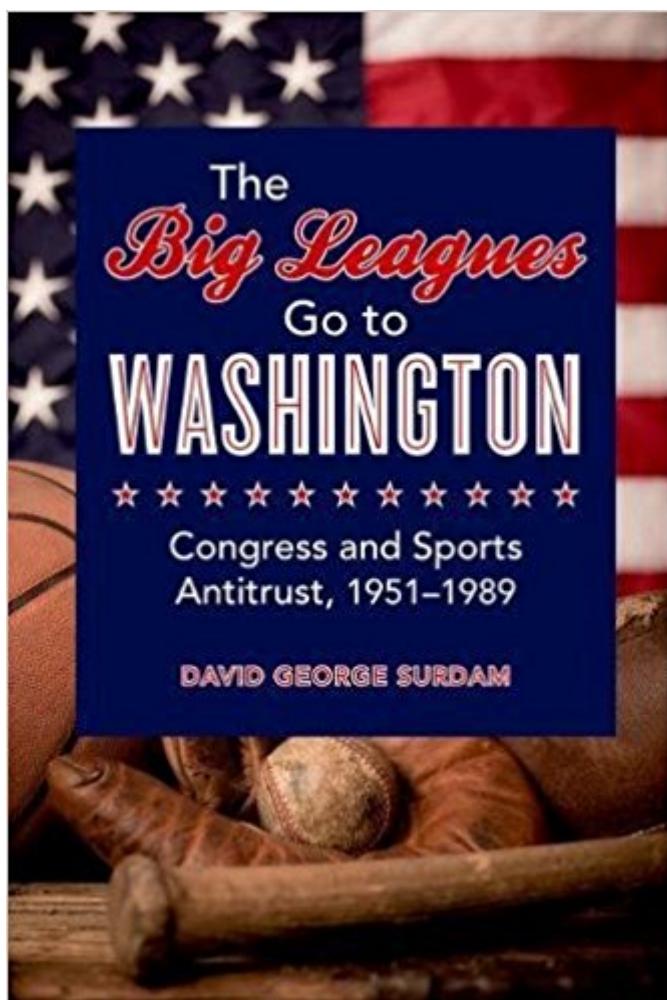


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The Big Leagues Go To Washington: Congress And Sports Antitrust, 1951-1989



Synopsis

Between 1951 and 1989, Congress held a series of hearings to investigate the antitrust aspects of professional sports leagues. Among the concerns: ownership control of players, restrictions on new franchises, territorial protection, and other cartel-like behaviors. In The Big Leagues Go to Washington, David Surdam chronicles the key issues that arose during the hearings and the ways opposing sides used economic data and theory to define what was right, what was feasible, and what was advantageous to one party or another. As Surdam shows, the hearings affected matters as fundamental to the modern game as broadcasting rights, player drafts and unions, league mergers, and the dominance of the New York Yankees. He also charts how lawmakers from the West and South pressed for the relocation of ailing franchises to their states and the ways savvy owners dodged congressional interference when they could and adapted to it when necessary.

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applying antitrust law to a particular industry, but rather seeking to protect deeply held interests of local constituencies.--World Competition Å "Surdam has made a fine contribution to not only the history of sports antitrust, but more broadly to our understanding of how sports leagues and franchises rose to such economic and cultural power in modern America."--Sport in American History Å "The display of Surdam's encyclopedic knowledge of the intricacies of the business of baseball, football, and basketball is the central strength of The Big Leagues Go to Washington." By wading through pages of hearing transcripts and by examining the three major American professional sports together, Surdam has contributed to our understanding of the business and law of sports."--Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society Å

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