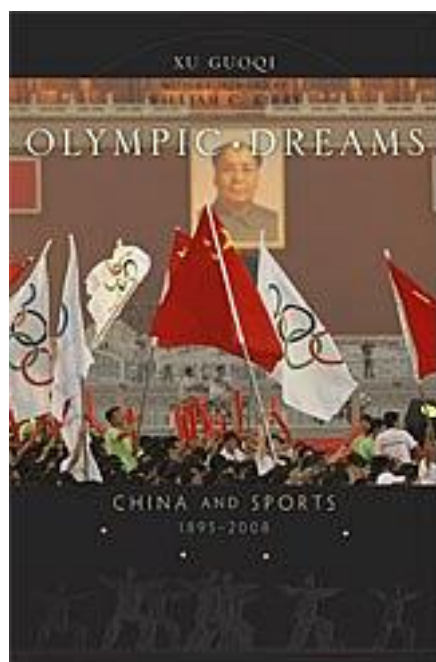


# Olympic Dreams



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Already the world has seen the political, economic, and cultural significance of hosting the 2008 Olympics in Beijing - in policies instituted and altered, positions softened, projects undertaken. But will the Olympics make a lasting difference? This book approaches questions about the nature and future of China through the lens of sports - particularly as sports finds its utmost international expression in the Olympics. Drawing on newly available archival sources to analyze a hundred-year perspective on sports in China, "Olympic Dreams" explores why the country became obsessed with Western sports at the turn of the twentieth century, and how it relates to China's search for a national and international identity. Through case studies of ping-pong diplomacy and the Chinese handling of various sporting events, the book offers unexpected details

and unusual insight into the patterns and processes of China's foreign policymaking - insights that will help readers understand China's interactions with the rest of the world. Among the questions Xu Guoqi brings to the fore are: Why did Mao Zedong choose competitive ping-pong to manipulate world politics? How did the two-China issue nearly kill the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games? And why do the 2008 Olympics present Beijing with unprecedented dangers and opportunities? In exploring these questions, Xu brilliantly articulates a fresh and surprising perspective on China as an international sport superpower as well as a new "sick man of East Asia." In "Olympic Dreams", he presents an eloquent argument that in the deeply unsettled China of today, sport, as a focus of popular interest, has the capacity to bring about major social changes.

作者介绍:

A review from Edward Cody

The Chinese government has said over and over in the last few months that the Beijing Olympics should not be politicized. The uproar over Tibet has no place in the Games, officials insist. Nor do humanitarian concerns over Sudan's Darfur region belong in the Olympic spotlight. As for human rights in China itself, well, that's an internal matter.

Yet, politics have long been at the heart of China's relations with the modern Olympic movement, as Xu Guoqi, an associate professor at Kalamazoo College, shows in his illuminating history, *Olympic Dreams*. The first time China participated in the Games, in 1932 at Los Angeles, the goal was to prevent Japan from scoring a propaganda coup. Japanese occupation authorities had planned to dispatch a stocky Chinese sprinter named Liu Changchun to represent the Manchukuo republic, the puppet state Japan had set up in Manchuria and Mongolia. To foil that plan, China's Nationalist government hurriedly scraped together some money and sent Liu as a one-man Chinese delegation. He fared poorly as a sprinter but held high the Chinese flag.

Later on, Mao Zedong saw sports victories as a way to prove the superiority of the socialist way. On advice from the U.S.S.R., China cultivated national teams. But during the first two decades of Communist rule, China kept its athletes out of the Olympics to protest Taiwan's participation. (More recently, both China and Taiwan have sent teams under artful compromises over the island's name.)

When Mao decided the time had come to make friends in the West, he also found sports a handy tool for that purpose. Mao and President Nixon had been exchanging secret messages through intermediaries for months before the Chinese sent a team to the World Table Tennis Championship in Japan in April 1971. As Xu relates, Zhou En-lai, who was in charge of foreign relations, issued detailed instructions to the Chinese players on what to do if they met Americans. "The Chinese were not permitted to exchange team flags," for example, but they "could shake hands," Xu notes. When American player Glenn Cowan jumped on a Chinese bus to greet Chinese star Zhuang Zedong, Zhuang was ready with a silk painting to present as a gift. Mao then gave the order for the Chinese players to invite the U.S. team to China; by the end of the month, the Americans had alighted in Beijing. "The small ping-pong ball, worth only about 25 cents, played a unique and significant role . . . in transforming Sino-U.S. relations," Xu concludes.

Even before Mao, sports had played an eminently political role in China. Chinese nationalists in the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw athletics as a way to create

vigorous men who could wage war and change the country's reputation as the "sick man of east Asia." As part of the national revival they hoped to foster, they embraced Western sports to counter the Mandarin paradigm of Chinese men as spindly, sedentary and effete.

Despite the reformers' efforts, to some degree the old paradigm has remained alive. Traditionally, most Chinese have been brought up to think they should be clever, disciplined and able to bear hardship, but not powerful or swift. Because Yao Ming's jousts with fellow NBA giants and Liu Xiang's triumph in the 110-meter hurdles at the 2004 Athens Olympics shattered racial stereotypes, they were hailed as breakthroughs by a new generation of Chinese. The 2008 Beijing Olympics, where China hopes to win more medals than any other nation, also was intended to have a political message.

Since abandoning doctrinaire socialism three decades ago, China has enjoyed an economic explosion that has given its 1.3 billion people a standard of living their parents could hardly imagine, and the government has entered into normal relations with most countries, becoming a diplomatic as well as an economic player in Asia and beyond. By hosting the Games, China was going to celebrate this status. Perhaps more important, it was going to receive international recognition of its achievements and, in some measure, acceptance of the Communist Party's glacial pace toward political change.

Xu's misfortune, and China's, is that this landscape, which he ably paints in his final chapter, shifted not long after the manuscript was sent to the printer. Riots in Tibet and protests along the Olympic Torch relay route created a global audience for questions about China's worthiness to host the Olympics. The atmosphere has soured badly, and no one knows whether it can be repaired before the Games begin in August.

The May 12 earthquake in Sichuan also will affect the Olympics. A country in mourning, China is likely to attract sympathy. But sorrow may change the tone of the event. Xu's history of China's participation in the Olympics remains enlightening, but the unsettled 2008 Games have become the stuff of journalism, changing every day.

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Conclusion

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## 评论

粗略翻了翻，感觉内容比较简单基本成为体育大事件回顾编年史。argument也有新瓶装旧酒之嫌。截止到08奥运颇有“蹭热度”感觉。

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读了前两章，介绍了“体育”在近代中国的兴起和中国的奥运政治，史实为主，不过也没有特别多的细节，线条比较粗

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## 书评

2008年，我还是一个初中刚毕业的小屁孩。那年的夏天，因为北京奥运会的举办而特别了起来。开幕式前的那些日子，电视台每天都会滚动播放有关奥运的节目，其中印象

深刻的有92巴萨罗那奥运点火是用弓箭射向火炬台点燃的。而且因为初二的时候喜欢上了篮球，在这个暑假还在小本子上...

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徐国琦毕业于哈佛大学历史系，现任教于香港大学历史系，擅长国际关系史尤其中美关系史的研究。今年早前“理想国”引进了他的《中国人与美国人》，探讨晚清迄今的中美文化交流历史，全书分三部分，其中第三部分是“由体育运动而产生的共有外交旅程”，点出了体育与外交的微妙关...

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