

The Chosen Game: Jewish Basketball History

When it comes to the history of basketball, there are numerous stories that highlight the talent and achievements of various communities. One such community that has left an indelible mark on the sport is the Jewish community. With a rich history that dates back to the early 1900s, Jewish basketball players have made significant contributions on and off the court.

The Pioneers: Laying the Foundation

In the early 1900s, basketball was gaining popularity across the United States, and it didn't take long for Jewish athletes to embrace the sport. The formation of Jewish basketball teams became the norm, with teams such as the "Original Celtics" making waves in the basketball world. These early pioneers laid the foundation for what would become a thriving and successful Jewish basketball community.

One such pioneer was Nat Holman, a Lithuanian-born Jewish-American who became a basketball legend. Holman not only excelled on the court but also became a renowned coach, leading the City College of New York (CCNY) to two NCAA championships in the 1950s. His impact on Jewish basketball cannot be overstated, inspiring generations of Jewish athletes to pursue their basketball dreams.

The Chosen Game: A Jewish Basketball History

by Charley Rosen (Kindle Edition)

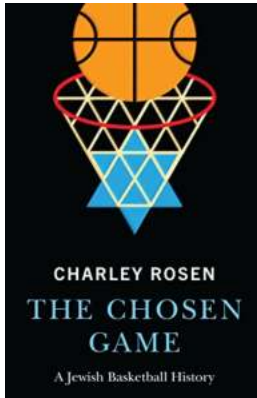
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NCAA Success and Professional Achievements

As the popularity of basketball grew, Jewish athletes began making their mark in the collegiate and professional arenas. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Long Island University (LIU) Blackbirds, led by Jewish players such as All-American Irwin Dambrot, achieved great success, winning multiple championships and becoming a dominant force in college basketball.

On the professional front, Jews had a significant presence as both players and owners. Teams like the Boston Celtics and Philadelphia Warriors featured Jewish players who became household names, including Red Auerbach and Eddie Gottlieb. Auerbach, in particular, made history as the first NBA coach to win nine championships, leaving an indelible mark on the league.

Impact Beyond the Court

While the on-court achievements of Jewish basketball players are remarkable, their impact off the court is equally significant. Jewish players, coaches, and owners have dedicated themselves to philanthropy and social justice causes, using their platform to make a positive difference in society.

David Stern, the former commissioner of the NBA, played a pivotal role in expanding the league's global reach and promoting diversity within the sport. His leadership helped basketball become a truly international game, welcoming players from all backgrounds and cultures.

Furthermore, Jewish basketball organizations and leagues have emerged worldwide, providing opportunities for Jewish athletes to pursue their passion for the sport. These organizations promote camaraderie, cultural exchange, and build bridges between communities.

The Chosen Game: Celebrating Jewish Basketball Heritage

The heritage of Jewish basketball is celebrated through various annual events and initiatives. One such event is the Maccabi Games, an international Jewish sports competition that showcases the talents of Jewish athletes from around the world. This event fosters a sense of pride and unity among Jewish communities, while also promoting friendly competition and sportsmanship.

Additionally, documentaries and books have been dedicated to documenting Jewish basketball history. These resources shed light on the achievements and challenges faced by Jewish athletes, providing a comprehensive view of their contribution to the sport.

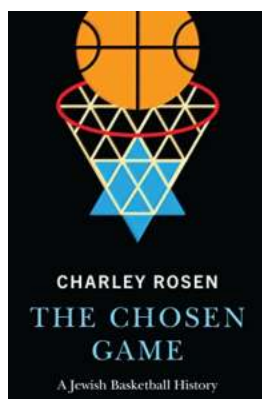
Looking Ahead: The Future of Jewish Basketball

As we look to the future, the legacy of Jewish basketball players will undoubtedly continue to thrive. With aspiring young athletes following in the footsteps of their predecessors, the Jewish basketball community will remain a vital part of the sport.

Furthermore, with the ongoing efforts to promote diversity and inclusivity in basketball, Jewish players will continue to play an influential role in shaping the game both on and off the court.

In

The history of Jewish basketball is a testament to the passion, talent, and resilience of Jewish athletes. From the pioneers who paved the way to the current generation making their mark, the Jewish basketball community has left an indelible impact on the sport. Through their achievements and dedication, they have not only elevated the sport but also used it as a platform for social change and unity.



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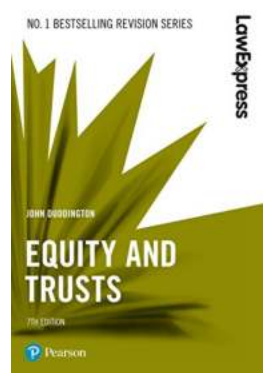


A few years after its invention by James Naismith, basketball became the primary sport in the crowded streets of the Jewish neighborhood on New York's Lower East Side. Participating in the new game was a quick and enjoyable way to become Americanized. Jews not only dominated the sport for the next fifty-plus years but were also instrumental in modernizing the game.

Barney Sedran was considered the best player in the country at the City College of New York from 1909 to 1911. In 1927 Abe Saperstein took over management of the Harlem Globetrotters, playing a key role in popularizing and integrating the game. Later he helped found the American Basketball Association and introduced the three-point shot. More recently, Nancy Lieberman played in a men's pro summer league and became the first woman to coach a men's pro team, and Larry Brown became the only coach to win both NCAA and the NBA championships.

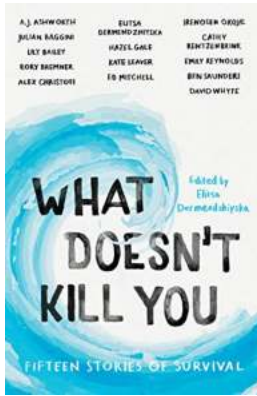
While the influence of Jewish players, referees, coaches, and administrators has gradually diminished since the mid-1950s, the current basketball scene features numerous Jews in important positions.

Through interviews and lively anecdotes from franchise owners, coaches, players, and referees, *The Chosen Game* explores the contribution of Jews to the evolution of present-day pro basketball.



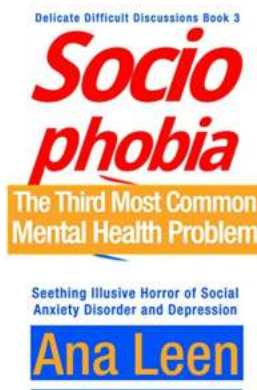
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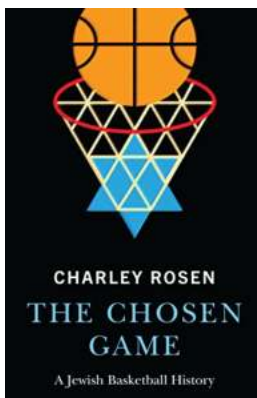
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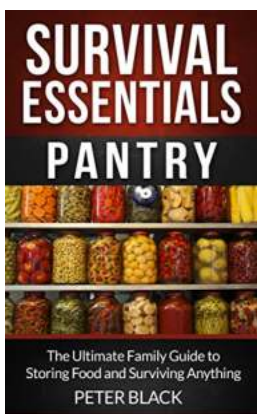
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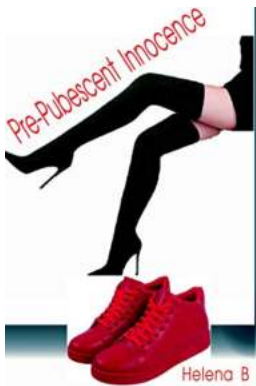
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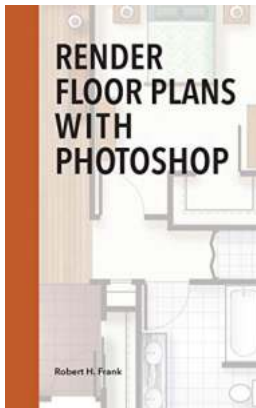
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