

# Wisconsin State Journal

## Moe: Maraniss looks back at 1960 Olympics

By DOUG MOE  
May 5, 2008

For the first time in his career, best-selling author David Maraniss is launching not only a new book, but a Web site devoted to it.

Maraniss, who grew up in Madison and still spends summers here, has his fourth big book in 10 years, "Rome 1960: The Olympics That Changed the World," coming out July 1. That night, he will speak about the book at the Barnes & Noble on Mineral Point Road, kicking off an extensive tour that will take him from New York to Los Angeles, with many stops in between (including a second Madison appearance, Aug. 14 at the University Avenue Borders).

The Web site, [davidmaraniss.com](http://davidmaraniss.com), went up this week. It was designed by David's son, Andrew Maraniss, and McNeely, Pigott & Fox, the Nashville public relations firm where Andrew works.

"I barely know how to use the Web," David was saying Monday from his office at The Washington Post, where he is an associate editor. "But Andy is good at that kind of stuff."

The highlight of the Web site is a four-minute video, mixing archival footage of the 1960 Rome Olympics with new video Andy shot while his dad was visiting in Nashville at Easter. Father and son took a camera over to Tennessee State University and Andy started asking questions.

The campus was an appropriate location because Wilma Rudolph and the Tigerbelles -- the name coined for the Tennessee State women's track team by their coach, Ed Temple -- factored large in the 1960 Olympics. Temple, in fact, still lives near the campus. Earlier, Maraniss had interviewed the coach, and said Temple's recollections enliven the new book.

"He's smart, funny and full of stories," Maraniss said.

Rudolph, decathlete Rafer Johnson, barefoot marathon runner Abebe Bikila and boxer Cassius Clay -- not yet Muhammad Ali -- were among the outsize personalities and stories that drew Maraniss to the Rome Games. He was drawn, too, by the larger forces that loomed over the Games, some for the first time. Rome 1960 was the first televised Olympics; it had the first doping scandal; Cold War tensions were high (Maraniss tells the story of a U. S. sprinter recruited by the CIA to get a Soviet athlete to defect); and African countries were gaining their independence.

The book, which David dedicates to his wife, Linda, is already generating considerable excitement: Sports Illustrated will excerpt it next month, and the acclaimed filmmaker Oren Jacoby is talking with Maraniss about a documentary.

"Rome 1960" caps an amazing decade-long run by Maraniss, as he continues to publish best-selling, critically acclaimed and research-intensive books one after another.

"I've sort of been going non-stop," he conceded Monday.

I can remember like yesterday talking to David in July 1999, on the eve of publication of "When Pride Still Mattered," his Vince Lombardi biography. He had won a Pulitzer and his Bill Clinton biography had been a success, but the Lombardi book would catapult his career to another level.

I had wondered how it had gone between David and W.C. Heinz, a legendary journalist who in the early 1960s had collaborated with Lombardi on the classic "Run to Daylight." I knew and revered Heinz (who died earlier this year at 93), and was pleased to learn Maraniss had devoted a chapter, titled "Daylight," to Heinz and the Lombardi collaboration.

Around that time, I had the chance in turn to ask Heinz, who was not given to superlatives, about Maraniss, and this is what he said: "It's a helluva book. He's a terrific reporter and a very good writer. What a meticulous researcher! He's talked to hundreds of people and has things in there that I was amazed to learn. It's just marvelous, and I think it will be a major book."

Maraniss brought that hard work and attention to detail to his subsequent books, "They Marched Into Sunlight" (alternately set in Vietnam and Madison in October 1967), and "Clemente," a biography of the baseball legend.

It's there in "Rome 1960" as well -- the kind of gold a journalist mines only by making the extra phone call or going the extra mile, often literally. Maraniss was on a reporting trip to the West Coast for the Rome book and contacting a number of people for interviews when he reached Joe Faust, a high-jumper who had finished back in the pack in Rome.

Faust lived outside of Los Angeles -- "in the middle of nowhere," Maraniss recalled -- but David got his address, punched it into MapQuest and found his way to Faust's little adobe home. They spoke in his living room, and then Faust led Maraniss to his cluttered backyard, where a path had been cleared to an old mattress -- a makeshift high-jump pit.

Nearly 50 years after Rome, Faust was still jumping. David called him a typical athlete but an uncommon human being.

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