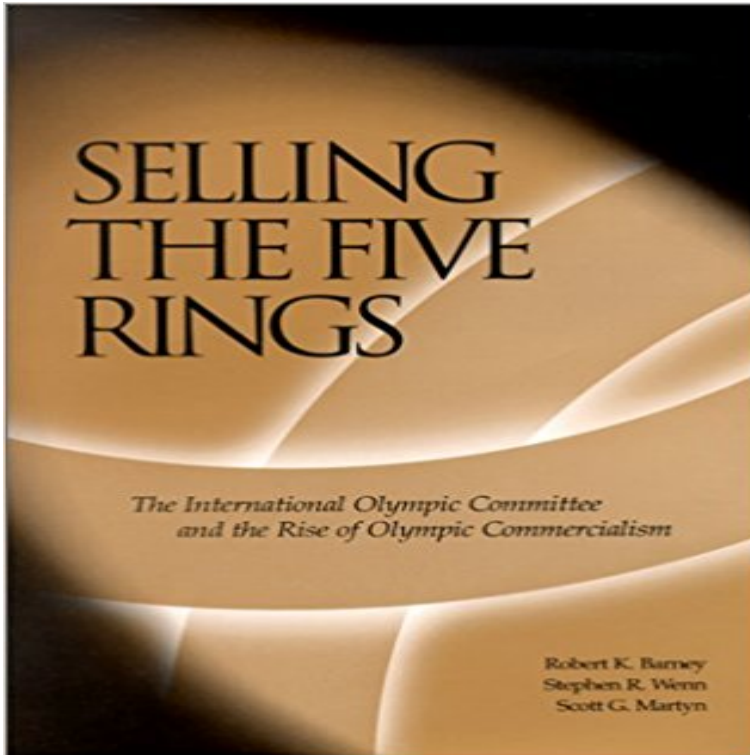


Selling The Five Rings: The IOC and the Rise of Olympic Commercialism



The original scheme for the modern Olympic Games was hatched at an international sports conference at the Sorbonne in June 1894. At the time, few provisions were made for the financial underwriting of the project and the beneficence of host cities would somehow take care of the costs. For much of the first century of modern Olympic history, this was the case, until the advent of television and corporate sponsorship transformed that idealism. Now, linking with the five-ring logo is good business. Advertising during the Olympic Games guarantees a global audience unmatched in size by any other sports audience in the world. However, if the image begins to tarnish and the corporate sector loses interest, television companies can't sell advertising to business interests. This was the greatest threat posed by the scandal surrounding Salt Lake City's bid. *Selling the Five Rings* outlines the rise of the Olympic movement from an envisioned instrument of peace and brotherhood, to a transnational commercial giant of imposing power and influence. Using primary source documents such as minutes of the IOC General Sessions, minutes and reports of various IOC sub-committees and commissions concerned with finance, reports of key marketing agencies, and the letters and memoranda written to and by the major figures in Olympic history, the authors track the history of a fascinating global institution.

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