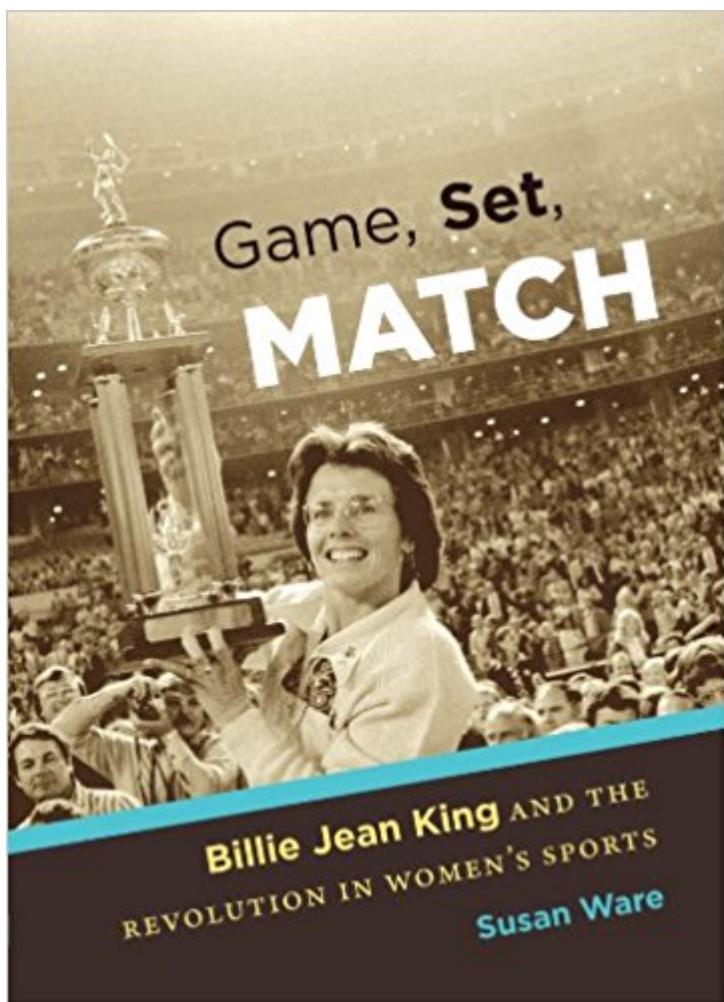


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# Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King And The Revolution In Women's Sports



## **Synopsis**

When Billie Jean King trounced Bobby Riggs in tennis's "Battle of the Sexes" in 1973, she placed sports squarely at the center of a national debate about gender equity. In this winning combination of biography and history, Susan Ware argues that King's challenge to sexism, the supportive climate of second-wave feminism, and the legislative clout of Title IX sparked a women's sports revolution in the 1970s that fundamentally reshaped American society. While King did not single-handedly cause the revolution in women's sports, she quickly became one of its most enduring symbols, as did Title IX, a federal law that was initially passed in 1972 to attack sex discrimination in educational institutions but had its greatest impact by opening opportunities for women in sports. King's place in tennis history is secure, and now, with *Game, Set, Match*, she can take her rightful place as a key player in the history of feminism as well. By linking the stories of King and Title IX, Ware explains why women's sports took off in the 1970s and demonstrates how giving women a sporting chance has permanently changed American life on and off the playing field.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

In 1973, Billie Jean King, then the best female tennis player in the world, defeated fiftysomething Bobby Riggs before a national television audience in the so-called Battle of the Sexes. It was a symbolic victory and proved to be the catalyst for a tremendous growth spurt in women's competitive sports. By the late seventies, women's participation in high-school and intercollegiate sports had skyrocketed. Ware, a scholar specializing in women's history, presents

both a biography of King and a chronological history of women's sports. She smoothly segues between chapters on King and chapters on the sociological landscape in which women compete. The King chapters are fascinating, particularly Ware's exploration of King's commitment to advancing women's tennis, but the best parts of the book deal with the larger issues of sports, especially the legislative battles to pass Title IX (guaranteeing equality in funding women's intercollegiate sports) and the struggle to implement it. An extraordinarily illuminating account of the history of women's sports. --Wes Lukowsky

[A] winning combination of biography and social history.--VogueA great read. . . . Ware sews together the histories of women's sports and feminism, using feminist icon Billie Jean King as the thread. Particularly compelling is her recounting of the tennis star's battle with her own homophobia and that of society.--Ms.[An] important book on Islamic education in West Africa.--ChoiceThe value of this book is its readability and its innovative use of King as a central figure to bring the history of women's sports to life. Recommended. All readers." --ChoiceIn Game, Set, Match: Billie Jean King and the Revolution in Women's Sports, the role of a pioneer and much of the leveling legislation she inspired--namely the NCAA's title IX provisions--is gamely told by women's history scholar Susan Ware.--Publishers WeeklyIf you read one book, make it: Game, Set, Match. . . . As Susan Ware's biography of her shows, King's fight against sexism in sports might be her biggest accomplishment.--ShapeA Publishers Weekly Top 10 Sports Book."Ware mixes strong writing with poignant insights from an array of sources to give us an idea of how King's tenacity and spiritedness not only enabled her get to the top of the tennis world but also helped her put women's tennis on par with the men's game.--Journal of American HistoryWare is a master of the art of biography, and, with this book, she once again shows its importance to the discipline of history.--The HistorianWare's view of history should be read by women of all ages--those who lived through it and survived it as well as (perhaps especially) the younger ones who benefited by it.--Story Circle Book ReviewsA book that works on multiple levels. . . . Cogently argues that the passage of Title IX may actually have impeded the creation of a level playing field. It's a tribute to how much has changed that much of the book's content will be shocking to readers under 30; it's also a measure of how much remains to be done, given the 'separate but equal' approach that still dominates sports today.--Kirkus ReviewsWare's view of history as seen through the prism of Billie Jean King and Title IX should be read by women of all ages.--Louisiana HistoryGame, Set, Match provides a window into the life of one of the most successful athletes of all time and her profound impact on women today.--American Association of University WomenWare astutely places King at the vortex of the

change in women's rights, gay causes . . . and sports professionalism, leaving no doubt about King's place in 20th-century women's sports.--Library Journal Well-written and -researched. . . . The book matters precisely because it digs into the messy, even uneasy relationships between King and women's liberation leaders, and more broadly, between advocates for women's athletics and second-wave feminists, bringing together histories that have for too long been considered separately." --Women's Review of Books

Informative, thorough and well written. It is a must read. Jaw dropping to learn what has and is going on in the sport's world especially for women.

This books delves much deeper into society than just tennis. It looks at the politics behind women's sports and education in America. Kinda droll at times, but exciting at others.

Not my favorite tennis book. Just OK. Not convince that Billie Jean was domineering for women's tennis. Nor, deserving of a stadium named after her. Just my opinion

How quickly we forget what we didn't have back in the day--equal rights! Ware's book reminds us of how hard Billie Jean King and other feminists fought to bring the social consciousness into the reality of female discrimination. My generation--the 50s girls--were called tomboys if we liked sports. We didn't have the opportunities that girls and women of the Title IX generation do. They take for granted that competing in sports is something that you do because you want to. There may have been worse forms of prejudice (socially) in the U.S., but there is no sharper example of inequity than that which operated against girls and women who took part or wished to take part in competitive sports. School administrators were not necessarily opposed to women's sports as long as they could do it without cutting into programs for men. Normally those in charge of making these decisions were men. In 1973, Billie Jean King was the right feminist in the right sport at the right moment in American history. Her match against Bobby Riggs cemented her stature as America's first female sports superstar. She proved that women did not choke, were not frail and weak, and could face pressure and take it. In a single tennis match, Billie Jean was able to do more for the cause of women than most feminists can achieve in a lifetime. To this day, strangers, especially women, still approach Billie Jean to tell her that the match changed their lives. She moved beyond just tennis to become a symbol for something even bigger: women's rights and women's changing role in society. Billie Jean appears in every chapter of Ware's book, but sometimes only in a

supporting role--it shows where her story and that of Title IX converge--working toward eradicating all forms of discrimination in careers, personal lifestyles, and athletics. She wanted little girls to dare to dream of equal-opportunity and offered her career as a model and an inspiration. In 1990 Life magazine named her one of the hundred most influential people of the twentieth century. Now the dilemma of modern feminism is how to recognize and embrace difference while also seeking formal equality. One of the major tenets is freedom of choice--women should be free to pursue any life courses they choose unencumbered by stereotypes or traditional gender expectations--in sports or any other areas. There is a tendency now to dismiss feminism as a relic of the past, to talk about the amazing opportunities girls have these days, to act as if the revolution is over and the mission accomplished. Well, it isn't. Ware's view of history should be read by women of all ages--those who lived through it and survived as well as (perhaps especially) the younger ones who benefited by it.

by Doris Anne Roop-Benner for Story Circle Book Reviews

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