



Give and Go: Basketball as a Cultural Practice

Thomas Mc Laughlin

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A pickup basketball player looks at the pickup game as a distinctive culture using both personal experience and cultural studies theory.

From the city courts of Harlem to the church halls of Indiana, pickup basketball culture is intensely local and reflects the histories and identities of its players. In Give and Go, Thomas Mc Laughlin examines how players put into play a loose set of values and ethical styles that influence how they think, feel, move, and relate to others within the community. A lifelong pickup ball player—one of modest skills but serious intent—Mc Laughlin has internalized and embodied the culture of the game, and he writes as a participant in the basketball community, putting into words what his body already knows. This book reflects the author's personal experience and observation of the game, through the lens of contemporary cultural theory, and also examines the representation of basketball culture in popular media, including the films Hoop Dreams, Hoosiers, and White Men Can't Jump. As only an insider can, Mc Laughlin takes readers onto the court and into the minds of players as they negotiate the culture of the game.

Thomas Mc Laughlin is Professor of English at Appalachian State University and the author of several books, including Street Smarts and Critical Theory: Listening to the Vernacular.



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