



# **Becoming Iron Men: The Story of the 1963 Loyola Ramblers (Sport in the American West)**

*Lew Freedman*

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*The greatest untold story in college basketball history*

Loyola University Chicago was ahead of its time when racial matters were forefront in a long overdue revolution in civil rights. The Ramblers of the 1962-1963 NCAA college basketball season were pioneers in race relations in sport, though most of the time they were simply playing the sport they loved.

When the NCAA tournament began in March, the Ramblers engaged in a series for the ages, daring to be the first NCAA Division I school to play five black athletes on the court at once and capturing the most prestigious title in college basketball at a time when states below the Mason-Dixon line still had laws on the books preventing black and white athletes from mixing even in pick-up games.

Records were set, rivals faced, and one of the most famous and significant contests in college basketball playoff history played out in what incidentally became a model showcase for race relations. Nearly every time the Ramblers took the court, the game was unique in its magnitude.

Relying significantly on exclusive interviews with surviving players, now in their seventies, Lew Freedman chronicles the entire journey, the adventure of the season that bound tight for a lifetime the group of men who lived through it.

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