

Alex Kupfer

# Sporting Labor in the Hollywood Studio System: Basketball, Universal Pictures, and the 1936 Berlin Olympics

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## Abstract

This paper examines basketball teams sponsored by motion picture exhibitors and studios between the 1910s and 1930s. Basketball teams were a popular means for employees to partake in physical exercise and a way for theater owners to bolster their theatrical programs. In 1934, Universal Pictures was the first studio to establish a “varsity” team of elite former collegiate stars. Their positions in the company combined elements of labor and public performance, as the basketball players were also hired as workers in areas such as the electrical or camera departments. The distinction between compensated and uncompensated labor was blurred far more frequently for these player-laborers than other studio employees. Most notably, to promote Universal’s *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), the team’s center would come out before games dressed as the monster and perform for the crowd. Top-level basketball in the film industry was only supported for a limited period. After the team was selected to represent the United States at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, what should have been the culmination of the team’s success turned into controversy. Instead, studio founder Carl Laemmle withdrew his financial support for the team and disbanded the team. The history of Hollywood basketball teams serves as an important reminder of the long history of convergence between sport and cinema as well as the prominent role that athletics played in defining the cultural experience of working in the film industry for many below-the-line workers.

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Well before Ted Turner started broadcasting games featuring his Atlanta Braves baseball team on his television “superstation” and the Disney-owned and branded Mighty Ducks of Anaheim entered the National Hockey League, Hollywood studios developed a keen interest in sports. A number of scholarly works have explored the relationship between sports history, film studies, and social history, taking early boxing films as their object of study.<sup>1</sup> Dan Streible notes these motion pictures “elucidate how commercial cinema and professional sport were part of a shared social and cultural experience.”<sup>2</sup> The critical examination of the intersection of sport and cinema in the first decades of the twentieth century has focused on the movies that were produced or their reception by moviegoers. However, the social and cultural experience of sports and movies throughout the twentieth-century also extended to the frequent participation in athletics by many within the film industry. This paper examines the

relationship between these entertainment industries by considering how the Hollywood studio system used sports as both performance and labor through sponsored basketball teams.

Starting in the early 1910s, motion picture studios, exhibitors, and distributors began their foray into athletics by sponsoring teams, particularly for basketball, for their employees. Film industry concerns sponsored three types of basketball teams between the 1910s and 1930s. First, there were teams of below-the-line employees and office workers which emphasized the promotion of physical fitness and the development of relationships within an institutional structure characterized by the rigid and hierarchal division of labor. Second, combining elements of play and work, in the 1920s and 1930s live basketball games pitting teams of employees served as box office attractions for local theaters. While the employees were public performers, these games were non-competitive demonstrations of the

sport.

In the early 1930s, Hollywood studios began to form a third type of team, composed of former collegiate stars, which were nicknamed “varsity” squad. Unlike other sponsored teams in the industry, the varsity emphasized winning first and foremost. Travelling the country, these squads competed against top teams in the country as part of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). In an era before professional basketball had taken hold in most of the country, individuals competing after college even at the highest levels of the sport typically played as amateurs. Although team members were recruited for their basketball prowess, they were also hired as laborers on the lots and were given below-the-line positions in areas such as the electrical or camera departments. This illustrates how easily lines between compensated and uncompensated labor were blurred in the film industry. This was because under the AAU regulations, players could not be directly compensated for their athletic skills. Employees of many studios were some of the best basketball players in the country during this period and among the most conspicuous off-screen performers in Hollywood. This narrative brings to light the lengthy history of the relationship between sports and media industries as well as the way that the intersection of labor and performance has defined the experience of working in Hollywood for amateur athletes.

As a case study, this paper focuses on the most prominent team, sponsored by Universal beginning in 1934. The Universal squad was the first to achieve national recognition and garnered the most extensive coverage in newspapers and trades. They were certainly not the only elite team in the movie industry. Twentieth Century-Fox, MGM, RKO, United Artists, and Columbia also sponsored competitive basketball teams during this period. Historian Adolph H. Grundman explains that large corporations viewed basketball as a part of an activities program to bolster company morale and market their products. Despite being chronically short on cash during the Depression, Universal offered its basketball recruits a program that combined athletic training, a high level of competition, and the opportunity to enter the film industry.<sup>3</sup> Success came quickly for the Universal team, and only a couple of years after the team was

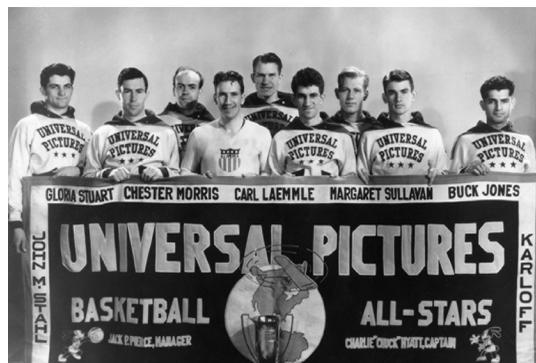


Fig. 1: Universal Pictures basketball team in 1935. Frank Lubin is in the center.

established it was selected to represent the United States at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the first to feature basketball as a medal sport. However, the players’ positions as paid employees soon conflicted with their uncompensated labor as athletes. Despite the clear international publicity opportunity that the Olympics offered for Universal Pictures, studio founder Carl Laemmle, a German-born Jew, pressured the players not to attend the Games and withdrew his financial support for the team. Disregarding the studio’s efforts to regulate their athletic activities, the players went to Berlin, where they easily won the tournament.

Basketball serves as an example of what John T. Caldwell identifies as the process by which the media industry “creates cultural identities through larger-scale staged enactments and rituals.”<sup>4</sup> The identities of the Universal basketball players, which had been cultivated by the studio for its own promotional and performative needs, proved to be incompatible with Laemmle’s efforts to take a stance against the Nazi regime. The individuals who used their basketball prowess to enter the film industry discovered that their status within the work culture of Hollywood was extremely tenuous as Universal’s sponsorship of top-tier basketball proved to be short-lived. After the Olympics, the importance of basketball as social ritual for workers within the studio system soon diminished, and athletes looking to play competitively after college had to look outside the motion picture industry.

Historians remember the Universal Pictures squad for its contribution to sports history as the winner of the inaugural Olympic medal.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the team’s roots in Hollywood and the larger role of

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basketball and participatory sports within the film industry have been overlooked by cinema scholars. Yet these sporting performances are a reminder of the ways in which laborers' off-camera performances were appropriated as a marketing and promotional tool at the local exhibition and industrial levels. The experience of athletics and film shaped off-screen work for some within the industry, and provide a case study for examining the connections between labor and varied forms of performance in the studio system.

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The first basketball teams in the film industry were formed in the mid-1910s as a way for urban employees to participate in physical activity. Industry basketball players however, were soon transformed into public performers. One of the first teams to play basketball as a spectator sport was made up of employees of the Loew's Circuit booking office in New York City. Starting in 1917, Loew's regularly played teams affiliated with area business and civic institutions such as the Keith Boys' Band and the University Settlement. Loew's management regarded the games as another form of mass entertainment, and charged admission to spectators. A ladies' ticket for their game against University Settlement cost twenty-five cents.<sup>6</sup> No records indicate how much of the revenue, if any, went to the players. Women occasionally played on their own basketball teams as well. The Loew's office in Chicago tried to put together its own girls' basketball team in 1921, though it ran into trouble first finding enough interested participants and then opponents to play.<sup>7</sup>

The men's games garnered enough interest within the industry that *Variety* and other trade publications reported game summaries and box scores. Evoking discourses about the social utility of sport, *Variety* hailed the Loew's team as a model for other boys in the entertainment industry. "That the Loew's boys took up basketball in winter speaks volumes for these young men. The boys of other offices might well follow suit, if not in basketball, then in some other sport that will give them the exercise they require and should have."<sup>8</sup> By offering sports, a company could be branded as a caring, benevolent employer.

Participation in company-sponsored athletics continued to proliferate throughout the 1920s as teams and leagues for basketball were created in New York and Hollywood. Reflecting the growing interest in sports within the film industry, in the summer of 1926 the Motion Picture Athletic Association was established to promote athletic competition among the employees of producers and distributors. Inaugural members included First National, Fox, Pathé, Paramount, MGM, Warner Bros., and Universal. Demonstrating that sports had the support of even the most powerful moguls, an advisory board included prominent executives including Adolph Zukor and Sam Warner.<sup>9</sup> Though scores and standings were reported on in the trades, illustrating a level of seriousness to the competition, broad participation among employees was prioritized. The Association sponsored activities for both male and female employees. Along with basketball, baseball, and track, less physically intensive competitions were offered in handball, billiards, and pool.

The investment in basketball and others sports by the studios coincided with efforts to address broad concerns about industry morality and labor issues. As Heidi Kenaga notes, in the 1920s, the figure of the 'extra girl' or 'movie-struck girl' became ubiquitous in trade and mass-market discourse, and led to considerable concerns about women going to Hollywood in search of stardom. Studio heads undertook various means so they could be "reconstructed" within public discourse "as less the impersonal managers of an exploitative factory system and more the benevolent patrons to young female movie hopefuls."<sup>10</sup> Kenaga identifies the establishment of the Central Casting Bureau in 1925 and the Hollywood Studio Club in 1926 as ways the industry sought to regulate part of their workforce, here female extras, and positively influence the public-relations agenda. Studios' investment in sports through the Motion Picture Athletic Association extended these efforts to both male and female employees here under the rubric of wholesome physical activity. It had the added benefit of putting forth a model of labor relations where the studio could be portrayed as an "extended family" with workers coming together in athletic competition.

Basketball did not have the broad cultural

ubiquity of football or baseball in this period, but it was the most popular sport among film industry employees. Its popularity in Hollywood was a reflection of the spike in interest in the game across the country as well as practical considerations. Games were held indoors, required minimal equipment, could be played year-round, and at night. The growing public excitement over the sport however caused problems for local exhibitors. Trade papers posited a direct link between the widespread popularity of basketball in small towns and disappointing box office numbers. For instance, in 1923 *The Film Daily* cited an owner of two movie theaters in Columbus, Indiana who lamented that basketball was solely responsible for a twenty-five percent decline in his box office receipts that winter.<sup>11</sup> One strategy promoted in advice columns to bring audiences back to the movie theater was for exhibitors to incorporate live basketball games in their programs. They could set up temporary baskets on the stage in front of the screen and have teams play short games or demonstrate various skills such as dribbling or trick shooting.

The athletic participants in these programs were typically anonymous male theater employees. Prominent sports figures were occasionally brought in as basketball performers as well. One notable instance occurred in February 1930 at a Publix theater in Minneapolis. For four days, the theater's evening program of the Fox feature *Lone Star Ranger* (1930) included one quarter of a basketball game. While the game at the Publix was spread over four separate programs, the individual quarters were intended to be thought of as a complete match. Each day, the previous quarter's score was posted in a window in front of the theater. What made this particular form of ballyhoo even more remarkable was that the match pitted a team of Publix employees against a squad led by famed football star Bronko Nagurski, who played both the halfback and linebacker positions at the University of Minnesota.<sup>12</sup> Despite Nagurski's background in a different sport, the combined appeal of the local athletic hero and basketball helped the theater have its best week in months.<sup>13</sup> Though basketball demonstrations at theaters were often very popular, they were soon overshadowed in terms of press coverage and public interest by the teams sponsored by Hollywood studios.

Instead of relying on athletes from outside the industry, studios began investing in their own basketball teams. The industry team which most closely resembled a professional squad was sponsored by Universal Pictures. The studio had a long history of sponsoring employee teams dating back to 1914. These squads were a means for the company to stimulate physical activity and inter-departmental contact among below-the-line employees. By 1934, Universal's social and athletic club had seventeen teams which met twice a week to play for the studio's club championship.<sup>14</sup> That same year, Universal established a team of the best players it could recruit to compete regionally and nationally and promote the studio to a wide audience. In comparison with its previous teams, which emphasized the importance of broad employee participation, here Universal brought in outsiders by filling the roster with former collegiate stars. The studio's in-house newsletter, *Universal Weekly*, characterized the new team as the "varsity" to distinguish it from the squads of employees already working for the company.<sup>15</sup> The studio employed the players year-round in below-the-line positions on the lot, paid for training and travel, and supplied uniforms. The uniforms advertised the team's sponsor, with either "Universal Pictures" or an interlocking "U.P." logo sown on the front. Their warm-ups were emblazoned with the Universal name and a patch of Oswald the Rabbit on the back.

The management of the squad reflected the institutional hierarchy at Universal. The task of supervising and putting together the team was given to Carl Laemmle Jr., the general manager of all Universal productions and son of the studio's founder. Junior Laemmle was an enthusiastic sports fan, and had a lengthy history with basketball going back to his time at prep school in New York City.<sup>16</sup> Junior's interest in sports was reflected in many of the projects he was involved with at the studio. This included his first project for Universal, *The Collegians*, a series of forty-four two-reelers which he wrote and produced between 1925 and 1929. The series followed the rivalry between two football stars Don (Eddie Philips) and Ed (George Lewis) as they progressed through college. After he was named head of production for the studio in 1929, Junior Laemmle oversaw some of the studio's most successful pictures including *All Quiet on the Western*

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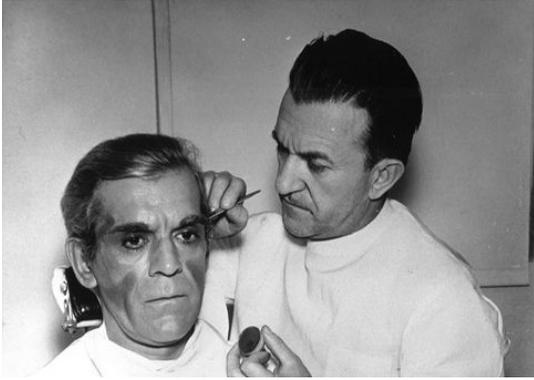


Fig. 2: Jack Pierce does Boris Karloff's makeup.

*Front* (1930), *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), and *The Old Dark House* (1932).

Jack Pierce, the highly regarded head of Universal's make-up department, was named team manager in November 1933. Pierce was placed in charge of running the daily operations of the basketball squad and training the players.<sup>17</sup> He was best known as the creator of the looks for Universal's monster movies, including Boris Karloff's famous turn in *Frankenstein*. Though Pierce had never played the sport himself, like Junior Laemmle he was a big basketball fan, and had spent years trying to get the studio to support an elite travelling team. Laemmle Jr. and Pierce focused their recruiting efforts primarily on former UCLA players. They signed up five for the team: Frank Lubin, Carl Shy, Donald Piper, Carl Knowles, and Sam Balter. All five had been exceptional collegiate players at UCLA, where they had been selected as captains for the Bruins or named by newspaper reporters to various All-American or All-Coast squads honoring the top players.

The star of the Universal team was Frank Lubin, a six foot six inch center from UCLA (where he had played as a guard) and one of the tallest players in the country. After seeing him play for the Pasadena Majors, an AAU team sponsored by a local bakery, Laemmle Jr. and Pierce hired him as a grip in the electrical department at Universal City at a rate of \$50 per week.<sup>18</sup> Lubin's stardom was further bolstered soon after joining the team when he was one of the performers in the MGM Sports Parade short *Basketball Technique* in 1935. Accompanied by explanatory remarks by Pete Smith, the picture showed what one newspaper called the "Motion

Picture Studio All Stars" demonstrating plays, trick work, offensive and defensive work.<sup>19</sup> The short was widely distributed in the United States and Canada, and provided a number of players working in studios with their first national recognition as athletes.

The distinction between Lubin's compensated and uncompensated labor was blurred far more frequently than other studio employees. To promote the upcoming release of Universal's *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) (for which Pierce did the make-up), Lubin would come out before games dressed as the monster and perform for the crowd. Taking advantage of Lubin's height, Pierce would dress Lubin in the same make-up and costume as Karloff had worn, including the platform shoes, ragged coat, and bolts in the neck. In costume, Lubin stood over seven feet tall.<sup>20</sup> At the team's exhibition and league games around the country, Lubin and Pierce's performative labor for *Bride of Frankenstein* took precedence over his play, since he would have to perform right until tip-off. Lubin would then rush back to the dressing room and change into his basketball uniform, typically missing the first five or ten minutes of the game.<sup>21</sup> Lubin became so closely associated with these performances and promotional work for Universal that the nickname "Frankenstein" stuck with him for the remainder of his basketball career and time working in the film and television industry.

Lubin's performances have been overshadowed by the Universal team's participation in the first Olympics to feature basketball as a medal sport. They earned this opportunity after competing in two tournaments against the top sponsored, collegiate, and YMCA squads from across the country. To select a team to represent the United States at the 1936 Games in Berlin, Germany, the American Olympic Committee (AOC) staged an eight-team tournament in Madison Square Garden in Manhattan. Pitting the best amateur teams in the country, the organizers allocated five tournament slots to college basketball squads, two to AAU teams, and one spot to the YMCA. There was, however, considerable debate in the U.S. about participation in the Berlin games. Many in the press called for a boycott of the Olympics and a number of amateur teams refused to play for the AOC. Long Island University, which had won thirty-three straight games and was considered to be the

best college team in the country, did not participate in the tournament because they had a number of Jewish players. The NYU and City College of New York teams did not enter the tournament for the same reason.

Despite the concerns of the press and Jewish collegiate players, the AOC tournament proceeded as planned. It had been decided that the two AAU slots would be reserved for the finalists of the 1936 AAU national tournament in Denver. These ultimately were the Universal Pictures team and the McPherson Globe Refiners from Kansas (who defeated Universal by a score of 47 to 35 in the final). In the opening rounds of the Olympic tournament in New York City to determine who would go to Berlin, Universal defeated the University of Arkansas and the Wilmerding, Pennsylvania YMCA. In a rematch against McPherson in the final, Universal eked out a victory by the score of 44 to 43. Thanks to their win, Universal Pictures placed six players on the Olympic team including Frank Lubin and Sam Balter. Their coach Jimmy Needles was also selected to helm the squad.<sup>22</sup> Notably, in an Olympics in which many American Jews chose not to participate or were barred from the team, Balter was the only Jewish player on the basketball roster, and the only Jewish-American to win a gold medal in Berlin.

The success of the Universal Pictures basketball team and the opportunity for international publicity notwithstanding, Carl Laemmle was staunchly opposed to the trip to Germany. Lubin recalled that after the team won the AOC tournament, Universal executives pressured the players to not travel to Berlin and boycott the event entirely to avoid demonstrating even indirect support for the Nazis.<sup>23</sup> Laemmle dropped the studio's sponsorship of the team and refused to allow them to use the "Universal" name or logos in conjunction with the Olympics. His stance represented a marked shift in his relationship to his homeland. As Thomas Doherty explains, "The German lineage of Carl Laemmle had long given Universal Pictures the coziest connections to Germany." Despite having faced censorship problems with *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Universal maintained the most ambitious production schedule of any studio in Germany in the early 1930s. When Hitler rose to power, the studio had two expensive projects in

postproduction: Luis Trenker's *The Rebel* (1933) and the adventure picture *S.O.S. Iceberg* (1933), starring Leni Riefenstahl.<sup>24</sup> The studio's fortunes changed in July 1934 when Universal was forced out of Germany and sold its assets in the country because Laemmle was identified by the government as a "non-Aryan." No longer focused on maintaining a foothold in the lucrative European market, Laemmle became one of the staunchest critics of the Nazis in Hollywood.

Laemmle's efforts to spur a boycott by his players were not successful. The team members all decided to go to Berlin. However, because they no longer had Universal's sponsorship they were compelled to find new means of paying for their expenses for a return trip to New York (where the Olympic Committee would take them to Berlin). To raise money for the trip Braven Dyer, the *Los Angeles Times* sports editor, organized an exhibition match pitting collegiate stars from USC, UCLA, and Loyola Marymount against the squad at the Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles. Local newspapers emphasized the game's civic function. The event was promoted as one of the few occasions for locals to honor one of their own teams headed to the Olympics. Although the names of Universal and Laemmle were now noticeably absent from the press coverage of the game, the press still evoked the team's connections to Hollywood. For instance, in one of its many previews of the game, the *Los Angeles Times* predicted that "Motion picture stars, including the 'big names' of the studio which formerly sponsored the team, will be on hand in copious quantities for the event."<sup>25</sup> Although here too the paper did not list any specific 'big names' who would be in attendance, perhaps as a way of avoiding portraying any actors as siding with labor over management. Team member Art Mollner recalled that Universal employees donated money



Fig. 3: 1936 U.S. Men's Olympics Basketball Team on its way to Berlin, Germany

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to the orphaned team including two of the stars of *Frankenstein*, Boris Karloff and John Boles.<sup>26</sup> Dyer and the team fell short of raising the desired \$2,000 from the game, but made enough to start the trip eastward. Additional exhibition games arranged by Dyer in Denver, Tulsa, and Kansas City helped them finance the rest of the trip to join the rest of the Olympic delegation in New York.

In Berlin, the U.S. team overcame indifference toward the sport from the hosting country, which did not field a team, and terrible playing conditions. The games were held on outdoor tennis courts of sand and clay. Media coverage of basketball at the games was sparse. For instance, despite shooting 1.3 million feet of film of the Games for *Olympia* (1938), Leni Riefenstahl did not instruct any of her cameramen to shoot any basketball.<sup>27</sup> The U.S. coasted to the gold medal. In the first three rounds the American side easily defeated Estonia, Philippines, and Mexico by a combined score of 133 to 61. Then they won the gold medal match against Canada, played in a driving rainstorm which turned the court into mud and made dribbling impossible, by a score of 19 to 8.

The team did not return to the United States as conquering heroes. They came back to find that they no longer had either athletic or labor positions at Universal Studios.<sup>28</sup> Laemmle had lost interest in sport after the Olympics and did not continue the studio's sponsorship of an AAU team. They were also not given the option to stay on in their jobs in the different studio departments. Laemmle and his son did not have a chance to reverse this decision to end top-level basketball. Both were forced out of the company after concerns about out-of-control expenditures on movies including the remake of *Showboat* (1936) and expensive box-office failures led to a bank takeover.

After Laemmle disbanded the Universal team, a number of the players including Frank Lubin, Carl Knowles, and Art Mollner moved to Twentieth Century-Fox where they formed the core of the most successful studio team of the 1940s. At Fox, their labor in the film industry and participation in studio-sponsored basketball were no longer contingent on one another. Whereas Lubin was hired as a stagehand at the studio, Knowles and Mollner worked elsewhere.<sup>29</sup> Mollner was a detective for the Los Angeles Police

Department. With this core, between 1940 and 1948 the Twentieth Century-Fox team reached the semifinals of the national AAU tournament all but once. They won the entire tournament in 1941. Lubin continued to play and coach AAU basketball until 1955 when knee problems forced him to retire from the sport. He remained a stagehand and grip in the film and later television industries, at Fox and then on television series including *The Rifleman* (1958-63) (starring former pro basketball and baseball player Chuck Connors) and *The Beverly Hillbillies* (1962-71). In the 1950s, the quality of studio sponsored basketball began to decline precipitously. New challenges to the industry from television and the Paramount decision led studio chiefs to invest their resources elsewhere. The level of sponsored amateur basketball fell across the country as well as corporations dropped their financial and institutional support of AAU basketball. The growing popularity of the professional game and creation of pro leagues, particularly the National Basketball Association (formed in 1949), made it too expensive for media companies to compete for athletic talent.

The history of Hollywood basketball teams such as the Universal Pictures squad of the 1930s serves as an important reminder of the long history of convergence between the two entertainment industries. It foregrounds the prominent role sports played in defining the cultural experience of working in the film industry. Although historians studying this era typically focus on issues relating to standardization of industrial practices or notable directors and stars, a consideration of the experiences of below-the-line employees and office workers provides a more accurate picture of the production cultures of the studio system. Specifically, such a consideration reinforces the importance of the off-screen performances for workers in defining labor roles. Once their value as a promotional tool was lost, the teams were discontinued and the players moved elsewhere in industry to play, though not necessarily to work. Despite this limited duration, the intersection of sports and the cinema in this period provides an ideal forum for further examination of the different forms of labor and the importance of both on-screen and off-screen performances in the American film industry.

**Alex Kupfer** is a PhD candidate in the Department of Cinema Studies at New York University and instructor at Hunter College. His forthcoming dissertation, “The Celluloid Campus: College Football, Nontheatrical Cinema, and University Extension” examines the use of motion pictures to promote and support higher education in the interwar period.

### Notes

1. See Dan Streible, *Fight Pictures: A History of Boxing and Early Cinema* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); Lee Grieveson, *Policing Cinema: Movies and Censorship in Early-Twentieth-Century America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
2. Streible, *Fight Pictures*, 4.
3. Adolph H. Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball: The AAU Tournament, 1921–1968* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), xvi.
4. John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Cultures: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 88.
5. See Rich Hughes, *Netting Out Basketball 1936: The Remarkable Story of the McPherson Refiners, the First Team to Dunk, Zone Press, and Win the Olympic Gold Medal* (Victoria, B.C.: Friesen Press, 2011); Carson Cunningham, *American Hoops: U. S. Men's Olympic Basketball from Berlin to Beijing Grundman* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009); and Grundman, *The Golden Age of Amateur Basketball*.
6. Advertisement for “Basketball: Marcus Loew Booking Agency vs. University Settlement,” *Variety*, February 23, 1917, 49.
7. “Chicago: Sports,” *Variety*, March 25, 1921, 8.
8. “Boys in Theatrical Offices...,” *Variety*, March 9, 1917, 9.
9. “New York and New Jersey,” *Motion Picture News*, July 3, 1926, 56.
10. Heidi Kenaga, “Making the ‘Studio Girl’: The Hollywood Studio Club and Industry Regulation of Female Labour,” *Film History* 18 (2006):131.
11. “Two Problems: Radio and Basketball Giving Small Town Exhibitors Problems,” *The Film Daily*, January 18, 1923, 6.
12. Nagurski had just finished his collegiate career, and would join the Chicago Bears of the National Football League in September.
13. “Minnesota,” *Variety*, February 26, 1930, 49.
14. *Ibid.*
15. “Keeping Fit to Make Finer Pictures,” *Universal Weekly*, May 5, 1934, 5.
16. “Production Boss Captains Universal Basketball Teams,” *Hollywood Filmograph* 13.46 (December 9 1933):10.
17. Following the practice of top AAU teams, the Universals coach was only involved in the actual games and did not participate in the team's construction or training.
18. Chris Baker, “Frank Lubin, a Big Man in Two Countries,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 2, 1990, C2.
19. “Cage Film at Capitol,” *The Montreal Gazette*, October 18, 1935, 12.
20. Frank J. Lubin, interview by George A. Hodak, *An Olympian's Oral History*, Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles, May 1998, 8.
21. *Ibid.*
22. Despite losing to Universal in the final, McPherson still placed six players on the Olympics roster. University of Washington center Ralph Bishop was also added to the team.
23. Lubin, interview, 22.
24. Thomas Doherty, *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933–1939* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 34.
25. Charles Curtis, “Cagers Mix Tomorrow,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 8, 1936, A12.
26. Arthur O. Mollner, interview by George A. Hodak, *An Olympian's Oral History*, Amateur Athletic Foundation of Los Angeles, May 1998, 22.
27. Steven Bach, *Leni: The Life and Work of Leni Riefenstahl* (New York: Vintage Books, 2007), 159.
28. They did not all return to America at the same time. Lubin stayed in Lithuania (where his family was from) for three years to coach and develop a basketball program in the country.
29. Lubin, interview, 22.