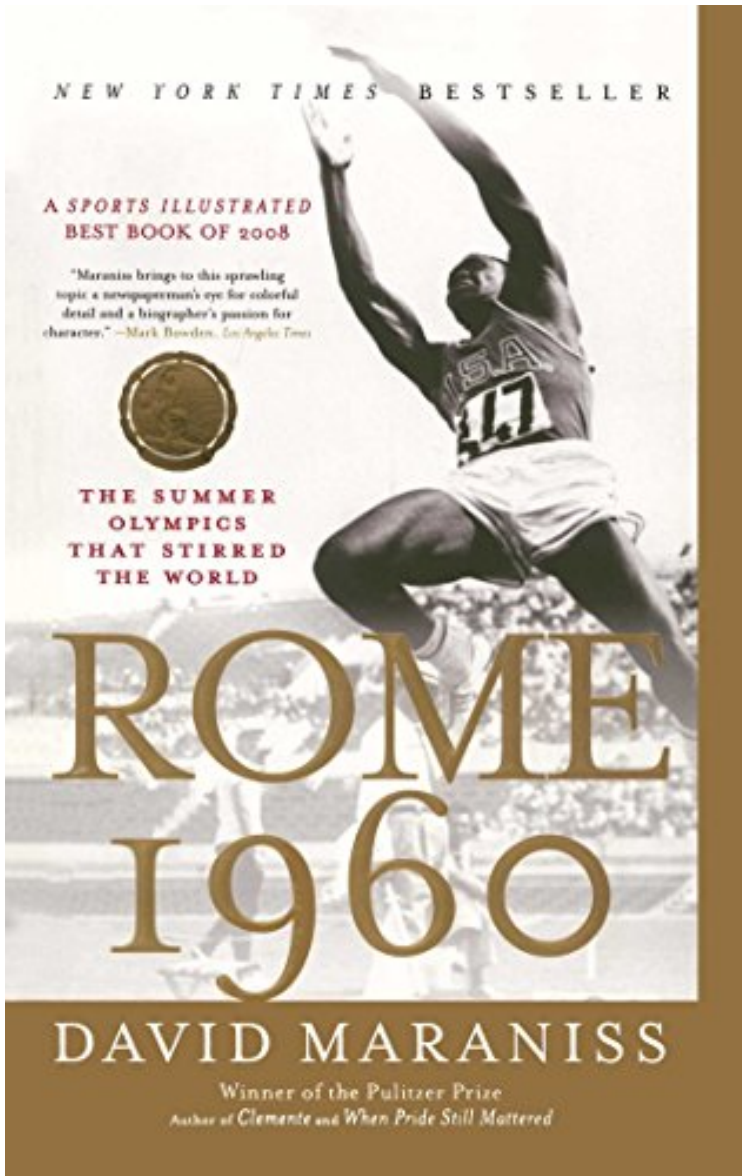


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# Rome 1960: The Olympics That Changed the World (English Edition)



Par David Maraniss  
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Dtails sur le produit Publi le: 2008-07-01  
Sorti le: 2008-07-01  
Format: Ebook Kindle

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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteur From the critically acclaimed and bestselling author David Maraniss, a groundbreaking book that weaves sports, politics, and history into a tour de force about the 1960 Rome Olympics, eighteen days of theater, suspense, victory, and defeat David Maraniss draws compelling portraits of the athletes competing in Rome, including some of the most honored in Olympic history: decathlete Rafer Johnson, sprinter Wilma Rudolph, Ethiopian marathoner Abebe Bikila, and Louisville boxer Cassius Clay,

who at eighteen seized the world stage for the first time, four years before he became Muhammad Ali. Along with these unforgettable characters and dramatic contests, there was a deeper meaning to those late-summer days at the dawn of the sixties. Change was apparent everywhere. The world as we know it was coming into view. Rome saw the first doping scandal, the first commercially televised Summer Games, the first athlete paid for wearing a certain brand of shoes. Old-boy notions of Olympic amateurism were crumbling and could never be taken seriously again. In the heat of the cold war, the city teemed with spies and rumors of defections. Every move was judged for its propaganda value. East and West Germans competed as a unified team less than a year before the Berlin Wall. There was dispute over the two Chinas. An independence movement was sweeping sub-Saharan Africa, with fourteen nations in the process of being born. There was increasing pressure to provide equal rights for blacks and women as they emerged from generations of discrimination. Using the meticulous research and sweeping narrative style that have become his trademark, Maraniss reveals the rich palate of character, competition, and meaning that gave Rome 1960 its singular essence.

Best of the Month, July 2008: Armed with the same engaging narrative found in *Clemente* and *When Pride Still Mattered*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author David Maraniss chronicles the triumphs, tragedies, and treacheries of "the Olympics that changed the world" with Rome 1960. The same Games that announced the greatness of icons like Cassius Clay, Wilma Rudolph, and Rafer Johnson, also exposed a growing unrest between East and West, black and white, and male and female. Even the host city of Rome, Maraniss recounts, was "infused with a golden hue...an illuminating that comes with a moment of historical transition, when one era is dying and another is being born." With moving portraits of the Games's remarkable personalities woven among tales of espionage and propaganda, *Rome 1960* explores an Olympics unable to fight off the troubles of the modern world. Cold War sniping and issues of social inequalities were spilling into fields and stadiums, and the face of sport was rapidly changing. History buffs and sports fans alike will appreciate Maraniss's quiet reporting, as he deftly removes himself from a storyline that is still relevant today.

--Dave Callanan

From *Publishers Weekly*

Overshadowed by more flamboyant or tragic Olympics, the 1960 Rome games were a sociopolitical watershed, argues journalist Maraniss (*Clemente*) in this colorful retrospective. The games showcased Cold War propaganda ploys as the Soviet Union surged past the U.S. in the medal tally. Steroids and amphetamines started seeping into Olympian bloodstreams. The code of genteel amateurism one weight-lifter was forbidden to accept free cuts from a meat company began crumbling in the face of lavish Communist athletic subsidies and under-the-table shoe endorsement deals. And civil rights and anticolonialism became conspicuous themes as charismatic black athlete supercharged sprinter Wilma Rudolph, brash boxing phenom Cassius Clay, barefoot Ethiopian marathoner Abebe Bikila grabbed the limelight while the IOC sidestepped the apartheid issue. Still, we're talking about the Olympics, and Maraniss can't help wallowing in the classic tropes: personal rivalries, judging squabbles, come-from-behind victories and inspirational backstories of obstacles overcome (Rudolph wins the gold, having hurdled Jim Crow and childhood polio that left her in leg braces). As usual, these Olympic stories don't quite bear up under the mythic symbolism they're weighted with (with the exception perhaps of Abebe Bikila), but Maraniss provides an intelligent context for his evocative reportage.

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