



Fútbol!: Why Soccer Matters in Latin America

Joshua H. Nadel

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Get ready for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Summer Olympics—both held in Brazil—with the story of Latin America’s most popular sport. Fútbol! explains why competitors and fans alike are so fiercely dedicated to soccer throughout the region.

From its origins in British boarding schools in the late 1800s, soccer spread across the globe to become a part of everyday life in Latin America—and part of the region’s most compelling national narratives. This book illustrates that soccer has the powerful ability to forge national unity by appealing to people across traditional social boundaries. In fact, author Joshua Nadel reveals that what started as a simple game played a seriously important role in the development of Latin American countries in the twentieth century. Examining the impact of the sport in Argentina, Honduras, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay, Chile, and Mexico, Nadel addresses how soccer affects politics, the media, race relations, and gender stereotypes.

With inspiring personal stories and a sweeping historical backdrop, Fútbol! shows that soccer continues to be tied to regional identity throughout Central and South America today. People live for it—and sometimes kill for it. It is a source of hope and a reason for suicide. It is a way out of poverty for a select few and an intangible escape for millions more.

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