

["New Books in Sports" Interview with Travis Vogan](#)

Discussion published by Keith Rathbone on Sunday, November 29, 2020

Hello colleagues,

I am writing to let you know about our latest New Books in Sports interview with Travis Vogan, Associate Professor of Journalism and American Studies at the University of Iowa, and the author of *ABC Sports: The Rise and Fall of Network Sports Television* (University of California Press, 2018). In our conversation, we discussed the special role that ABC Sports played in the promotion of sports television, the innovations of sports broadcasting executive Boone Arledge, and the collapse of network sport broadcasting in the cable-TV era.

Please find the URL here: <https://newbooksnetwork.com/abc-sports>

In *ABC Sports*, Vogan traces the cultural impact of ABC Sports rise in the 1950s until its demise in the 1990s. Under the aegis of Boone Arledge, ABC developed an innovative approach to sports programming that changed viewers experiences for the better. They foregrounded narrative, introduced documentary style reporting, developed new film and recording practices. Along the way, the network produced iconic sports programming such as *Wide World of Sports* and *Monday Night Football*. They nurtured a range of media personalities including Howard Cosell who helped the network navigate some of the eras most fraught sports coverage including the Munich Olympics Massacre. Their influence revolutionized the aesthetic experience, widening sports TV audiences, transformed the Olympics into a mega-event, introducing new media processes to the fledgling ABC News channel, and propelled ABC from America's third place network to the top of the charts in the 1970s. Their reliance on costly but glossy production ultimately undid the ABC Sports division. In the 1980s and 1990s, the birth of cable television, especially ESPN, and a hostile takeover of their parent company ended Arledge's era of sports television innovation but its legacies remain relevant today.

Vogan's work offers insights into the interplay between sports and the media, and it offers insightful ways to think about how the two shaped viewers experiences and provided models for other media enterprises to change the wider media landscape. This book will be of interest to all who study sports and media studies.

The "New Books in Sports" network features discussions with sports scholars about their most recent books. It is a part of the "New Books Network," a consortium of podcasts exploring recent publications across a wide range of fields. The podcasts

can also be accessed via iTunes where a free subscription option is available.

Please contact me off-list if you have any recent book suggestions.

Best,

Keith Rathbone

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*Keith Rathbone is a lecturer at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. He researches twentieth-century French social and cultural history. His manuscript, entitled *Sport and physical culture in Occupied France: Authoritarianism, agency, and everyday life*, examines physical education and sports in order to better understand civic life under the dual authoritarian systems of the German Occupation and the Vichy Regime. It will come out with Manchester University Press in 2021. If you have a title to suggest for this podcast, please contact him at keith.rathbone@mq.edu.au.*