Ollan Cassell’s Book

Recommended reading for devotees of track and field, the Olympic world, and sports in general is now available -- “Inside the Five Ring Circus,” Ollan Cassell’s 352-page retrospective on his life and times as an Olympic gold-medal athlete and subsequent career as an administrator and sports executive at the highest level of Olympic sports. Subtitled “Changing Global Sports and the Modern Olympics,” Cassell shares major insights on his era that saw the sports world evolve tumultuously in an array of directions.

A national track champion, Cassell won a gold medal in 400x400 relay in the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, Japan. Soon afterward, he launched a career as a sports executive with the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU). He eventually became head of USA Track & Field and a major figure in the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), the sports world governing body. Along the way, he blazed trails that other sports federations would follow.

Here is the real story of the evolution from ‘shamateurism’ to professionalism in the Olympics; of the high stakes USA-USSR confrontations during the Cold War; of the ongoing battles over the scourge of performance-enhancing drugs. From the days of “Bullet Bob” Hayes to Frank Shorter, Carl Lewis, Butch Reynolds, Michael Johnson, Mary Slaney, Jackie-Joyner Kersee, Florence Griffith and many more, Cassell played a key role in the scenes-behind-the-scenes of their greatest triumphs enroute to the medal stand.

“Inside the Five Ring Circus” is now available by mail ($24.95) from: Cathedral High School Spirit shop. Order by phone at 317-968-7388. Online orders will be filled starting Sept. 15 at www.gocathedral.com, (Go to ‘On Campus’, then to ‘Spirit Shop’).

This project featured writers Elliott Denman, an Olympian in 1956, Pete Cava, Jim Ferstle, and Dan O’Brien. Their combined efforts are an insightful volume on the life and times of a man who did it all, saw it all, and helped change it all.