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# Legendary Sports Writers Of The Golden Age: Grantland Rice, Red Smith, Shirley Povich, And W. C. Heinz



## Synopsis

During the 1920s—the Golden Age of sports—sports writers gained their own recognition while covering such athletes as Babe Ruth, Bobby Jones, Jack Dempsey, and Red Grange. The top journalists of the era were the primary means by which fans learned about their favorite teams and athletes, and their popularity and importance in the sports world continued for decades. *Legendary Sports Writers of the Golden Age: Grantland Rice, Red Smith, Shirley Povich, and W. C. Heinz* details the lives and careers of four sports-writing greats and the iconic athletes and events they covered. Although these writers established themselves during the 1920s, their careers extended well into the decades that followed. They reported on Jesse Owens, Joe Louis, Sandy Koufax, Arnold Palmer, and many other stars from the 1920s and beyond. Lee Congdon examines not only the lives and careers of Rice, Smith, Povich, and Heinz, but the distinctive writing style that each of them developed. Taken together, these four writers lifted sports reporting to heights that it is unlikely to reach again. This book brings to life the greatest era in sports history, as seen through the eyes of four legendary sports writers. Sports fans, historians, and those interested in sports journalism will all find this a fascinating and informative look at a time when the sports world was at its peak.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Congdon pays tribute to the mythic influence of four sports scribes, Grantland Rice, Red Smith, Shirley Povich, and W.C. Heinz, whose readers followed their colorful commentary from the roaring

twenties to the space age. Rice, a Tennessee native whose literate columns appeared in more than 80 U.S. newspapers, became the most famous and highest-paid of all sports writers at the time. The lofty Rice standard shaped the precision of Smith, the sensitivity of Povich, and the imagination of Heinz. Highlights include Smith's coverage of the savage series of Tony Zale vs Rocky Graziano fights, Povich's depiction of the 1958 NFL Championship game between the Baltimore Colts and New York Giants as "an art form," and Heinz's novel *The Surgeon*, which inspired the 1970 Robert Altman film, *MASH*. Congdon's slender but informative homage to this quartet of newspaper legends gives readers a sense of a print world where words really mattered. (Publishers Weekly) Any book that features the sportswriting and stories of legends such as Grantland Rice, Red Smith, Shirley Povich and W. C. Heinz deserves to be read. (George Solomon, Director, The Shirley Povich Center for Sports Journalism, University of Maryland)

Lee Congdon is professor emeritus of history at James Madison University. He is the author of five books, the most recent being *Baseball and Memory: Winning, Losing, and the Remembrance of Things Past* (2011).

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