

Ingrassia, Brian M. *The Rise of Gridiron University: Higher Education's Uneasy Alliance with Big-Time Football*. Culture America. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015.

The Rise of Gridiron University is a book by Brian M. Ingrassia about the connection between college football and the academic university. In his book, the author's main argument is that sports at the college level are not two different sides of a coin. Sports are not an utterly unacademic event, and universities are not an academic "Ivory tower" that has no relation to the public world or society. Universities provide the scientific and educational side, while sports offer a connection to the public. The author makes this argument so that when individuals in today's society try to find ways to connect universities to the public sphere, they will have access to the history and rationale behind intercollegiate athletics. The author wants to do this so that universities will find other ways outside of football to fill this connection between universities and the public sphere.

To prove his point, he breaks down the book into chapters, with chapters one and two discussing the early years of football at the collegiate level. Going from single player sports to team sports and how team sports became away for universities to get massive attention. Chapter three and four talk about two different groups: the psychologist, and social scientists who each encouraged the continuation of college football because of its importance for universities. Chapter five and six talked about how coaches and stadiums became sources of encouragement for sports being a connection to the public world. While Chapter seven goes back through what was discussed before and fits it all together for his argument.

To fully understand the author's points that he is making he provides background information on the topic. He discusses how in the 1800s sports were not a place for shows or

spectacles but were a place where students could learn self-control and morality. During this stage sports were not supposed to be away to connect to the public. In the 1840s gymnastics declined and sports like baseball, and prize fighting began to become popular. This change was due to resistance to gymnastic military origin, and other bodily reform movements.

With prizefighting you see the want for spectacle sports. Many people liked gymnastics over team sports because of what it taught the student. Then with football came the idea that team sport taught teamwork and discipline which undermined critics main argument. This provides the beginning of how football started in colleges and universities, and lays the foundation for the evidence that will support the author's main argument.

Overall this book does a great job of engaging what he is saying to the topic. After reading each chapter I knew how that section related to the main argument. The author even provide sections in the introduction that explain what the author was talking about and how it related to the main argument. I also loved how the author structured the book to help the audience engage with the argument he was making. Each chapter had their own topic that helped back up his own claim but certain chapters also connected with other chapters which created a new depth of understanding of the topic. You no longer were learning about two different ideas separately but finding the connection between them in relation to the main argument.

This book is a very good piece if you want to understand the history of football and its relationship with the academic side of universities. The author did a good job of laying out what his argument was going to be for this book and each chapter did what it was suppose to do. I never felt like a chapter was missing the mark or a filler piece. With this book only being hundred pages of material it never had time to put in information that did not support

his claim. With it being so short it also provides a good read if you wanted to learn more about the history of college football if you love the sport but do not know its history.

Based on the information provided from this source I would recommend this book to individuals working at the college level who deal with public relations. It appeals to this group because the book's whole argument is trying to help university members today find a better way to connect to the public and to do that they need to have an understanding of the imperfect way that they did it in the past which is through football.