



NONVIOLENT DISOBEDIENCE

Actor Danny Glover speaks outside the Sudanese Embassy in Washington, DC, during a demonstration against the humanitarian crisis in Sudan's Darfur region. Glover was arrested during for civil disobedience as he crossed onto embassy property.

Olympics give NBC ratings gold

LOS ANGELES (AP) - While the Olympic Games coped with disputed judging numbers, there was no argument about NBC's domination of TV ratings with its coverage from Athens.

The network attracted more viewers last week than its five major broadcast competitors combined, according to Nielsen Media Research figures released Tuesday.

Of the top 10 programs, six were NBC's Olympic coverage.

The highest-rated was on Thursday, when gymnast Carly Patterson became the first U.S. woman to win the all-around since Mary Lou Retton in 1984.

Slightly more than 31.7 million people tuned in that

night, giving NBC a 32 percent share of the TV audience.

The electrifying freestyle relay in which American swimmers narrowly beat the Australians was the week's second most-watched night with an audience of 30.1 million and a 30 share.

Gymnast Paul Hamm's unprecedented U.S. victory in the men's all-around competition, which came after judges incorrectly scored a South Korean in one event, drew 28.4 million viewers and a 29 share.

Given NBC's heavy promotion of its upcoming fall schedule during the Olympics, new series can't complain they missed a chance to win over lots of potential

viewers.

Among the non-Olympic also-rans who managed to eke out a respectable audience were three CBS crime dramas: "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation," "Without a Trace" and "CSI: Miami."

For the week, NBC was the clear winner, averaging 26.7 million viewers (16.2 rating, 27 share).

CBS averaged 7.3 million viewers (5.0 rating, 8 share), ABC 4.5 million (3.0 rating, 5 share), and Fox 4.4 million (2.9 rating, 5 share). UPN had 2.5 million (1.7 rating, 3 share), the WB 2.2 million (1.6 rating, 3 share), and Pax TV 650,000 (0.5 rating, 1 share).

New tome recalls Aaron's rise to baseball notoriety

Hank Aaron and the Home Run that Changed America, by Tom Stanton; William Morrow; Hardcover: 256 pp.; \$23.95

ISBN: 0-06-057976-5

Book Review
By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

"This book... is about Hank Aaron's pursuit of the national pastime's most cherished record. It is about a chase that provoked bigotry, shattered prejudice, and shook stereotypes. It is about a quiet, private man who endured hatred, suffered death threats, and grew more determined to achieve his goal. It is also about heroes and friends and family — and a brief span of time that helped America define itself."

— Excerpted from the Introduction

When Babe Ruth retired from baseball in 1935 having hit 714 home runs in his career and 60 in one year, most presumed that those were two major league records which would never be broken. And as those marks initially stood the test of time, the Bambino's legend only grew over the intervening decades.

Then, in 1961, Roger Maris was as much cheered as he was vilified for finally breaking the much-beloved legend's single-season record. Even Major League Baseball officially denigrated Maris' achievement by placing an asterisk next to it, noting that it had been accomplished in 162 as opposed to Ruth's 154 games.

Although Hank Aaron was well aware of what the reaction to Maris had been, nothing prepared him for the avalanche of hate that would accompany his assault on 714. For when you factor in that Hank was a Black man, it made the impending toppling of a White cultural icon that much more aggravating to certain racist segments of American society.

While Aaron chose to play down all the

death threats and hate mail he received as he closed in on the crown, they were all recalled in "Hank Aaron: Chasing the Dream," an Oscar-nominated documentary. Now, Tom Stanton has chosen to retell the tale vividly in book form, in an opus entitled "Hank Aaron and the Home Run that Changed America."

Mr. Stanton is a noted baseball writer and author of "The Road to Cooperstown" and "The Final Season."

Here, after sharing some basic biographical information about Aaron, he focuses rather narrowly on the day-to-day events in Hank's life from the season of 1972 to the moment he broke the record on April 8, 1974.

Reading like a mix of finely-honed journalistic entries and touching remembrances, this fond fan-oriented bio recalls particular at-bats of this or that game. While the baseball enthusiast may enjoy accounts of how Hank fared against various pitchers, what most are likely to find far more interesting are the descriptions of what life was like for Hank off the field.

We learn that he was harrowed by incessant death threats because they were made not only against him but against his four children. Hank was understandably upset that he could not be home to protect his innocent children, and this temporarily sent him into a slump.

Plus, because he had never been one to showboat or boast about his accomplishments, he was dismayed that his humility was nonetheless being met with such vile mistreatment.

Complete with vintage photographs and the heartfelt reflections of many who had been around him, "Hank Aaron and the Home Run that Changed America" is a refreshingly honest baseball book in a field generally given to uncritically nostalgic flights of fantasy.

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