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

The Rise of Gridiron University: Higher Education's Uneasy Alliance with Big-Time Football by Brian Ingrassia focuses on the relationship between college sports and academics. It also focuses on the business side of college sports during the progressive era. The book dives into the different phases that college football had to go through to develop and grow while also facing different challenges along the way. For most of the book, one can see this back and forth between "circus or sideshow." Is college sports a circus that mainly distracts students from academics and serves no greater purpose other than taking from the academic experience that students are in school for, or is it a sideshow that helps students disconnect from the rigors of school and the challenges that come along the way?

This book focuses on post-civil war through World War I and how college football would change with American culture. The idea of the "Ivory tower" from the northern schools early on in the history of college football and how that would come into play when southern schools would feel this sense of inferiority coming from the north. This concept is important early on in the book and highlights how American culture was post-civil war with how there was a natural rivalry between the American North and South. This concept would transform into the author's main argument throughout the book, which is the idea of masculinity in football. Football was seen as a manly sport, and it instilled many values like toughness in the men who played. This is important in chapter 7 about World War I because Ingrassia highlights how football was used to instill the right qualities in men and prepare them for war.

Each chapter of the book is grouped by a theme and it is easy to see what each chapter is going to be talking about. The book breaks down each part of college football from students to stadiums. It engages with each topic in a good amount of detail and provides great evidence for his main arguments and trends throughout the book. For example, chapter 6 focuses on stadiums and seeing the business side of it and the conflict of a circus or sideshow, while chapter 5 focuses on the coaches and the installment of manly values in student-athletes from coaches.

This book does a great job of highlighting more than just the game of football but all of the different aspects that went into the growth of college football as a whole. It is easy to see the issues that college football faced in the 19th and 20th centuries like injuries, scholarships, and race still be an issue today just in a new form. Ingrassia overall does a great job of providing evidence for his arguments using primary and secondary sources that mainly came from scholars from the time. This does tie into one of my critiques of this book. There was a chance to add more to this book by discussing the player's perspective. There are few stories and sources that focus on the players themselves and how they felt about some of the rule changes and the ideas of academics and how it affected the game as a whole.

This book is a good length and someone who is a fan of football and enjoys knowing more about the game. It is also a good book for someone trying to get more into sports history as a whole and needs a place to start because in America college sports are a big deal and most people have a general understanding of the game and this book adds on to it. Lastly, I enjoyed this book and enjoyed learning new things about college football and the struggle between academics and sports.

