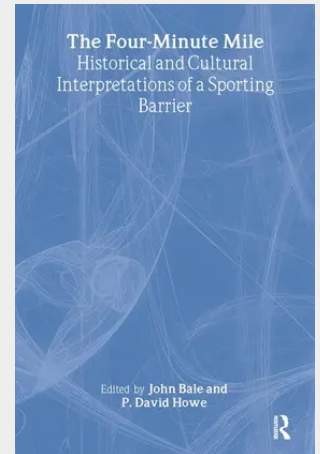


The Four-Minute Mile

Breaking records and challenging the limits of human ability are central to much of our understanding of athletic track and field sports, with a world record title arguably as valued as an Olympic gold medal. Some particular limits and records take on greater significance, however, as in the case of the Four-Minute Mile which was roundly believed to be impossible until Roger Bannister shattered the illusion with half a second to spare in May 1954. These essays look at the background of Bannister's achievement and the meaning that was ascribed to it by the media and the public at large, drawing on an array of interdisciplinary and international influences to unpick the legend surrounding an historic moment in our social and sporting past.



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