The Edge: The War against Cheating and Corruption in the Cutthroat World of Elite Sports

Roger Pielke
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The world of sports is widely scrutinized and analyzed in the media, at the water cooler and on barstools across the world. With his book The Edge: The War Against Cheating and Corruption in the Cutthroat World of Elite Sports, Roger Pielke Jr. takes the topic into the world of academia.

Pielke claims that his book is the first to take a deep look into what he calls “the edge”; in other words, “the place where the quest for athletic advantage runs into the rules governing what is allowed, what is fair, what isn’t, and what is really behind the ‘spirit of sport.’” He pulls recent controversial headlines as a starting place to discuss amateurism, match fixing, doping, technology, sex testing, and multiple other ways athletes try to find even the slightest advantage over opponents.

A notable feature is the book’s potential to appeal to a wide audience. Pielke is the head of the Sports Governance Center at the University of Colorado—the first of its kind in the nation—and this work is certainly a complex academic pursuit at its core, with extensive citations, case studies, tables, and charts included throughout. However, Pielke’s accessible and conversational writing style will have Joe Fan eagerly flipping pages of The Edge. The topics unfold more like a journalistic look into real-life sports scandals, but Pielke’s correlation of the rule bending being “a war for the soul of sport” adds an intriguing layer to the conversation.

Don’t look for a solution to the problems facing sports within the pages of this book. Pielke admits that neither he nor any other expert has one. “Those answers—especially to the most important questions—will be shaped by all of us who care deeply about sport and its role in our society and our world,” he writes. The key to finding a solution, of course, is to fully understand the problem. With his work in The Edge, Pielke gets us much closer to that point.

RICH REZLER (Fall 2016)

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