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Marty Glickman. *The Fastest Kid on the Block: The Marty Glickman Story.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996. x + 201 pp. $24.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8156-0393-1.

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The Fastest Kid on the Block: The Marty Glickman Story

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The Fastest Kid on the Block chronicles the life of Marty Glickman, a 1936 Olympian and well-known radio and television broadcaster. Through the book's autobiographical form, readers learn immediately about Glickman's Olympic experience. This experience lays the basis for his adult life, and for the rest of the book.

While many people are aware of Jesse Owens' spectacular showing at the 1936 Berlin Games, few have in-depth knowledge regarding the events of the United States Olympic Track and Field team. After qualifying for the 4 x 100 relay team at the Olympic trials, Marty Glickman and Sam Stollar, both Jewish athletes, were denied their opportunity to compete in the event in Berlin. The morning of the race, the sprinters were told by coaches Lawson Robertson and Dean Cromwell that the Germans were hiding their best sprinters. Jesse Owens and Ralph Metcalf replaced Glickman and Stollar on the relay team. The United States won the event by 15 yards, in a record-setting performance of 39.8 seconds. Glickman analyzes the event, noting: 1) the potential anti-Semitic attitude of Dean Cromwell and Avery Brundage, president of both the United States Olympic Committee and the Amateur Athletic Union, 2) the effect of the experience on Sam Stollar's life, and 3) the lifelong friendship which developed between Glickman and Owens.

The book continues in a chronological format, from Glickman's youth and early involvement in high school and college sports, through his career as a sports broadcaster for the New York Knickerbockers, New York Giants, New York Jets, and HBO Sports. Born in the Bronx at the end of World War I, Marty Glickman's youth revolved around sports. Unlike other parents who stressed studying, Harry and Molly Glickman supported their son's sporting interests. Marty made several all-scholastic teams in football and track while at Madison High School, and set New York State records for the 100-yard dash. Recruited by West Virginia, Yale, and Syracuse, Glickman chose Syracuse after receiving financial support from five alumni. Nonetheless, he lived in the wrestling room with four other athletes during the first semester of his freshman year. Despite receiving athletic scholarships the next three years, he worked odd jobs throughout college to make ends meet. He starred on the football and track teams at Syracuse, and came to know Wilmeth Sidat-Singh. With little contact with blacks prior to college, Glickman felt bad about not speaking up when Singh was benched due to his skin color. Glickman notes that athletic director, Lew Andreas, had a bad reputation among blacks at Syracuse. After a Syracuse football win over Cornell University, Glickman was asked to do a 15-minute radio broadcast, which would be the beginning of his career.

Though he played one year of professional football for the Jersey Giants (a farm team for the New York Giants), Glickman was more interested in a career in broadcasting. Radio sports broadcasting began in the early 1920s, and televised broadcasts of sporting events in the late 1930s. After one year of gopher work without pay at WHN with Dick Fishell and Bert Lee, Glickman began broadcasting indoor track meets and ice hockey games for WMCA and WHN in 1940. He is possibly the first former athlete to make a career of sports broadcasting. Glickman's beginnings led him to prepare and broadcast "Today's Baseball," a show presenting dramatic recreations of professional games played earlier in the day. He admired Red Barber and said his "relationship to Red was that of an acolyte to a master." Basketball was Glickman's first love, as far as broadcasting was concerned, and he felt this was where he could make his mark.

Glickman's reputation as a basketball announcer spread and he became "the voice of basketball." His first big basketball tournament was the NIT in 1946. Over the next several years, he broadcast games with Nat Holman, Clair Bee, and Joe Lapchick. "The Garden was the focus

of the basketball world, and I was in the middle of it," he explains. Prior to a game, Glickman spent a lot of time early in the day watching the teams practice, and getting to know the individual players and coaches. When news of the college basketball scandals broke in the late 1940s, he knew gambling was taking place but didn't want to believe it. Gambling had affected his own life, as his father had gambled and caused hardship for the family. Glickman never spoke about gambling on the air.

Glickman's Jewish culture did affect his place in society and, eventually, his potential sports broadcasting jobs. Though never wishing to emphasize anti-Semitism as an excuse, Glickman refused to change his name, when asked, out of respect for his father. He also remembered a time early in his career when he was not allowed to workout at the New York Athletic Club because he was Jewish. Fifty years later, however, he was an invited guest of honor at the same establishment. In the 1950s, Glickman introduced Maurice Podoloff, owner of the Knickerbockers, to Tom Galley of NBC television. To his surprise, Glickman was dropped by NBC, and he felt this was due to his Jewish heritage; Podoloff feared the appearance of too many Jewish people in control, so Glickman was out. Glickman also assisted Roone Arledge, who took a job as a producer for sport shows on ABC. He was again disappointed when ABC obtained the rights to NBA games and Chris Schenkel was selected as the announcer.

Glickman began broadcasting Giants football games on WHN radio in 1948 and continued for twenty-three years. He worked with Chris Schenkel, who went on to television in the early 1950s. Though friendships developed between players, coaches, broadcasters, and the media in the early days, the privacy of people was respected, unlike today. Yet Glickman did not consider himself a "houseman," one who rooted solely for the team he broadcast. One player for the Giants was Frank Gifford, who went on to WCBS radio and CBS television broadcasting. In the early 1970s Glickman left the Giants and WNEW for the Jets and WOR. WNEW replaced Glickman with Marv Albert, whom Glickman had worked with. Glickman lost the Jets radio assignment in 1977 when rights reverted back to CBS, but returned in 1988 at age 71. He retired again after the Jets/Saints game in December 1992. Glickman had fun broadcasting games and he felt like he was part of the teams he came to know–the Knicks, Giants, and Jets. To him, broadcasting was like playing the game, and he enjoyed coaching novice announcers. So, how does Marty Glickman feel about sports today? Glickman dislikes the distortion of values in society that have come with the increase in money and believes that athletes should not make more money than what they contribute to society. He disagrees with the commercialization and big-business aspect of sport. Glickman supports the philosophy of Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the Modern Olympic Games: The most important thing is taking part, i.e, sportsmanship and brotherhood. Yet Glickman no longer supports the Olympic movement, as professionalization and money have taken precedence over sport. He believes the Olympics will soon die out.

At the end of the book, the author includes a fifteen-page, three part section, entitled "A Sports Primer," written for those who are interested in the field of broadcasting. In "Guru Glickman's Primer," tips for broadcasters and analysts include knowing the game and the people involved, giving meaning to words, deleting petty information, and keeping it simple. Perseverance is stressed in his section on "Tips for Beginners." Glickman offers his opinion on thirty sports broadcasters in his final section, "The Broadcasters," ranking Marv Albert, Mary Carilo, Bob Costas, Dick Enberg, Brent Musburger, and Hannah Storm among the best.

Throughout the book, readers feel as though they are sitting down and listening to Marty Glickman himself, as the author writes as if he is in conversation. The text frequently tangents from the main story, which at times can be confusing with the amount of names and events that are presented. Many comments give insight but are inserted with little relevance to the topic of the section or chapter. Yet, one also learns about the intricate networking, politics, and discrimination involved in the business of sport. Glickman states his opinions and feelings about people without reserve or apology, such as his dislike for Howard Cosell and his negative opinion of early female broadcasters (he claims that Gussie Moran was "cute but sports dumb" and that using women to broadcast football games is just a publicity stunt). Through his constant name-dropping readers receive a history lesson within a lesson. For example, Glickman describes how college football rules have changed and offers his opinion as to why the earlier rules were more beneficial. He also includes some history of radio and television broadcasting and discusses several early broadcasters. Though Glickman states that he didn't let the Olympic incident get him down, it is evident that it affected his career and the way he led his life. *The Fastest Kid on the Block* is Glickman's story, his justification of value in the world of sport. Denied the opportunity to prove himself on the track, Marty Glickman took to the air.

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