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Sport as a Social Spectacle

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Sport as a Social Spectacle

by

Sean Cook
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A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the State
University of New York College at Brockport in partial
Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Education

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The role of sports in society has been vastly important throughout history. There have been numerous instances in history where the role of sports has proved to be essential in those societal times. Some of the key instances where sports played a pivotal role in society include the Negro Leagues and Jackie Robinson, the Women's Baseball League, the 1936 Olympics and Jesse Owens, the 1980 Miracle on Ice, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Boston Marathon Bombings on April 15, 2013, T.C Williams High School Football in the 1970's and the role of Nelson Mandela, Rugby and Apartheid in South Africa. These are just some of the more distinct examples throughout history. Nonetheless, sports have been used as a catalyst to support, unite and heal society.

Sports have played a role in society throughout the history of the world. Through the study of the ancient Greeks, historians realized the role of sports and the beginning of the Olympic Games. The role of sports through society has changed throughout the history of America. In recent history, American citizens have experienced such great sports events such as Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in Major League Baseball, the Miracle on Ice at the 1980 Winter Olympics and most recently the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the Boston Marathon Bombing in 2013. These events are just a few key examples of the impact sports have had on society. Jackie Robinson's crossing the color barrier of Major League Baseball can be considered the beginning of the African American Civil Rights Movement in sport. The Miracle on Ice in the 1980 Winter Olympics, helped unite the country with nationalism

against the Soviet Union. Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the sports world took a week off in order to allow time for families and the country to mourn the loss of so many innocent lives. After a week, America began turning to sports as their first steps back to normalcy. The most recent event, the bombing at the finish line of the Boston Marathon, put the city of Boston as well as the rest of the country on edge. Shortly after the bombing and the terrorists were captured, the Boston sports world came together, unified and strong. As a result of the bombing, the Boston community as well as the Boston Bruins and predominately the Boston Red Sox united around the slogan “Boston Strong”. The Boston Red Sox, united around their new slogan and the support of the city, went on to win the 2013 World Series. Sports have become a major aspect of society in America and throughout the world. As these few examples suggest, sports have had an impact on society, helped change society or helped society heal. Therefore, sports have become more than a spectacle in American society, sports and society can be directly linked and impacted by one another.

Through the first two phases of my thesis research, I have explored multiple resources that focus on the two main events of my overall research topic. The first main topic of my initial research phases was Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in Major League Baseball and its impact on society. The second main topic was the 1980 “Miracle on Ice” and the impact the U.S victory over the Soviet Union had on society. Both pieces of research have helped me understand the way we tell the story or do not tell the story. The main goal for my connecting my research to curriculum is to help students understand the impact that sports can have on society and vice versa. For my connecting my thesis topic to research, I am going beyond these two key events that I have selected

and will create a guide for teachers to use in order to implement various sports events into specific topics of the United States curriculum.

The role of sports in society has been vastly important throughout history. There have been numerous instances in history where the role of sports has proved to be essential in those societal times. Some of the key instances where sports played a pivotal role in society include the Negro Leagues and Jackie Robinson, the Women's Baseball League, the 1936 Olympics and Jesse Owens, the 1980 Miracle on Ice, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Boston Marathon Bombings on April 15, 2013, T.C Williams High School Football in the 1970's and the role of Nelson Mandela, Rugby and Apartheid in South Africa. These are just some of the more distinct examples throughout history. Nonetheless, sports have been used as a catalyst to support, unite and heal society.

One of the most famous stories of sports supporting and uniting society is that of Jackie Robinson crossing the color barrier in Major League Baseball. William Rubinstein stated that baseball has been repeatedly cited as "crucial to understanding American society."¹ Rubinstein goes onto cite Mark Twain and others in their support of this rationale. Twain is quoted as stating "is the very symbol, the outward and visible experience of the drive and rush and struggle of the raging, tearing, booming nineteenth century."² Baseball is known as "America's Pastime" and has played a crucial role in society since its beginning. Rubinstein goes on to state that the integration of Major League Baseball with Jackie Robinson in 1947 set the state for the Civil Rights

¹ Rubinstein, William D. . "Jackie Robinson and the Integration of Major League Baseball." *History Today*, September 2003. <http://www.historytoday.com/william-rubinstein/jackie-robinson-and-integration-major-league-baseball> (accessed December 12, 2013).

² Rubinstein (2003).

movement that would take place in the years to come, leading to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Baseball has been seen as a unification method of American society, molding new and marginal groups into members of a unified society sharing common values and a common identity. Major League Baseball was able to achieve this unification of society in 1947 when Jackie Robinson crossed the color barrier that had been instilled throughout Major League Baseball. Prior to Jackie Robinson, Major League Baseball was a white man's game, played by white men and enjoyed by white society. However, the African American community created their own baseball league in order to enjoy this American pastime as well, the created league became known as the Negro League. There was no official written rule that barred African Americans from playing Major League baseball, just an unwritten rule that owners and managers were not prepared to break. Despite the barring of African Americans from Major League Baseball, many new immigrants into America were assimilated into American society through baseball. Some of the most famous players in the history of baseball came from immigrant families in the early twentieth century. Joe DiMaggio, one of the greatest baseball players of all time, came from Sicilian parents who immigrated to San Francisco. Hank Greenberg, was the son of Romanian-Jewish parents who immigrated to New York in the early twentieth century. These players are just two examples of baseball players who were from immigrant families who assimilated into American society through baseball.³ Despite the efforts of baseball to unite American society with a common identity and common values, African Americans were still barred from playing in the major leagues.

The unwritten rule of barring African Americans from playing Major League baseball did not stop them from participating in America's pastime in their own way. The

³ Rubinstein, 2003.

African American community united in both baseball and themselves and created the Negro Leagues. As Frank Deford states in his article "Negro League Baseball", "the heyday of the Negro Leagues was in the '30s."⁴ The first successful organized Negro League was established in 1920 in Kansas City, Missouri. Andrew "Rube" Foster was the driving force behind the formation of the league and served as the league's initial president⁵. With his efforts and drive to start the Negro League, Foster became known as the "Father of Black Baseball".⁶ The first Negro League that Foster created became known as the Negro National League and was successful until 1931. Shortly after the creation of the NNL, the Eastern Colored League was formed in 1923. Between 1923 and 1933, numerous other Negro Leagues formed, but as with the ECL, collapsed before becoming successful. The Great Depression nearly put an end to the entire Negro League organization, but a second Negro National League was formed in 1933 and lasted until 1937. Once again, the Negro Leagues began a slight downfall from 1937 until 1947. By the 1949 season the Negro National League was absorbed by the Negro American League and operated successfully until the end of the 1960 season.⁷ Despite the efforts of Major League Baseball and Jackie Robinson crossing the color line in 1947, the Negro Leagues still operated in their own light. The Negro Leagues were run in similar fashion as the white Major Leagues, with the exception that the Negro League players were paid far less than their white counterparts. One of the major similarities between the leagues

⁴ Deford, Frank. "Negro League Baseball." *Smithsonian*, November 2013.
<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/A-Long-Toss-Back-to-the-Heyday-of-Negro-League-Baseball-228931031.html> (accessed December 12, 2013).

⁵ Bolton, Todd. Negro League Baseball Players Association Historian, "History of the Negro Leagues."
Last modified 2012. Accessed December 12, 2013. <http://www.nlbpa.com/negro-league-history>.

⁶ Bolton, 2012

⁷ Bolton, 2012.

was the World Series and the all-star game held each year. The Negro League all-star game was known as the East-West Game and was played at Comiskey Park in Chicago each summer. The East-West game was considered more important than the World Series and typically attracted between 20,000 and 50,000 fans annually.⁸

The Negro Leagues, Jackie Robinson and Major League Baseball are not the only example of a sport uniting a society. The story of Jesse Owens in the 1936 Olympics is a prime example of a single athlete uniting a country. In 1936 African American track star Jesse Owens won the hearts of America as he won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin in the presence of Adolf Hitler⁹. Owens' won medals in the 100 meter, 200 meter, long jump and as a member of the 4X 100 meter relay team. Owens' efforts during the 1936 Olympics were considered a triumph over Hitler and Nazi Germany.

A second individual athlete who made great strides for the African American community in regards to race, sports and society was Ernie Davis. Ernie Davis was a running back for Syracuse University from 1959 to 1961. Though Davis did not play at all his freshman year at Syracuse, because it was a team rule that freshmen could not play, he started to create his legacy through his performance in practices. During his sophomore year at Syracuse, Davis compiled 998 rushing yards, 10 touchdowns and earned the nickname "the Elmira Express". The 1961 season was the highlight of Davis' short football career. At the end of the 1961 season, Davis became the first African

⁸ Bolton, 2012.

⁹ Schaap, Jeremy. *Triumph: The Untold Story of Jesse Owens and Hitler's Olympics*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.

American to win the Heisman Trophy and the first African American to be selected first overall in the NFL Draft¹⁰. Unfortunately, Davis' life was cut short as he died from Luekemia in 1963, before he could play a single down in the NFL. Today, Syracuse University has retired Davis' number 44 jersey as well as named their football field in his honor, "Ernie Davis Legends Field".

The relationship between sports and society has not always been because of one individual or to unify different groups of people. The United States along with 64 other countries boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympics being held in the Soviet Union. The United States started the trend to boycott the Summer Olympics after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979. The United States gave the Soviet Union one month to pull out of Afghanistan or they would not participate in the Olympic Games. This can be seen as an example of multiple countries uniting in a common cause compared to the previous examples of individuals or groups uniting under a common cause. Sports have not always served as a catalyst to unite people through the sport, the 1980 Summer Olympics boycott is an example of different countries using the sports world to unite against the Soviet Union and their actions in Afghanistan.

Though the 1980 Summer Olympics had its pros and cons, this Olympic boycott by the United States would not be the only jab they would land against the Soviet Union that year. The "Miracle on Ice" has been named one of the top ten moments of the twentieth century by Sports Illustrated¹¹. In the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, the United States' men's hockey team found themselves facing a heavily favored Soviet team with a chance for the gold medal game on the line. At the time, the

¹⁰ "Ernie Davis," *The Biography Channel website*, <http://www.biography.com/people/ernie-davis-9267805>

¹¹ Sports Illustrated, "*Top Sports Moments of the Twentieth Century*" 1999.

Soviet hockey team had won nearly every international tournament since 1954 and was considered the best team in the world. In February of the same year, the United States team took on the Soviet team in an exhibition game prior to the start of the Olympic games, where the Soviets destroyed the United States team 10-3. However, the Olympic game in Lake Placid would be a different story. The United States ended up upsetting the Soviet team 4-2 and would go on to defeat a team from Finland to win the gold medal.

The role of sports and society can be seen and studied through many different sports figures and sporting events. Some of the key events that will be the focus of this research will be Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier of Major League Baseball and the 1980 "Miracle on Ice". Though these two events are going to be the main focus of the research, there are many other key figures and events that can be used to demonstrate the relationship between sports and society.

Sports have played a role in society throughout the history of the world. Through the study of the ancient Greeks, historians realized the role of sports and the beginning of the Olympic Games. The role of sports through society has changed throughout the history of America. In recent history, American citizens have experienced such great sports events such as Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in Major League Baseball, the Miracle on Ice at the 1980 Winter Olympics and most recently the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the Boston Marathon Bombing in 2013. These events are just a few key examples of the impact sports have had on society. Jackie Robinson's crossing the color barrier of Major League Baseball can be considered the beginning of the African American Civil Rights Movement in sport. The Miracle on Ice in the 1980 Winter Olympics, helped unite the country with nationalism

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Jackie Robinson has become synonymous with being the person to break the color barrier in Major League Baseball. Historians have created documentaries and written numerous books, discussing the importance of this feat since the day it happened. Through reading the story of Jackie Robinson and viewing documentaries and motion pictures depicting his story, I have learned about who he was and why this moment is still celebrated sixty-seven years later. Jackie Robinson was put on center stage, as the face of the African American community for all of Major League baseball and all of America. The use of Robinson would have lasting effects on the baseball community, the African American community and the United States as a whole.

The story and the importance of Jackie Robinson began long before he was introduced to Branch Ricky and was the first African American integrated into Major League Baseball. The story of Robinson can begin with his early childhood years and how he stood up for himself. As mentioned in Ken Burns' documentary Baseball: The National Pastime, Burns highlights the life of Jackie Robinson before he became a famous baseball player. Burns discusses how when Robinson was a young boy, he and his brothers would stand up for themselves despite what they were being taught by their parents and grandparents about respect and courtesy for white people. The story Burns shares is of how when Jackie and his brother would get bullied and teased by the other white children, for example, the white children would throw rocks at other black children, Jackie and his brother would not run away in fear, but would protect themselves and throw the rocks right back. This practice of protecting themselves was not typical behavior for African Americans at this time, especially in the South and in response to actions by white people. This example of Jackie and his brother standing up for themselves and fighting back demonstrates the differences that Jackie Robinson exhibited compared to the majority of the African American community. Furthermore, as Jackie would grow up and mature, we can see how Jackie is different and why that leads to him becoming the perfect candidate to break the color barrier of Major League Baseball.

The character and attitude of Jackie Robinson developed and changed throughout his life. Jackie was the same as any human being in that sense, no one ever stays the same person, people always develop and change over time. Despite growing up in the South as an African American, Robinson never believed or adhered to the "laws" of the Jim Crow South. As Robinson matured and developed into the man that crossed the color barrier,

his ideals and beliefs changed slightly, but we was still the same feisty Jackie Robinson, who stood up for what he believed in. Another instance of Jackie Robinson standing up for what he believed and what he felt was earned occurred on a military bus. Throughout high school history, students are taught that Rosa Parks did a great thing by refusing to give up her seat to a white person on the city bus. Her actions ended up leading to the Montgomery Bus Boycott and Supreme Court rulings that ended segregation. However, years before Rosa Parks and the NAACP purposely set-up the bus seat refusal, Jackie Robinson did the same thing, but for his own purpose and without the protection of the NAACP. As Burns describes in the documentary, Robinson was on the military bus and was asked to move his seat so that a fellow white soldier could have it. Robinson refused to give up his seat, believing that he had earned his right to sit wherever he wanted because he had just fought a war with these men and deserved to be treated the same way they were being treated. Robinson ended up being court marshalled for his actions. However, the judge ruled that Robinson was within his full legal rights to refuse to give up his seat on the military bus. Therefore, Jackie Robinson, pulled a “Rosa Parks”, before Rosa Parks pulled a “Rosa Parks”. The result of Robinson’s actions on the military bus did not lead to a boycott of buses or lead to Supreme Court decisions regarding segregation, like the actions of Rosa Parks did. However, the actions of Robinson demonstrate his character and beliefs that he feels need should be treated fairly no matter the circumstances. As Burns states in the documentary, “Robinson was a race man, wanted a fair chance to fight and wanted to be treated fairly.” Therefore, as previously mentioned, the ideals and beliefs of Jackie Robinson had developed overtime and created

the opportunity for him to be the perfect person to cross the color barrier of Major League Baseball.

Jackie Robinson's actions off the field spoke volumes about his character, but it is what he did on the field that helped generate changes for the African American community at this time. With the help of Brooklyn Dodgers owner Branch Ricky, Jackie Robinson was given the opportunity many African American baseball players wanted, the chance to play in Major League Baseball. The transition of Jackie Robinson from the Negro Leagues to Major League baseball was not going to be an easy task. During this time, the African American community was still segregated from the white community in all aspects of life, especially baseball. In the words of former Major League Baseball Commissioner Judge Kenesaw Landis, "colored ball players have their own league, let them stay in their own league."¹² Judge Landis was using his power and control of Major League Baseball in order to keep the sport white. Landis felt that because there was a separate league for African Americans, then he was not required to allow African Americans to play baseball in his league. Under the control of Landis, baseball was going to stay white. Prior to Jackie Robinson and Branch Ricky, other owners had attempted to bring African Americans into Major League Baseball and failed because of Landis. In 1943, the Pittsburgh Pirates attempted to hire Josh Gibson, one of the greatest baseball players to ever live, but Landis refused. Gibson eventually was elected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1972 and became known as "The black Babe Ruth"¹³. A second example is when Bill Vek Jr. attempted to buy the last place Philadelphia Phillies and stock the team with stars from the Negro League and Landis made sure that someone else

¹² Burns, K. (Director). (1994). *Baseball: 6th Inning: The National Pastime United States*. .

¹³ Burns, *Baseball: 6th Inning: The National Pastime*.

bought the team over Vek.¹⁴In post-World War II America, the hypocrisy of fighting racism abroad, while ignoring it at home became more and more clear to Americans, especially the African American community. Following the war, African Americans came back from fighting to better jobs and more pay, which further increased support for the Negro Leagues and equal opportunity. It was not until after Landis' death in 1944, that the face of baseball began to change for the better.

The courage and strength of Jackie Robinson speaks greater volumes than his actual baseball skills. Robinson set the stage for African Americans to integrate into Major League Baseball, which set the stage for the future Civil Rights Movement which would take over America in the years following Robinson's breaking of the color barrier. As sports historian John Thorn stated in the Burns documentary, "Baseball has led America instead of followed it, none more than with Jackie Robinson."¹⁵ The many actions of Jackie Robinson both on and off the baseball diamond helped lead to the African American Civil Rights Movement. The actions of Jackie Robinson started the conscientious thinking by both blacks and whites that led to Martin Luther King Jr.'s career and greatly impacted the African American Civil Rights Movement. Though Robinson's actions did not directly influence the Civil Rights Movement, it was his actions that led to the possibility of the Civil Rights Movement, which culminated with the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act in 1965. The ability of Jackie Robinson to integrate Major League Baseball and overcome the pressure and violence that he faced every day united the African American community and opened the eyes of America to the realities of racism. One of Robinson's most famous quotes is "I was fighting two

¹⁴ Burns, Baseball: 6th Inning: The National Pastime.

¹⁵ Burns, Baseball: 6th Inning: The National Pastime.

wars, one abroad and one at home”, Robinson was a member of the military and fought during World War II. Yet, when he returned home, he returned to the violence and racism that had affected America for over a century. Jackie Robinson was able to use his personal strength and character to overcome the violence and racism and lead the way for the African American community into the Civil Rights Movement. Robinson has since entered the history books as one of the greatest baseball players of all time and was elected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962. The legend of Jackie Robinson did not end with the culmination of the Civil Rights Movement in 1965. Today, every April 15th is celebrated as Jackie Robinson day throughout Major League Baseball. All players wear his famous number 42 jersey in his honor. Robinson is the only player to have his number retired throughout all of Major League Baseball. The last player to wear number 42 was Mariano Rivera who retired from the New York Yankees following the 2013 season. Rivera was allowed to continue to wear number 42 following Jackie Robinson’s official number retirement in 1997. As sports historian John Thorn stated, “Baseball has led America instead of following it.”

Jackie Robinson and Major League Baseball are the perfect example of how society and sports are closely related. Prior to Jackie Robinson integrating Major League Baseball, the African American community had their own league and Major League Baseball had a commissioner who refused to allow African Americans into “white baseball”. The efforts of Branch Ricky and Jackie Robinson opened up the eyes of America to the realities of racism. These efforts helped unite the African American community to push for equality and integration through the Civil Rights Movement. The

efforts of Robinson not only impacted Major League Baseball, but opened up the door for change throughout America.

A second sporting event that greatly affected America was the Miracle on Ice at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY. At the time of the 1980 Winter Olympics, there were great tensions throughout the world, especially between the United States and the Soviet Union. In the months leading up to the winter games, tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union greatly increased after the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Furthermore, life was not much better on the home front. At the time of the winter games, inflation rates were around eighteen percent, interest rates were not far behind and gas prices were soaring. Six months prior to the start of the games, President Carter gave a speech addressing “a crisis of American spirit.”¹⁶ The United States of America as a whole was downtrodden and weak. The winter games, gave the country a slight glimmer of hope, but it was not until the semi-final match in men’s hockey versus the Soviet Union, did things start to change for the country. The match-up would pair off two familiar foes, a superpower versus a weakling. At the time, the United States could still be considered a superpower, but because of the state of the Union at the time, it can be argued otherwise. The match-up would be a Cold War battle fought on ice and with hockey sticks. This battle would square off seasoned veterans and professionals against amateurs and collegiate players. The outcome of the game would not only lead the men’s team to win the gold medal at the Olympic Games, but they brought hope to a country that desperately needed it.

¹⁶ Coffey, W. R. (2005). *The Boys of Winter: The Untold Story of A Coach, a Dream, and The 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Beyond the Cold War implications and other world affairs that were occurring around the time of the Miracle on Ice, this game would help unite the country in a time of despair. In regards to global tensions, the United States and the Soviet Union were at odds, fighting the Cold War. On the ice, the United States hockey did not fare well against the Soviets in recent years. Coming into the 1980 Winter Olympics, the Soviets were the heavy favorites, winning the last four gold medals and dominating on the world hockey stage. In exhibition games leading up to the Olympics, the Russians went 5-3-1 against National Hockey League teams and dominated the NHL All-stars 6-0. The Soviet team was made up of season veterans who had long careers as professional hockey players. On the other side of the blue line, the American team was made up of amateur and collegiate hockey players, many with little to no international hockey experience. Two weeks before the Olympic Games began, the Americans and Soviets squared off for an exhibition match in Madison Square Garden. The Soviets won easily by a score of 10-3, only giving the Soviets more hope of winning the gold and further dampening the spirits of the young American squad. However, when it came to the semi-final during the Olympic games, the outcome would be much different for the young American squad and the rest of America.

As previously mentioned, the young American team was greatly outmatched coming into the semi-final game against the Soviet Union, but that did not bother these young players. As *The Boys of Winter*, chronicles, these players were collegiate athletes that would be facing up against professional hockey players. However, the amateur status of the American team, added to the “blue collar” aspect of both the Olympic Games and America at the time. The players on this team represented a small population of “blue

collar” Americans, because they came from limited backgrounds and location, but they all had the same goal in mind, win the gold medal. Under head coach Herb Brooks, the young American team would be trained to outskate, out hustle and out play every opponent they would face. The typical style of American hockey was to be patient and wait for the opportunity to score. The reason that the Soviet team had been so successful on the world stage was because they did not play this patient style of hockey. The Soviets wanted to outplay their opponents within the first five minutes of the first period. In doing so, the Soviets would outlast and outplay their opponents, typically in an easy fashion. Coach Herb Brooks knew that he needed to change the style of his Olympic team if they even wanted a chance to compete, let alone try to win a medal at the games, therefore, Brooks instituted the European/ Soviet style of aggressive hockey. This new style of hockey was not easy to implement, being that these young American hockey players grew up playing the “American” style of hockey as opposed to the “Soviet” style. Implementing this new style of hockey would not be the only major task Brooks would have to compete with before the games even began. Being that hockey was a very regional sport prior to the Olympic games, Brooks would have a team filled with players who were collegiate rivals and had nothing but hate for each other. Before Brooks was able to begin to implement the new style of play, he had to unite his team with a common goal. Though it took some time, Brooks was able to unite these former rivals as new teammates playing for the United States Men’s Hockey team at the 1980 Winter Olympics on their home ice in Lake Placid, NY. If these games were not being played on our home turf, then the United States would have most likely boycotted the games because of the actions of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan prior to the games and the lack

of action from the United Nations to get the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan. The fact that these games happened on American soil further aided to the hype of the games and the lasting effects following the “Miracle on Ice” victory.

In order to better gauge a “snapshot” of the reaction of America following the “Miracle on Ice” victory, I created an eight question survey about the game and distributed to friends and family that grew up in the “North Country” during the time of the 1980 games. The short survey was distributed to about forty different people; however, I only received responses from eight different people. The first question asked on the survey was how old they were at the time of the 1980 Olympic games, the average age of the respondents was 15.75 years old. The oldest individual that responded was 21 years old and the youngest was 12 at the time of the games. All of the individuals that responded to the survey grew up in the “North Country” and they were still living in that region during the time of the games, except one respondent was attending college at the time at Mohawk Valley Community College in Utica, NY. In addition, two respondents were living in Watertown, NY, one was living in Crown Point (about an hour north of Lake Placid), one was living in Queensbury which is about an hour and a half from Lake Placid, and the last three respondents were living in Plattsburgh, NY at the time of the 1980 Olympic Games. The reason that I chose individuals who were growing up in the “North Country” during the time of the 1980 games was because, I felt that they would be able to offer a better idea of the initial reaction to winning the games in the surrounding areas of Lake Placid as opposed to generating reactions from the country as a whole. I felt that the reaction from the entire country would be the same as the reaction as these small communities that were surrounding the Lake Placid area.

A second question that I asked on the survey was about how the individuals watched the game. Through my research, I learned that the game was not televised live and was shown on tape delay replay at 8 pm. ABC attempted to negotiate with the International Olympic Committee and the four hockey teams that were playing in the semi-finals matchups. Three of the four teams agreed to switch the game times to ensure that the United States versus Soviet hockey game would be played in primetime. The United States, Finland and Sweden all agreed to change the times, the Soviets refused to change the game time because moving the game to an 8pm start on the East Coast would mean that the game would have a 4am start time in Moscow. With the refusal of the Soviets to agree to the time change, the games went on as planned and the Soviets and United States played their game at 5pm Eastern time. The odd start time, lack of live coverage on American TV and the refusal of the Soviets to switch game times only allowed for one possibility. ABC had agreed to record the game and then replay the game on tape delay at 8pm in order to ensure a primetime audience. Through my survey results, I learned that the majority of the respondents did not know that they were watching the game on a tape delay and they believed they were watching a live sporting event. However, it was interesting to learn that some of the respondents were able to watch the game as a live broadcast, those from Plattsburgh, because of their close proximity to Canada and their ability to pick up Canadian television stations. Therefore, while the majority of the United States was glued to the front of their televisions at 8pm to watch the Cold War clash between the United States and the Soviet Union, there was people in Northern New York, especially those who attended the actual game who already knew the outcome of the event. Despite the fact that the game was shown on tape delay, the

reaction from America to beating the Soviet team was still the same. In today's technological age, this would not be an option. The use of the internet as well as social media platforms will "spoil" the results before ABC or another affiliate would be able to show the replay of the game to a "live" audience. For example, the most recent Olympic games took place in Sochi, Russia. The great time difference between Russia and the United States prevented the majority of the events from being broadcast live in the United States. If Americans wanted to watch any of the specific events, they would have to wake up at three or four o'clock in the morning. Despite this great time difference, NBC was able to show the majority of the events on tape delay in "primetime" throughout the United States. However, through the use of technology and the internet, the majority of these results were already known before the replays were televised.

A third important question that I asked on the survey, was their reaction following the game or after they heard of the results of the game. All eight individuals responded that they were shocked and proud to be an American after the United States defeated the Soviets. One of the individuals in the additional comments section noted that they "remember people talking about it taking several hours or more to travel from Crown Point to Lake Placid during the Olympics due to the traffic jams". In response to the American victory, the people in Lake Placid as well as surrounding areas flocked to the streets of Lake Placid to celebrate the amazing victory. A second individual responded that they were in complete shock as he witnessed the United States defeat what was "considered the best team in the world". My favorite response was from the individual who stated "it was like David vs. Goliath because the Soviets were all professional players and our team was a bunch of college kids." The Soviets were Goliath and the

United States was David, but just like the biblical story, the smaller, out skilled team triumphed. The victory of the United States versus the heavily favored Soviet team, was a shock to the entire country, but was able to instill hope and pride into everyone.

The final question I would like to discuss from the survey asked about whether they felt the victory of the Soviet Union helped to unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory. The predominant answer from all of the individuals that responded to the survey was yes, there was a sense of unification following the United States victory of the Soviet Union. Some of the respondents answered with a simple yes or a statement about the feelings after the game, on the other hand, some of the individuals answered with explicit reasons why they felt the victory helped to unite the country. For example, one individual stated that “what the USA victory did more was allow people to forget their financial troubles for a little while.” This answer was in response to the severe recession that affected America, especially the Northeast, with unemployment rates around twenty percent. Another response was along the same lines, discussing the economic disaster of the 1970s, stating that “we needed something to feel good about, and this game provided it.” One response stated that the victory strengthened American nationalism and united the country with respect to the Soviet Union and the Cold War. My favorite response, discussed the evidence of unification that she witnessed in the streets of Lake Placid. The individual stated that the victory “brought about a feeling of solidarity” and that she remembered seeing people remain in the arena for hours “waving the American Flag, singing patriotic songs and chanting ‘USA’, USA’”. Therefore, I believe that the victory over the Soviet hockey team absolutely helped to

unite the country, especially in a drastic time when morale and hope were at an all-time low throughout the country.

Though I did not generate as many responses to the survey as I had hoped, I feel that the few responses that I did receive do give an accurate “snapshot” of the reaction of America following the United States victory over the Soviet Union. In addition to the victory over the Soviet Union in the semi-final game, the United State team went on to defeat Finland in the gold medal game the next day. The ability of the United States hockey team to overcome drastic odds to defeat a “Goliath” of a hockey team had both immediate and lasting effects on the morale of the United States as a whole. Almost immediately after the victory, there was a new sense of hope and nationalism that spread throughout the country, in a time when it was most needed. The United States had suffered throughout the 1970s in regards to foreign affairs as well as economic issues. The victory over the Soviet Union turned out to be more than a hockey win, but was a catalyst for change in hope throughout the country. In the years since the amazing victory, Sports Illustrated magazine named the victory as the greatest moment in the twentieth century. Furthermore, the International Hockey Association named the victory as the greatest international hockey moment in the last century. Sports can be directly linked to society in many different ways. Whether the results or changes are immediate or long lasting, the world of sports has a close relationship with society and can greatly influence its general thoughts, feelings and beliefs.

There have been numerous sporting events throughout the history of mankind that have had a great influence on society. The original Olympic Games in Ancient Greece were a great spectacle for all of society. Those games have greatly changed overtime, just as

sports role in society has greatly involved over time. The legacy of Jackie Robinson continues on today, more than sixty-five years after he broke the color barrier of Major League Baseball. Furthermore, the actions of Jackie Robinson and his ability to overcome the harassment, set the stage for Martin Luther King Jr and the Civil Rights Movement that took over America in the 1950s and 1960s. The 1980 “Miracle on Ice” instilled a new sense of hope and nationalism in a country that was desperate for positivity. The United States victory over the powerhouse Soviet Union, helped change the downtrodden face of America and helped push society out of the economic recession of the 1970s. There have been many more recent sporting events that have helped shape or influence society in different ways. The previous two examples have had many things written about them and occurred outside of my lifetime. One of the events that has occurred in my lifetime that I will never forget is the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. These attacks shook and shock all of America. As a small step to return to normalcy, both the NFL and MLB used sports to bring society back together. Following the attacks, there were no professional or collegiate sports for over a week, in order to allow time for America to mourn. The NFL and MLB were the two professional organizations to help people heal and start to return to their lives. The returning of sports following the terrorist attacks is an example of how sports can be used to help a society heal and overcome the negativity of terrible events that have occurred. A second example of a society uniting and overcoming tragic loss happened last year in Boston after the Boston Marathon bombing. The entire city of Boston as well as the United States was shook with fear after the bombings at the Boston Marathon. In the week following the bombings, both the Boston Red Sox and the Boston Bruins returned to their respective games to help the city

heal and unite in this tragic time. In one of the most moving videos I have seen in my life, at the first hockey game at the Boston Garden following the bombings, the crowd stood for the National Anthem like they would at any sporting event. Except this time, without any outside input, the entire crowd joined together to sing the National Anthem together as one. I have since watched this video numerous times, every time it brings tears of joy to my eyes, as a witness nationalism, pride and unification happen right before my eyes. The second important aspect to the Boston community is the Boston Red Sox. Following the bombings, the Red Sox united together as a team and helped to further unite the city in this troubling time. Throughout last season, the Red Sox honored the many emergency responders of the city as well as the victims of the bombing. Furthermore, the Red Sox players created a jersey for the city, hanging their now famous “Boston Strong 617” jersey in the dugout for every game the rest of the season. The 617 represented the area code in the city of Boston. The phrase “Boston Strong” became a rallying cry for not only the Red Sox, but for the entire city of Boston. The phrase symbolizes their resiliency and pride that they held in their city. The best part of this story, is that the Red Sox used this rallying cry to fight through the remainder of the season, on their way to winning the World Series. Once again, sports and society can be directly linked. Though there have been negative events in society and sports were used to heal society, there have also been positive events that helped unite the country as one. Sports are a spectacle of society and are directly related to one another and greatly influence one another.

Through the first two phases of my thesis research, I have explored multiple resources that focus on the two main events of my overall research topic. The first main topic of my initial research phases was Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier in

Major League Baseball and its impact on society. The second main topic was the 1980 “Miracle on Ice” and the impact the U.S victory over the Soviet Union had on society. Both pieces of research have helped me understand the way we tell the story or do not tell the story. The main goal for my connecting my research to curriculum is to help students understand the impact that sports can have on society and vice versa. For my connecting my thesis topic to research, I am going beyond these two key events that I have selected and will create a guide for teachers to use in order to implement various sports events into specific topics of the United States curriculum.

The purpose of including various sports events and stories within the curriculum is to help better connect and engage students into the topics we are studying throughout the United States History curriculum. The overall goal would be to provide teachers with options to incorporate into the curriculum during specific topics that will bring the curriculum beyond the typical “names and dates” study of History. Too often in middle and high school History classes, the focus is on memorization of key facts that are important, however, I feel that there is never a connection that will further engage more students. Through my student teaching experience, I learned that very little high school students are overly interested in Social Studies. Therefore, I feel that in order to be an effective teacher, we need to include information and lessons that will spark our student’s interests in Social Studies. Through the inclusion of sports figures and events that played key roles in History, I believe that our students will become more engaged and as a result learn more information that we are teaching them.

The story of Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier of Major League Baseball has become one of the most well-known stories in regard to both sport and society.

Through my research on the topic, I have come to realize the impact that Jackie Robinson had on not only baseball, but on society as a whole. The actions of Robinson during his time in “white” baseball; specifically when he was on the Brooklyn Dodgers, helped to spark changes that eventually lead to the Civil Rights Movement. Though it is difficult to argue that Robinson’s actions started the Civil Rights Movement, it can be argued that Robinson’s actions helped open people’s eyes to inequality in America that eventually lead to the Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, I believe that a teacher could use the story of Jackie Robinson to start a unit on the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher could use the story of Jackie Robinson as told through biographies and documentaries to demonstrate the impact that his actions had on society and how they helped lead to the Civil Rights Movement. The teacher could use the story as an introduction to the unit and use the story of Jackie Robinson to show how his actions impacted society. As stated by sports historian John Thorn in Ken Burns’ documentary “Baseball”, “Baseball has led American instead of followed it, none more than with Jackie Robinson.”¹⁷ Therefore, the story of Jackie Robinson can be used to link sports and the direct impact they can have on society.

The second key event that my research focused on was the 1980 “Miracle on Ice” where the United States Men’s Hockey team defeated the Soviet Union in the semifinals of the Lake Placid Olympic Games. Sports Illustrated has called this victory one of the greatest moments of the Twentieth Century. However, the event is never discussed amidst the topic of the Cold War. During the 1980 Olympic Games, the United States and the Soviet Union were in the middle of the Cold War, with tensions on the rise following the Soviet’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The semifinal hockey game was seen as a

¹⁷ Burns, K. (Director). (1994). Baseball: 6th Inning: The National Pastime United States.

“David vs. Goliath” match-up, with the Soviet Union playing Goliath. The Soviet Union hockey team was made up of veterans with immense international and professional hockey experience. On the other side of the rink, the United States team was made up of college and semi-professional hockey players with little to none international or professional experience. Furthermore, the Soviet Union hockey team had dominated the United States in an exhibition match just two weeks before the semifinal match, winning 10-3. However, this match up was completely different and would have tremendous impact on the world of hockey and the United States as a Nation. Through my research on the event, I learned a vast amount of information that only added to the story of the “Miracle on Ice”. As a part of generating my own research around the topic, I conducted short interviews with friends and family that were growing up in the “North Country” during the 1980 Winter Olympics in order to gauge the impact that the victory had on the United States as a whole. Through my research, I concluded that the United States victory over the Soviet Union helped unify a nation that had been suffering from foreign affairs and economic issues throughout the previous decade. As many of the responders stated in the interview, “the victory united our country and brought about a feeling of solidarity.” Therefore, I believe that the United States victory over the Soviet Union can further demonstrate to students the impact that sports can have on society.

In addition to these key events that I have conducted the majority of my research around, I will create a guide that will help teachers to incorporate more sports related topics into specific units through the United States curriculum. The key events that I feel are the most important and most relevant to include in the curriculum are the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks and the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing and the impact that

they had on society and their relationship to sports following those tragic events. As a teacher, I believe that inclusion of these two major events can help students understand the continuing impact that sports has on society. Depending on the age of the students, they may or may not have been alive for the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. However, as teachers, this is one of the events that we will remember for the rest of our lives as we lived through it. Therefore, we can offer our first hand experiences regarding the terrorist attacks as well as the role sports played in the healing process following the attacks. The 2013 Boston Marathon Bombing is a very recent event that the majority of our students should be able to remember. However, they may or may not know the impact that the events had on society, specifically the city of Boston. In addition, the story of the 2013 Boston Red Sox uniting around the city of Boston and becoming “Boston Strong” and going on to win the 2013 World Series. These are two key events that have happened in recent years that have had a great impact on society and demonstrate the clear relationship that society and sports have.

The essential purpose or objective of incorporating sports into history topics is to better engage students in the learning of the topics being taught. Furthermore, the inclusion of sports can be beneficial in helping the students better understand of the topics. For example, the discussion and inclusion of Jackie Robinson’s story can give the students a better understanding of how his actions helped eventually lead to the Civil Rights Movement. Though Jackie Robinson’s actions did not directly lead to the Civil Rights Movement, his actions both on and off the baseball field helped changed the mindset of many Americans, which eventually lead to the Civil Rights Movement. Therefore, the inclusion of the story of Jackie Robinson, the impact of the “Miracle on

Ice” as well as other key sports events throughout the Social Studies curriculum, will be used to help students gain a better understanding of the topics and well as help students realize the relationship that exists between sports and society. In order to properly implement these outside resources into the curriculum, the teachers will need to create specific learning objectives that are directly related to the resources and their relationship to the specific topics of the unit being discussed. A generic learning of objective that may be used and adapted throughout various units would be, “students will be able to explain the relationship between sports and society during...”. The use of specific learning objectives will help teachers determine what they want their students to learn by the end of the unit or lesson. These learning objectives need to be aligned with state and district standards, student focused and must be measurable¹⁸.

The inclusion of these sports events such as the Jackie Robinson story and the “Miracle on Ice” will be included with the instruction for the specific unit being taught. For example, prior to discussing the Civil Rights Movement, the teachers will use an outside source regarding Jackie Robinson, such as Ken Burns’ documentary or a biography about Jackie Robinson. In the example of Jackie Robinson, these sources will be used to discuss the impact that Jackie Robinson had on baseball and America prior to the Civil Rights Movement. In addition to the story of Jackie Robinson, I will also include other outside resource options for various units throughout the Social Studies curriculum, which will be outlined at a later point. In addition to including these outside resources into the curriculum, additional teaching practices also need to be included in order to facilitate improved student performance. Research suggests that the use of

¹⁸ Ceri B. Dean, Elizabeth Ross Hubbell, Howard Pitler, BJ Stone, *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (Denver: McREL, 2012), 153- 154.

cooperative learning “helps students develop a number of skills, including academically based social skills that will serve them in school and the workplace.”¹⁹ The use of cooperative learning can help students consolidate and expand their understanding through collaboration with their peers, as well as generate positive interdependence and accountability among peers. In addition to cooperative learning, it is important to help students extend and apply their knowledge of the content. The use of outside resources and linking them with specific topics within units will help students to expand and apply their knowledge. Students can extend and apply their knowledge by testing hypotheses and comparing and contrasting information²⁰. Furthermore, the inclusion of the outside resources can help students extend their knowledge of the topic specific curriculum by demonstrating the relationship between sports and the specific units of study.

An important factor for all curriculum and instruction revolves around the assessment of the students. It is important to utilize a pre and post assessment in order to gauge student learning and mastery of the materials. The inclusion of these outside resources into the curriculum will result in a change in the assessment of the student’s mastery of the instruction. However, because the outside resources will be used in conjunction with the Social Studies curriculum, minimal changes will need to be made to assessments. The changes to the assessments will need to be based on types of assessments being used and the outside resources being incorporated into the curriculum. For example, when discussing the role of women during World War II, the teacher may decide to use the movie “A League of their Own” to demonstrate the relationship between sports, society and women during this time. In order to assess the students

¹⁹ Dean, 157

²⁰ Dean, 163

understanding of the information, the teacher may create a guided questions sheet for the movie or have students answer an essay question that addresses the movie in addition to other information discussed during the unit. The use of assessments to evaluate student performance is necessary in order to gauge whether the students are mastering the material being taught. “Identifying criteria for performance helps teachers think about when and how they might assess student learning and provide formal feedback.”²¹ The use of assessments is beneficial to both the teachers and the students. The teachers will use the assessment data to gauge student learning and the students can use the assessment data to understand their mastery of the material. There are important factors to consider when creating assessment criteria. Some of these factors include, clearly defining the criteria for which the student performance will be assessed, aligning the criteria to the learning standards and identifying how and when students will be assessed²².

Sports and society can be directly related. Through the research conducted, the author has noted key events that have related closely to societal changes. The first key event, Jackie Robinson crossing the color barrier of Major League Baseball, was a catalyst for change in America that helped push towards the Civil Rights Movement. The second key event, the 1980 “Miracle on Ice” helped unify the country around nationalism and change the overall spirit and mood of the American people. These are just two of the many sporting events and sports figures that can be used to show the relationship between sports and society. In order to help teachers facilitate further engagement by their students, the author has provided a list of outside resource options that teachers can incorporate into the New York State Social Studies Curriculum. These are not the only

²¹ Dean, 154

²² Dean, 155

options available for teachers to use, this is only a list of suggestions for teachers. The use of these outside resources can help teachers and students examine the relationship that exists between sports and society. In order to be effective educators, teachers need to incorporate resources and topics that will further engage their students. The use of outside resources can be beneficial for both engagement and increased learning by the students.

Building a Curriculum

Unit VII: An Industrial Society

Topic: The Progressive Movement: 1900-1920: Efforts to reform the new society

Book Options:

Shoeless Joe Jackson: This book was written by W.P Kinsella, originally published in 1982. The story is about an Iowa farmer Ray Kinsella, who builds a baseball field in his cornfield in order to give redemption to the famed “Shoeless” Joe Jackson who was banned from baseball after the Black Sox Scandal in the 1919 World Series. Ray Kinsella builds the baseball field after hearing an ominous voice telling him to do so. Upon completion of the field, “Shoeless” Joe along with the rest of the 1919 White Sox come out of the corn field to play the game they love. The story tells about the importance of change and redemption in America during the Progressive Era.

Movie Options:

Field of Dreams: Field of Dreams is the film rendition of the book Shoeless Joe Jackson, released in 1989. The movie follows the same story as the book, where Ray Kinsella (Kevin Costner) builds the baseball field in his Iowa cornfield and the famed 1919 Chicago Black Sox come to play again. The title is rated PG, therefore it will be appropriate for high school students to watch.

Eight Men Out: Eight Men Out is the film depiction of the Chicago Black Sox scandal of the 1919 World Series. The film tells the story of the famed 1919 Black Sox, who took bribes to purposely lose the 1919 World Series. The film was released in 1988 and is rated PG, making it appropriate for high school students to watch.

Unit IX: The United States between Wars

Topic: The Great Depression

Book Options:

The Natural: The book was written by Bernard Malamud in 1952. The story is about a young “natural” baseball player who makes his way into Major League Baseball despite getting shot by a woman at the age of 19, slowing his path to the Big Leagues. The book can be considered as one of the best baseball books to be written. The book takes place during the 1930s-1940s and would fit into the Great Depression Era. The book discusses life in America during this era as well as the importance of baseball to society.

The Boys of Summer (1972): **The Boys of Summer** was written by Roger Kahn in 1972. The book recounts the story of young men who played baseball in the 1930s and 1940s, alongside the man who broke the color barrier Jackie Robinson. The book is about a sportswriter who covered the Brooklyn Dodgers in the 1950s and tells the stories of Jackie Robinson, Pee Wee Reese, Carl Erskine and others after their playing days were over.

This book can be used to demonstrate the impact the Jackie Robinson had on Major League Baseball as well as society as a whole. Furthermore, the book is intended for around an 8th grade reading level and tells the story of the sportswriter as he grew up in Brooklyn during this area. Therefore, the book will be suitable as it will not only provide historical information, but connect to the lives of the students directly.

Jackie Robinson: Journey to Freedom: This book was written by Tony DeMarco in 2001. This book is a biography about Jackie Robinson. The book shares the story of his childhood, athletic success in college and his journey into Major League Baseball. This book is intended for ages ten and older and is a quick read (40 pages). This book can be

used to give students a deeper understanding of who Jackie Robinson was and the impact he had on both baseball and society.

The Legend of Jesse Owens: This book was written by Hank Nuwer in 1998. The biography highlights the personal life, athletic accomplishments and career of Jesse Owens.

Jesse Owens became famous for his athletic accomplishments in track and field in both college and the Olympic Games. Owens won four gold medals at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, Germany, officially debunking Hitler's decree of the supremacy of the Aryan race.

Movie Options:

Ken Burns: Baseball: Fifth Inning: Shadow Ball: This Ken Burns documentary highlights and discusses the role of baseball in America that was released in 1993. The "Fifth Inning" of the documentary discusses baseball during the 1930s and 1940s.

Furthermore, this segment of the documentary discusses the role of baseball through the Great Depression as well as the role of the Negro Leagues and the African American community.

In addition, the entire documentary series contains nine different segments, broken up into different decades of baseball. The first inning discusses baseball's origins prior to the twentieth century. The second inning discusses baseball from 1900 to 1910 and the formation of both the American and National Leagues. The third inning highlights baseball from 1910 to 1920, specifically the Black Sox scandal of 1919. The fourth inning highlights baseball from 1920 to 1930 and the rise of Babe Ruth. The sixth inning highlights baseball from 1940 to 1950 and the role of Jackie Robinson breaking the color

barrier of Major League Baseball. The seventh inning discusses baseball from 1950 to 1960, focusing on the three great teams of New York, the New York Yankees, New York Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers. The eighth innings discusses baseball from 1960 to 1970 and the slow decline of baseball and the need for new changes in the game. The last inning, the ninth inning discusses baseball from 1970 to 1993 and the rise of player unions and free agency. Therefore, the documentary can be used throughout many historical eras that will be discussed throughout the school year and can be used to highlight the role that baseball has played in society throughout history.

The Jesse Owens Story (1984): The movie is a biopic of one of the greatest Olympic athletes of all-time.

The Jackie Robinson Story (1950): This movie is a biography of Jackie Robinson, the first African American to play in Major League Baseball.

Unit X: The United States Assumes Worldwide Responsibilities

Topic: World War II

Book Options:

Unbroken: This book was written by Laura Hillenbrand in 2010. Hillenbrand tells the story of an Olympic runner who enters World War II as an airman. Unbroken is the telling of a man's journey into extremity.

This book can be used to further demonstrate the relationship between sports and society.

In the case of **Unbroken**, Louis Zamperini is an Olympic runner who gives up his running aspirations to fight in World War II. Beyond the relationship between society and sports that is demonstrated through this book, the book is also a testament to the resilience of the human body, mind and spirit.

When Baseball Went to War: This book was written by Todd Anton in 2008. Anton tells the story of famous baseball players such as Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio, who hung up their cleats to serve their country in World War II.

Movie Options:

A League of Their Own (1992): This movie demonstrates the relationship between sports, society and women. As men enlisted in the military to fight World War II, women began playing new roles in society. One of these new roles that women found themselves in was playing baseball. The Girls Professional Baseball League was formed to keep baseball alive during the war.

Unit X: The United States Assumes Worldwide Responsibilities

Topic: The United States as the Leader of the Free World

Book Options:

Boys of Winter: Written by Wayne Coffey in 2005. Tells the story of the athletes who played for team USA during the 1980 Olympics. The story also recaps the “Miracle on Ice” where the United States defeated the heavily favored Soviet Union during the semifinals of the Olympic Games.

Movie Options:

Ali (2001): The story boxer Muhammad Ali, who evaded the draft and refused to fight during the Vietnam War, but became famous for his fights in the ring.

Express (2008): The story of Ernie Davis, the first African American to win the Heisman Trophy, the award for the best athlete in college football.

Miracle (2004): The story of the “Miracle on Ice” United States hockey victory over the Soviet Union during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY.

Unit XI: The Changing Nature of the American People from World War II to the Present

Topic: Postwar Society Characterized by Prosperity and Optimism

Book Options:

Remember the Titans: The Bill Yoast Story: The story written by Steve Sullivan in 2007, shares the story of Bill Yoast, the football coach who paired with the first African American head coach to lead the first integrated football team in Virginia to an undefeated season.

Movie Options:

Remember the Titans (2000): The story of the first integrated high school football team in Virginia during the 1970s. The story recollects the trials and tribulations that the team and the community went through after their school was forced to integrate.

Glory Road (2006): The story of Texas Western coach Don Haskins as he lead the first ever all African American starting line up to a National Championship in 1966.

Unit XI: The Changing Nature of the American People from World War II to the Present

Topic: The United States Begins a New Century

Book Options:

War Games: In the Shadow of the Twin Towers' Horror, A Metropolis Sought Solace in

Children's Sport (2001): In the first issue of Sports Illustrated published following the terrorist attacks of September 11th, this article examines the role that sports played to help society heal follow the tragic event.

Near, Yet so far the View from Mike Piazza's Balcony was Changed Forever (2001): This article published following the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, discusses the effects that the terrorist attacks had on New York City. Furthermore, the article discusses

the role Mike Piazza played following the attacks towards the volunteers and victims of the attacks.

The Boys on the Bus: To Gauge Sports Grip on us in a Time of Tragedy (2001):

Following the terrorist attacks of September 11th, professional and collegiate sports came to a halt in order to honor and mourn the mass loss of life following the attacks. Gary Smith decides to take his son to a small town high school football game on the Friday after the attacks in order to understand the role that sports play in our society following such a tragic event.

A Break in the Action: There was No Cheering in a Heartbroken Nation (2001): After the attacks of September 11th, there was some debate over whether games (professional and collegiate) should still be played. In this article, Richard Hoffer discusses the role that sports played in our society prior to the attacks and the necessity to call for a break in the action in order for the country to mourn the tragic attacks.

Even in the Wake of Tragedy, We can't Change who we are (2013): Peter King writes an article following the Boston Marathon Bombings in April, 2013, demonstrating the importance that sports plays in our society, especially after a tragic event. Unlike following the terrorist attacks of September 11th, King is calling for fans to keep going to games, whether professional or your son's soccer game, we need to continue to attend these games as they can help us heal as a nation.

A Year after Marathon Bombings, Boston is even Stronger (2014): David Ortiz, the "hero" who gave an anger-filled yet uplifting speech at the Red Sox first home game following the Marathon bombings, reflects on the way the city and the country united in the year since the attacks.

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Interview Responses

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability.

Name: Kevin Cook

1. What year were you born? About how old were you during the 1980 Winter Olympics?

I was born in 1966 and was 14 years old during the 1980 Winter Olympics.

2. Where were you living during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY?

During the 1980 Winter Olympics, I lived in Plattsburgh, NY. Plattsburgh is located about 55 miles northeast of Lake Placid.

3. How closely did you watch the 1980 Winter Olympic Games?

I recall watching many Olympic events on TV since the games' close proximity to my home town added to my interest. My home town was bustling with many visitors during the games.

4. Did you watch the hockey semi-final match between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as "The Do You Believe in Miracles Game"?

I did watch the hockey semi-final match, on TV, between the U.S. and Soviets.

5. The game wasn't broadcast live, so do you remember when and how you heard about it?

The game was broadcast live on the Canadian TV network, which we could get on our TV if we adjusted the rabbit ears just right. I don't recall if I saw the game live on CTV or if I saw a later broadcast on a U.S. network. I remember that the results of the game dominated the local and national news for quite some time.

6. What was your reaction following the game or when you heard the news of the United States victory over the Soviet Union?

I was amazed and very proud given the Soviets' historical domination of Olympic hockey and they were the strong favorite to win. The U.S. team was basically a group of college players who had to overcome the stronger, more experienced Soviet team.

7. Do you remember hearing and/ or reading about the game following the United States victory over the Soviet Union? If so, what do you remember the media discussing?

The media seemed to focus on the U.S. hockey team overcoming incredible odds and the U.S. win was truly like a miracle.

8. Do you think the victory of the men's U.S Hockey team over the Soviet Union helped unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory? Keep in

mind that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan shortly before the Olympic Games began in Lake Placid and that the United States and Soviet Union were at great odds entering the games.

The U.S. win over the Soviets seemed to unite the nation and strengthen Americans sense of nationalism and strength with respect to the Soviet Union in which we were in a “Cold War” with.

Additional Comments:

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability.

Name: Carrie Favaro

1. What year were you born? About how old were you during the 1980 Winter Olympics?

I was born in February of 1967, so I was 13.

2. Where were you living during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY?

My family lived on The Military Turnpike in Plattsburgh, NY. It is a little over an hour away from Placid.

3. How closely did you watch the 1980 Winter Olympic Games?

I attended Beekmantown Central School District and they created "Winter Break" that year so that locals could attend or be more involved with the Olympics. I'm sure I mostly watched the skiing and figure skating since those were my favorites.

4. Did you watch the hockey semi-final match between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as "The Do You Believe in Miracles Game"?

I viewed it on a TV in the mall in front of JC Penney. A whole crowd was situated around the small TV.

5. The game wasn't broadcast live, so do you remember when and how you heard about it?

I don't recall. Most likely on the local news.

6. What was your reaction following the game or when you heard the news of the United States victory over the Soviet Union?

I'm not sure I grasped the political significance of the game at that time. I really don't think I appreciated it until I was a young adult.

7. Do you remember hearing and/ or reading about the game following the United States victory over the Soviet Union? If so, what do you remember the media discussing?

No, not until a later time. I guess I knew it was a big deal, but didn't really understand why.

8. Do you think the victory of the men's U.S Hockey team over the Soviet Union helped unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory? Keep in mind that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan shortly before the Olympic Games began in Lake Placid and that the United States and Soviet Union were at great odds entering the games.

I think it definitely united our country and brought about a feeling of solidarity. I remember seeing people remain inside the stadium for hours after the game ended waving the American Flag, singing patriotic songs, and chanting "USA, USA!"

Additional Comments: My younger sister and I would trade Olympic pins with athletes and other foreigners that we would meet in the mall. We displayed them proudly on our parkas. I remember a gentleman from the USSR putting a pin in my hand and closing my fist around it. He didn't want one back. I'm sure I still have it. Also, the Coca Cola pins were a hot item at that time and my dad had an envelope of them he got from the Coca Cola reps at school. I think my sister sold one for \$100 or so, which was a lot of money back then. I have one of those too.

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability.

Name: Matt Sames

1. What year were you born? About how old were you during the 1980 Winter Olympics? 1968, and 12 years old
2. Where were you living during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY? Plattsburgh NY
3. How closely did you watch the 1980 Winter Olympic Games? Pretty closely
4. Did you watch the hockey semi-final match between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as “The Do You Believe in Miracles Game”? Yes
5. The game wasn’t broadcast live, so do you remember when and how you heard about it? On TV
6. What was your reaction following the game or when you heard the news of the United States victory over the Soviet Union? It was like David vs. Goliath because the Soviets were all professional players and our team was a bunch of college kids. Remember, the Cold War was at it’s peak. We thought they were going to bomb us, and vice versa.
7. Do you remember hearing and/ or reading about the game following the United States victory over the Soviet Union? If so, what do you remember the media discussing? It was one of the biggest sporting event achievements in US sports history!
8. Do you think the victory of the men’s U.S Hockey team over the Soviet Union helped unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory? Keep in mind that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan shortly before the Olympic Games began in Lake Placid and that the United States and Soviet Union were at great odds entering the games. It helped Americans feel good about being Americans. The ‘70s were an economic disaster and we had just had our hostages

in Iran for over a year. We needed something to feel good about, and this game provided it.

Additional Comments:

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability.

Name: Andrew Webert

1. What year were you born? About how old were you during the 1980 Winter Olympics?

1964... 16 years old

2. Where were you living during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY?

Watertown, NY

3. How closely did you watch the 1980 Winter Olympic Games?

Very Closely

4. Did you watch the hockey semi-final match between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as "The Do You Believe in Miracles Game"?

Yes I did...

5. The game wasn't broadcast live, so do you remember when and how you heard about it?

Didn't know the score beforehand... Actually didn't know I was watching it on tape delay... Thought I was watching it live.

6. What was your reaction following the game or when you heard the news of the United States victory over the Soviet Union?

Thought it was awesome... Shocked that the US held on...

7. Do you remember hearing and/ or reading about the game following the United States victory over the Soviet Union? If so, what do you remember the media discussing?

It was a huge deal... All over the news... Hockey had finally hit the big time...

8. Do you think the victory of the men's U.S Hockey team over the Soviet Union helped unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory? Keep in mind that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan shortly before the Olympic Games began in Lake Placid and that the United States and Soviet Union were at great odds entering the games.

I wasn't too invested in the political aspect...I was a hockey player and mostly just cared about the game...I was 16 and wasn't too aware of the larger ramifications

Additional Comments:

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability.

Name: Nancy Cook

1. What year were you born? About how old were you during the 1980 Winter Olympics?
1964. 15

2. Where were you living during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY?
Watertown ,NY

3. How closely did you watch the 1980 Winter Olympic Games?
I watched most of the games.

4. Did you watch the hockey semi-final match between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as “The Do You Believe in Miracles Game”?
Yes

5. The game wasn’t broadcast live, so do you remember when and how you heard about it?
We watched the game in the afternoon on the local tv station. The hockey game was the main broadcast coverage of that day.

6. What was your reaction following the game or when you heard the news of the United States victory over the Soviet Union? It was a great day for the USA. There was a lot of pride in our country being the under-dog and beating a team of professionals.

7. Do you remember hearing and/ or reading about the game following the United States victory over the Soviet Union? If so, what do you remember the media discussing?
Don’t remember

8. Do you think the victory of the men’s U.S Hockey team over the Soviet Union helped unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory? Keep in mind that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan shortly before the Olympic

Games began in Lake Placid and that the United States and Soviet Union were at great odds entering the games.

Don't know

Additional Comments:

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability.

Name:

1. What year were you born? About how old were you during the 1980 Winter Olympics?
1959 I was 21 in 1980
2. Where were you living during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY?
Queensbury NY
3. How closely did you watch the 1980 Winter Olympic Games?
I probably watched 80% of the games
4. Did you watch the hockey semi-final match between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as “The Do You Believe in Miracles Game”?
I think I saw parts of it after the game
5. The game wasn’t broadcast live, so do you remember when and how you heard about it?
It was all over the news and TV
6. What was your reaction following the game or when you heard the news of the United States victory over the Soviet Union?
It was a great thing. Everyone was celebrating, happy and proud.
7. Do you remember hearing and/ or reading about the game following the United States victory over the Soviet Union? If so, what do you remember the media discussing?
I remember the video of the team skating with the American Flag over their shoulders and all the excitement but don’t remember many specifics.
8. Do you think the victory of the men’s U.S Hockey team over the Soviet Union helped unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory? Keep in mind that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan shortly before the Olympic Games began in Lake Placid and that the United States and Soviet Union were at great odds entering the games.
I think it was a great moment to be proud to be an American that we won.

Additional Comments:

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability.

Name: Glen Buell

1. What year were you born? About how old were you during the 1980 Winter Olympics?

I was born in 1963 and was 16 years old going on 17.

2. Where were you living during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY?

I was living in Crown Point, New York which is less than an hour away from Lake Placid, New York.

3. How closely did you watch the 1980 Winter Olympic Games?

Fairly closely, but I don't remember much about it.

4. Did you watch the hockey semi-final match between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as "The Do You Believe in Miracles Game"?

No, I didn't watch the hockey game.

5. The game wasn't broadcast live, so do you remember when and how you heard about it?

I heard about it on the news on TV after the game.

6. What was your reaction following the game or when you heard the news of the United States victory over the Soviet Union?

I was very proud that we beat the Soviet Union.

7. Do you remember hearing and/ or reading about the game following the United States victory over the Soviet Union? If so, what do you remember the media discussing?

I really don't remember that much about it.

8. Do you think the victory of the men's U.S Hockey team over the Soviet Union helped unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory? Keep in mind that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan shortly before the Olympic Games began in Lake Placid and that the United States and Soviet Union were at great odds entering the games.

Yes it did.

Additional Comments:

I remember hearing about the traffic jams going into Lake Placid more than anything else. I still live in Crown Point, New York which is less than an hour from Lake Placid. I

remember people talking about it taking several hours or more to travel from Crown Point to Lake Placid during the Olympics due to the traffic jams.

Please answer all of the questions to the best of your ability.

Name: Wade White

1. What year were you born? About how old were you during the 1980 Winter Olympics? **I was born in 1960, making me 19 during the 1980 Winter Olympic Games.**
2. Where were you living during the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY? **I was attending college at Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) in Utica, NY.**
3. How closely did you watch the 1980 Winter Olympic Games? **Didn't watch much of the Games prior to the USA-USSR hockey game.**
4. Did you watch the hockey semi-final match between the United States and the Soviet Union, known as "The Do You Believe in Miracles Game"? **Yes, I did. Believe I caught the 2nd and 3rd periods.**
5. The game wasn't broadcast live, so do you remember when and how you heard about it? **Watched the game via tape delay in the MVCC Student Activities Center. There had already been rumors that "something big" had happened.**
6. What was your reaction following the game or when you heard the news of the United States victory over the Soviet Union? **Having followed hockey, was in complete shock that we had beaten what was considered the best team in the world.**
7. Do you remember hearing and/ or reading about the game following the United States victory over the Soviet Union? If so, what do you remember the media discussing? **Most people thought that when we beat the USSR, we won the gold medal. The announcers did a good job reminding viewers that the USA had to play one more game.**
8. Do you think the victory of the men's U.S Hockey team over the Soviet Union helped unite the country in a way that was not present before the victory? Keep in mind that the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan shortly before the Olympic Games began in Lake Placid and that the United States and Soviet Union were at great odds entering the games. **During the late 70s the USA was also in a severe recession, especially in the Northeast, with unemployment rates at or above 20%. I think what the USA victory did more was allow people to forget their financial troubles for a little while.**

Additional Comments: **Since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan had been a recent event, the politics were not as much in play as they were later, when multiple countries boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympic games in Moscow, and the 1984**

Summer Olympics in Los Angeles.