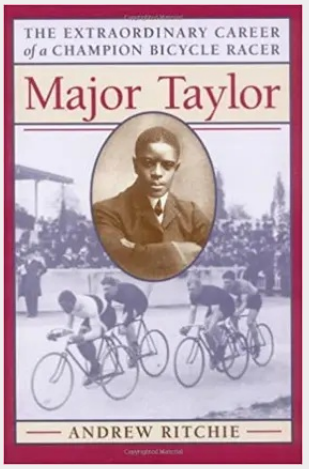
Ritchie

Major Taylor

The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer



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World champion at 19. One of the first black athletes to become world champion in any sport. 1-mile record holder. American sprint champion in 1898, 1899, 1900. triumphant tours of Europe and Australia. Victories against all European champions. Until now a forgotten, shadowy figure, Marshall Walter "Major" Taylor is here revealed as one of the early sports world's most stylish, entertaining, and gentlemanly personalities. Born in 1878 in Indianapolis, the son of poor rural parents, Taylor worked in a bike shop until prominent bicycle racer "Birdie" Munger coached him for his first professional racing successes in 1896. Despite continuous bureaucratic—and, at times, physical—opposition, he won his first national championship two years later and became world champion in 1899 in Montreal. This beautifully illustrated, vividly narrated, and scrupulously researched biography recreates the life of a great international athlete at the turn of the century. Based on ten years of research—including extensive interviews with Major Taylor's 91-year old daughter—this is the dramatic story of a young black man who, against prodigious odds, rose to fame and stardom in the tempestuous world of international professional bicycle racing a century ago.

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