Kaliss, Gregory J. *Beyond the Black Power Salute: Athletic Activism in an Era of Change*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2023. 248 pages. Photos, Chapter Notes, Bibliography, Index. Hardcover, $110. Paperback, $24.95. E-book available.

Reviewed by Richard C. Crepeau

The Sixties were a decade of considerable political and social activism in Sport across the globe. In this well-written volume, Gregory J. Kaliss analyses not only the defining moments of activism beginning at the 1968 Olympic Games, but takes the analysis across the next several decades. The book is divided into five chapters plus an introduction and conclusion. Each of the five chapters focuses on one particular area of sport and protest.

Chapter One addresses what Kaliss terms the economics of sports and the contribution of sport to economic uplift. Pointing out that the protests at the Mexico City Olympics had an economic component, Kaliss moves to such other examples as Jim Brown’s Black Economic Union, issues of equal pay for women in tennis, and what he sees as the limitations inherent in the acceptance of free market capitalism.

In Chapter Two the issue of women’s rights is the focus. Kaliss examines women’s running and the push for acceptance socially along with equality of access. The battle to gain entry for women into the Boston Marathon is the vehicle used to examine the issue. Equality of access generally provides the underlying context along with the social sanctions faced by women who run.

Chapter Three turns to college athletics and the growth of African American activism. The Mexico City Olympics and the emergence of Muhammed Ali as the leading activist are the initial focal points. The NCAA provides a case study for abuse of athletes, as does the ordeal of Charlie Scott the first African American basketball player at the University of North Carolina. Scott is caught between the pressures coming from the basketball culture and the Black Power movement on campus and what each expects of Scott. The case of the Wyoming 14 concludes this chapter.

In Chapter Four Kaliss offers a very interesting analysis of the Joe Frazier/Muhammed Ali rivalry and how Ali was able to brand Frazier as an “Uncle Tom.” This leads Kaliss into a discussion of the role of the African American athlete as “Gladiator” and the debate over the definitions of “manhood.”

Chapter Five may just be the most creative chapter in the book. Here Kaliss looks at the history of the American Basketball Association as a reflection of Hip-Hop Culture or perhaps even an origin point for Hip-Hop. He argues that the ABA basketball style comes out of the New York playground games, featuring the slam dunk and “an African American aesthetic rooted in rhythmic sophistication, personal style, and improvisation.” (p.16) The connections made in this chapter draw from multiple locations across a wide span of African American popular culture, and some of best known of the ABA stars with Dr. J the archetype.

The conclusion features an examination of the Curt Flood Case and the limitations found in the results of Athletic Activism. The analysis of the Flood Case lacks a full understanding of the details of the case and the issues surrounding the challenge to free-agency. There are other minor points in the book that come under the category of nit-picking.

Overall, this is a wonderful piece of work spanning the historical landscape of the last seven decades. Anyone even remotely interested any of the issues raised within Kaliss’ analysis should put *Beyond the Black Power Salute* at the very top of their reading list.