMAN TRIATHLON IS...

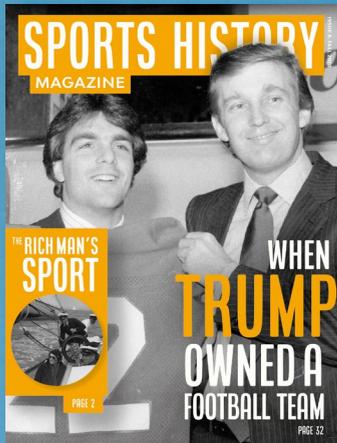
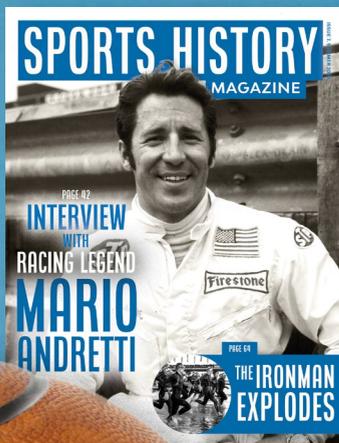
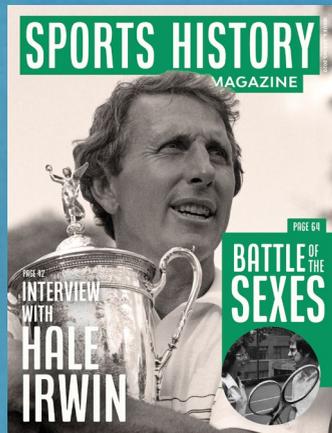
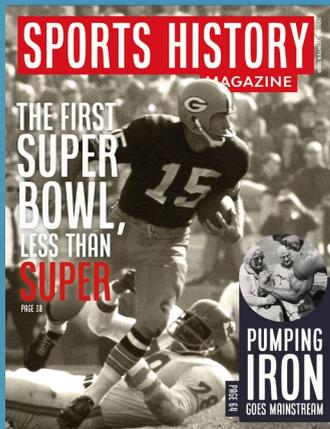
- (A) 56 MILES
- (B) 74 MILES
- (C) 95 MILES
- (D) 112 MILES





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