



# **The Dandy Dons: Bill Russell, K. C. Jones, Phil Woolpert, and One of College Basketball's Greatest and Most Innovative Teams**

*James W. Johnson*

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In the mid-1950s three unrecruited black basketball players, coached by a white former prison guard who had never before coached a college team, led a small Jesuit university in San Francisco to two national titles. *The Dandy Dons* describes for the first time how the unprecedented accomplishment of the Dons, led by coach Phil Woolpert and future hall-of-famers Bill Russell and K. C. Jones, paved the way for black talent in major college basketball and transformed the sport.

James W. Johnson traces the backgrounds of the coach and players, chronicles the heart-stopping games on the road to the championships, and details the Dons' novel techniques: a more vertical game, more central defense, and intimidation as part of game strategy. He also gives a textured picture of life on an integrated basketball team amid a culture of racism and Jim Crow in mid-twentieth-century America.

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