

## Marty Glickman: The Life of an American Jewish Sports Legend

**Jeffrey S. Gurock**

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Jeffrey S. Gurock's *Marty Glickman* is an encompassing biography of the athlete, sportscaster, and mentor.

Born in 1917, Glickman grew up in New York's Bronx and Brooklyn neighborhoods. A star high school athlete, he was recruited by a Jewish fraternity at Syracuse University to enroll at the college. The fraternity members wanted Glickman to be an example of athletic excellence and to counteract the university's increasing and exclusionary antisemitic environment.

At the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics, Glickman and his Jewish teammate, Sam Stoller, were slated to run the 400-meter relay race. But a sudden substitution replaced Glickman and Stoller with athletes Jesse Owens and Ralph Metcalfe. For decades, controversy existed as to whether the Jewish runners were removed to keep them from winning medals. The United States was still trying to avoid global conflict at the time, and the American Olympic Committee may not have wanted to "embarrass" Hitler and his Nazi regime.

The book excels at conveying the conflicted emotions of Glickman, and many second-generation Jewish Americans, during the era. Rather than challenging antisemitism, there was often a desire to assimilate and be perceived as successful, upstanding citizens. And while Glickman later had a revered sportscasting career, his reluctance to change or "de-emphasize" his Jewish surname might have limited his national potential.

Glickman's popularity in the New York metropolitan region, however, was unquestionable. His athletic experience, combined with a unique use of language and idiom, made Glickman a radio icon with a vast and diverse audience. Even Jack Kerouac extolled Glickman's basketball commentary in his famed 1957 novel, *On the Road*; Kerouac described him as "mad Marty Glickman," and the "greatest announcer" ever.

This engrossing, vibrant biography of Marty Glickman also explores the evolving identity of Jewish people in twentieth-century America.

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