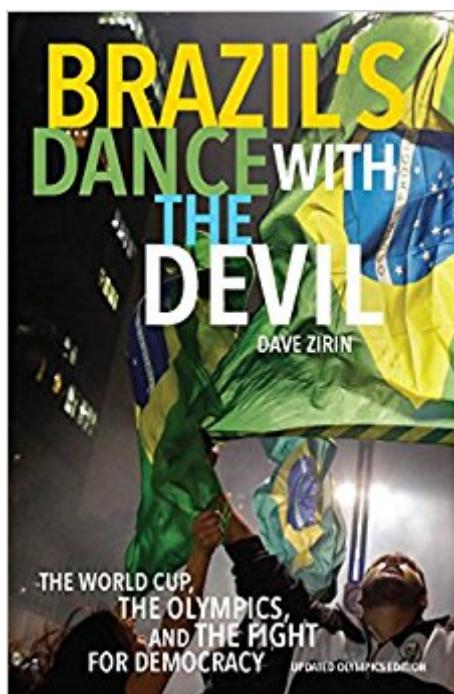


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Brazil's Dance With The Devil: The World Cup, The Olympics, And The Struggle For Democracy



Synopsis

One of the Boston Globe's "Best Sports Books of 2014" As the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games approach, ordinary Brazilians are holding the country's biggest protest marches in decades. Sports journalist Dave Zirin traveled to Brazil to find out why. In a rollicking read that travels from the favelas of Rio de Janeiro to the fabled Maracanã Stadium, Zirin examines how athletic mega-events turn into neoliberal Trojan horses.

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Customer Reviews

"People think speaking truth to power is easy, but if it was easy everyone would do it. This book does it... It speaks truth to the powers that be, from Brazil to the US to FIFA to the IOC. It hits you like an uppercut that rattles your brain and sets it straight. I cannot recommend this book highly enough." John Carlos, 1968 Olympic medalist "Dave Zirin is not just the radical brilliant sports critic but along with Naomi Klein the investigative journalist of our neoliberal era. He has figured out that sports operates at the the nexus of capitalism, race, class, sexuality, privatization and of course spectacle. That's why his work is so important to so many of us." Robin Kelley, author, *Africa Speaks, America Answers* "Dave Zirin has long stood on the edge of the sports writing world, exploding topics many of his colleagues are scared to approach. With Brazil's Dance with the Devil, he puts to bed any notion that the IOC and FIFA have the best interests of their host countries at heart. Brazil is a special country and Dave Zirin honors its people and history while mercilessly going after those who would undermine its people. This book is a remarkable mix of investigative sports journalism and insightful social history." Glenn Greenwald, author, *No Place to Hide* "In

a sports journalism landscape where it sometimes seems there are only those who fawn and those who pander, where curiosity about the world at large is in short supply, Zirin is an altogether different kind of presence. He does care, until it hurts, and consistently delivers unique takes on the nexus of sports and race, globalization, politics and human rights. In *Brazil's Dance with the Devil*, Zirin is at his best, on familiar and fertile ground. Like so much of his work, it is incisive, heartbreaking, important and even funny."; Jeremy Schaap, ESPN, author of *New York Times* bestseller *Cinderella Man*;"For years, FIFA and the Brazilian government have failed to understand the complexity of the Brazilian populace, that it is possible both to love soccer and to be outraged over the organization of the World Cup at the expense of the people. Dave Zirin, one of our great chroniclers of sports and society, spent time on the ground in Brazil interviewing those most affected by the Brazilian World Cup and Olympics, and he comes away with the truth of it all: That the brutal expense of these Mega-events isn't worth the investment of so much public money and historical memory. Everyone who watches the World Cup should read this book."; Grant Wahl, senior writer, *Sports Illustrated*;"A vision from abroad about our Brazil from inside. It is a vision at once critical, smart, truthful, and free of prejudices, and not sparing any criticisms of his own country, the United States. Additionally it's a generous vision that uplifts the great Brazilian people. Enthusiastically recommended!"; Juca Kfouri, columnist, *UOL Esporte*;"Dave Zirin offers a great, fast-paced primer for those who want to get up to speed with what is happening on the ground in Brazil as it prepares for the World Cup and Olympics. Zirin brings the reader through years of history in order to contextualize the tumult on the streets during the 2013 Confederations Cup and offers perspective on what the world can expect during the World Cup and Olympics. *Brazil's Dance with the Devil* gives insight into the linkages between corruption, massive public spending and the folly of mega-event planning in a country with huge wealth inequalities and major infrastructure challenges. Zirin has done his homework and fieldwork, consulting the classics and experts to bring together a fast-paced, focused read for an international audience."; Juliana Barbassa, Former Rio de Janeiro correspondent, *Associated Press*;"Like everything Dave Zirin writes, this book is impassioned, deeply informed and very readable. It's also a necessary book, because Brazil is a poorly understood country entering a crucial period. Zirin backs up his opinions with good, honest reporting. Brazil has a good friend in him."; Simon Kuper, author, *Soccernomics*"*Brazil's Dance With the Devil*, is a powerful and haunting look at what is happening behind the scenes (oft-tragically) in a nation hosting both the World Cup and the Olympics. It is strong work."; Jeff

Pearlman, author, Boys Will Be Boys: The Glory Days and Party Nights of the Dallas Cowboys Dynasty

DAVE ZIRIN is the sports editor for the Nation and the author of Game Over: How Politics Has Turned the Sports World Upside Down. Named one of UTNE Reader's 50 Visionaries Who Are Changing Our World, Zirin is a frequent guest on MSNBC, ESPN, and Democracy Now! He also hosts the weekly Sirius XM show Edge of Sports Radio and has been called "the best sportswriter in the United States," by Robert Lipsyte.

I'm hardly an expert on soccer, but I thought it might be fun to follow this year's World Cup after visiting Brazil last year, just before the Confederations Cup protests. After reading this, I think I have a good idea of what the street demonstrations were all about (certainly not the 20 cent bus fare increase the mainstream US media were fixated on.) The book is much more focused on the history of Brazil and the politics of soccer than it is on the game itself. On the whole, this is justified and anyone who still thinks that soccer can be thought of separately from politics will benefit from reading Zirin. Zirin offers a concise sketch of Brazilian history from the founding of the country under Portuguese rule, through the story of slavery, independence, the Vargas years, the military dictatorship, through the rise of Lula and Dilma Rousseff. From what I know of Brazilian history, he does a superb and accurate job and he has clearly consulted and learned from the classics in this area. The second half of the book is more soccer-centric. Zirin will not win any fans at FIFA (or the IOC for that matter). His thesis is that recent World Cups and Olympics have been essentially what he calls "neo-liberal Trojan horses and sporting shock doctrines", taking a cue from Naomi Klein's "The Shock Doctrine." The evidence Zirin presents is quite convincing that the corporatist agenda has been the driving factor in these spectacles. The best part of the book, for me at least, was his discussion of the drive to eradicate the favelas and Vila Autodromo in Rio. Pure greed in action. One small consolation is that Eike Batista, a financier of the "pacification" drive, was at the time of the writing of the book "Brazil's wealthiest man," and is now essentially busted in a spectacular fall from grace. I feel that there will be protests accompanying the upcoming World Cup, given the compromises and sell-outs that have been made to accommodate this spectacle for the wealthy. While FIFA has insisted on "FIFA- quality stadiums" the slogan of the people is "give us FIFA-quality schools." Anyone who loves and cares for Brazil will want to read this and hopefully will pay as much attention to what may be going on outside the stadiums as to what is happening inside them.

"Brazil's Dance with the Devil" proves once again that Dave Zirin is the best sports analyst today. In the book, Zirin digs deep into Brazil's history and gives the reader a comprehensive examination of the social forces at play with the World Cup and Olympics. Zirin shows us how the legacy of imperialism, slavery, hypernationalism, corporatism , FIFA and the Olympics have intertwined and created neoliberal sporting events in which the wants and needs of the people of Brazil are squashed while the dictates of capital reign supreme. After reading the book you will clearly understand how destroying historical sites, shredding the social safety net, gutting one of the most revered sports stadiums in the world, paramilitarism, broken promises, evictions, environmental destruction, and pure theft has led to the massive resistance we are seeing today. To Zirin (and I dream every reader) the hope lies with the resistance. Zirin ends the book with "It is their World Cup. But it is our world." Truer words have never been written. If you want to look past sports statistics and uncover the filth behind the games, this book is for clearly for you. Get it now!

An eye-opening account of the greed and power of FIFA and the IOC. An accounting of how Brazil bought into the sponsorship when the economy was thriving and FIFA and the IOC demanded their costly conditions be met after the economy tanked, leaving the citizens stuck with a huge debt.

Very interesting book. Zirin did an excellent job bringing up the issues of corruption and inequality that exist within the structures of the Olympics and the World Cup. Also had many sources to back up his information.

The best book on Brasil. I travel to Brasil two times a year and it is one more tool to understand the culture.

Eye opening book. Shows how capitalism cripples the already delicate balance between Brazilians and their government.

This was a really good read as a follow-up to reading Circus Maximus. There's lots to consider about the World Cup and Olympics that do not get mentioned as you watch on TV.

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