

WHAT ELSE?

Believe it or not, there are other interesting sports newsletters, magazines, services, and so forth out there. The problem is that unless you happen to run smack into one, you probably won't know about it. And even if you overhear someone casually mention it, he probably won't have the address or remember what it costs, or be able to explain why it's a great thing to find in a mail box.

In it's never-ending search for truth, justice, and what-have-you, The Coffin Corner will set aside a page each issue for purveyors of such newsletters, etc. to tell us about their wares. If you have a sports newsletter, why not send us 500 words telling us all about it? It doesn't have to be football; many of our members are interested in baseball, basketball, hockey, tennis, golf, hurling, or nude volleyball.

We'll start with an interesting little paper that reviews sportsbooks.

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THE SPORTSBOOK FILE

Sports fans who want to get inside the story, past the headlines, past the articles, even past the magazine features, have another option – sports books. Hundreds are written each year. They can be as high a subject profile as Nolan Ryan (at least three on him last year alone) to as specialized as how to fly fish or how to cheer your team on in Latin! One man serves as a clearinghouse for the sports book field and disseminates the information in a bi-monthly newsletter. **Barry Mandell** has published *The SportsBook File* for almost two years. During that time he has read hundreds of books from about 50 different publishers. He writes about many of these books, about 20 each issue.

"Most of the books are about baseball," says Mandell. "There are so many published and most of my subscribers are big baseball fans. But basketball and football books are popular, too, especially during those sports' seasons." In his ten issues to date, he's written about 100 baseball book reviews, 20 football and basketball reviews each, and a smattering of other sports – including boxing, auto racing, tennis, golf, hockey, fly fishing, even white water rafting. And, in a separate category, college athletics. There have been sports almanacs, encyclopedias, and fact stat books; biographies, how-tos, and novels; team histories, team seasons, and dream seasons. "Frankly, some sports books never make it in the newsletter," says Mandell. "There may be a glut during some seasons, or some just won't have a high interest level for my readers, such as one I received recently called *High Intensity Weight Training*, or another about talking sports in Latin. I did have a 'Worthy of Mention' section that listed other titles, but with my newer format I can't fit that. However, periodically I'll be putting out a separate addendum to the newsletter, so I will list the titles and give a 4-sentence blurb about books you'd probably never want to read." (First one coming out in March-April.)

The newsletter is 12 pages, has no advertising, comes out six times a year, and is \$15 for a subscription. Each profile runs about 500 words, and includes all necessary information – publisher, price, size, photo information, number of pages, even the ISBN code. Following each review is a comment section, author information, and a star rating. Page one is a member-oriented page that allows subscribers to publicize their own sports related projects. There is a trivia contest each issue with prizes awarded. "It is a labor of love for me," says Mandell. "I certainly am not making any money. I love to read and collect sports books, and I love to write. I get to communicate with people all over the country and find out what interests they have and the projects they're working on. And the books are so stimulating. Once in a while I get a clunker, but I let the readers know."

To subscribe, send a check for \$15 to *The SportsBook File*, 1069 Alexander Drive, Rotterdam Jct., NY 12150. Telephone (518) 887-2768.