

The Games Do Count Study Guide

The Games Do Count by Brian Kilmeade

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Plot Summary

The Games Do Count is a compilation of essays written in the words of the people who participated in a project, describing how sports shaped their lives and helped them to become successful in their chosen careers. This book is an intimate peek into the lives of some of America's brightest people, including politicians, businessmen, and celebrities. Also included is a discussion of the impact of sports on the lives of a few of the heroes of Flight 93, an impact that might have culminated in their heroic actions on the final day of their lives. It is a touching and sometimes heart wrenching book that will inspire all who read it.

Brian Kilmeade considered for quite some time a book about the impact of sports on the lives of successful people. However, it was not until September 11, 2001, and the subsequent investigation he conducted into the lives of the brave people on board Flight 93, that Brian truly realized the importance of sports on a person's life. He decided to share this idea with his readers. Brian spoke to more than seventy businessmen, writers, entertainers, and the family members of several of the men on board Flight 93 and compiled a group of essays expressing these people's feelings toward sports and the impact of sports on their lives.

There are many things people credit sports for as an impact on their lives. Many of the people profiled in this book credit the activity of organized sports as saving them from a life of crime that boredom and misdirection might have provided for them otherwise. Many credit sports with teaching them the importance of working as a member of a team and working together for a common goal. Then there are those who saw sports as an escape from an unhappy life, whether it be trouble at home or an inability to fit in with the other children at school.

Sports do more for most people than build muscles. Brian Kilmeade has proven in his book that sports can impact a life in many different ways. There are those profiled in this book who credit sports with creating in themselves a character that might not have developed without the discipline of sports. Others contend that sports taught them how to be strong, how to believe in themselves, and how anything is possible with hard work and discipline.

Then there are those who believe sports helped to prepare them for their lives in general. Many in politics compare sports to politics, claiming the competitiveness of politics is similar to that seen in sports. There are also a few who claim that to be successful in politics, they must learn to work as a team, which many have done by playing such games as basketball and baseball.

Others credit sports with taking them out of a middle-class existence and presenting them with the opportunities of college and a broader career choice. Many of the people profiled in this book come from lower-middle-class households and might not have had a chance at college if not for sports. Others found that the inability to participate in sports led to other interests that led not only to college but career opportunities. Sports

are highly important to many people and the successful people profiled within this book prove that fact over and over with their highly personal stories.



Tony Danza

Tony Danza Summary and Analysis

The Games Do Count is a compilation of essays written in the words of the people who participated in the project, describing how sports shaped their lives and helped them to become successful in their chosen careers. This book is an intimate peek into the lives of some of America's brightest people, including politicians, businessmen, and celebrities. Also included is the impact of sports on the lives of a few of the heroes of Flight 93, an impact that might have culminated in their heroic actions on the final day of their lives. It is a touching and sometimes heart wrenching book that will inspire all who read it.

Tony Danza grew up in Brooklyn, a small kid who learned to fight to protect himself on the streets. When he got older, a group of Tony's friends entered him into the Golden Globes boxing competition. Tony began fighting regularly and was billed as the Battling Bartender. Tony was knocked out one night and was dazed, but he loved the sport. Tony went back the following year, but this time he trained. Shortly after, Tony turned pro. Tony began training at Gleason's gym and trained with Eddie Gregory, who later, after changing his name to Eddie Mustafa Mohammad, became world champ. Tony found a real love for boxing, despite the fact that his father did not want him to do it for fear of his becoming injured. Tony credited his boxing career with helping him land his first acting role on the television show, *Taxi*. Tony was seen in a fight by a man who worked in television and who wanted to put him in a television show he was creating. Tony thought he would lose the chance because he nearly lost the fight that the NBC executives came to see him in. However, he won and was soon offered a role that eventually led to his role on *Taxi*.

Tony Danza credited his career as a boxer for his start in acting. This touches on the theme of sports as a confidence builder. By getting into boxing, Tony's confidence built up, and he felt as though he could do anything, which led him to more fights and eventually to an acting role. The tone of this chapter is subjective, as Tony describes boxing through his own experience, and it is enthusiastic, almost making the reader want to run out and box, too.



Jon Stuart

Jon Stuart Summary and Analysis

Jon Stuart began participating in sports in order to get out of the suburbs. Jon was a small kid and found it difficult to compete until he was in late high school. Jon spent a lot of time working on his soccer skills with a neighbor, Mike Faith. Jon looked back fondly on those days. Jon knew he was not the greatest athlete, but it taught him a lot about relying on himself to succeed. Jon compared the soccer field with comedy. It was not about the audience or the fans but about the act of playing or the act of writing jokes.

Jon was not a good soccer player, but he learned from his experiences as a soccer player things that have brought him success in his career as a comedian and actor. Jon learned that it was not about pleasing the audience but about doing the best he could do. This touches on the theme of sports as a character builder. While Jon was not good at soccer, at least not by professional standards, he worked hard at it and learned that life takes work and practice, and he uses this philosophy in his every day life.

Pat Croce

Pat Croce Summary and Analysis

Pat Croce, a television host, started playing sports when he was in fourth grade. To Pat, sports were a way to prove dreams could come true, and that you could get better at something. Pat shared his sports enthusiasm with his father, a man who was a strict parent, but who also showed support and affection to his son when he played sports. Pat matured late in life; therefore, he never was a starter on his high school or college football teams, a fact that always bothered him. However, Pat played to the best of his ability, using the skills he learned later when he became an athletic trainer.

Pat Croce's story also touches on the theme of sports as a character builder. Pat found in sports a way to make his dreams come true as long as he worked hard and practiced every day. Pat took these lessons into adulthood, using sports as a career by becoming an athletic trainer. Pat would never expect his players to do anything he could not do using the same lessons he learned on the athletic field to help his clients.

Tony Robbins

Tony Robbins Summary and Analysis

Tony Robbins, a motivational speaker, wanted to play sports when he was young but did not have the opportunity until his mother remarried when he was in fifth grade. Tony's new father was a semi-pro baseball player who encouraged Tony to play baseball. This encouragement helped Tony connect to his new father while they trained together. Later Tony switched to football but found he had come to the game too late to do well, but he learned to toughen up. When Tony missed making the baseball team in junior high, he changed his desire to be a professional ballplayer to the idea of becoming a sportscaster. Later, Tony learned that Howard Cosell was going to be at a local department store. Tony went and managed to get an interview with Cosell for his school paper. Later, the LA Times ran a story about it, and Tony's local paper asked him to write an article. After the success of the article, Tony was offered a weekly column.

Tony Robbins used his love of sports to not only create a close relationship with his new stepfather, but to jump start his career at a time when most kids are more worried about making the team or getting a date for Saturday night. Tony learned through sports how to be tough physically and emotionally and how to find inner strength. Tony still uses these lessons today in his motivational speaking and in the books he writes.



Geraldo Rivera

Geraldo Rivera Summary and Analysis

Geraldo Rivera was a street kid, who credits two coaches and sports for saving his life. Geraldo was an asthmatic kid who was small and mediocre at sports but soon learned that running could help expand his lung capacity and helped his asthma. In high school, Geraldo also learned that a positive attitude could change any situation. In college, Geraldo joined the rowing team and learned the importance of working together as a team. Geraldo loved competitive sports and played a touch football game every Sunday for twenty-five years in Central Park. Geraldo was proud of that record because he played with some very successful and famous people. Geraldo summed up what he learned from sports as a chance to prove he can compete and he can succeed.

Geraldo's story touches on the theme of character building through sports. Geraldo learned that sports could help him to have a positive outlook on life and to succeed where others might think he would fail. Geraldo took these life lessons from sports and applied them to his daily life and career and succeeded when others told him he would not. Sports took Geraldo out of the streets and gave him the will to try and to become a successful adult.



Catherine Crier

Catherine Crier Summary and Analysis

Catherine Crier was always an athlete, playing basketball, football, and running track most of her childhood. However, it was the horses her family raised and showed that were Catherine's greatest athletic outlet. By the time Catherine was fourteen, she had won many prestigious awards in the horse show circuit. Through her horsemanship, Catherine learned that if she made a mistake, there was no one she could blame but herself. This taught Catherine to be well disciplined and self-reliant. Catherine used sports to keep herself out of trouble as a child.

Catherine Crier's story touches on the theme of sports as a confidence builder. Catherine learned to rely on herself, to take the responsibility of her mistakes on her own shoulders, and to go out into the world with confidence, knowing she could handle any situation. Catherine continues to use these lessons today in her career as a television reporter, anchor, and author.

John Tesh

John Tesh Summary and Analysis

John Tesh was a tall, awkward kid in junior high school, who turned to sports as a way to make himself more popular with the other kids. John started out as a high jumper, breaking a record at his school, then moved on to soccer. John was not the best player on the team, but he worked hard and earned his letter jacket, a source of great pride to him. John learned from sports that you can do anything as long as you work hard at it.

John Tesh's story illustrates the theme of sports as a confidence builder. John used sports to help change his reputation at school and take away some of the awkwardness he felt because of his size. Although not great at sports, John did learn he could be successful if he worked hard and practiced often. Sports changed John's entire outlook on life.



Oliver North

Oliver North Summary and Analysis

Oliver North grew up in a competitive family where his father encouraged all his children to play a sport, including being on the Little League team North's father coached. When Oliver was older and attending the Naval Academy at Annapolis, participation in a sport was required in order to teach the students about being part of a team. Oliver said he learned that not winning was a disappointment and that winning makes a difference. Oliver boxed at the Naval Academy under a legendary teacher and later came back to judge a championship boxing match. While collecting the judge's cards, Oliver noticed that Rocky Marciano, another judge and World Heavyweight Champion, consistently voted for the boxer who got knocked out. Oliver asked him why, and the Marciano said it was because the kid who got knocked out had courage to get back up each time. Oliver continues to use this lesson as he coaches young boxers himself.

Oliver North's story illustrates the theme of the general impact of sports on a person's life. Oliver learned that winning does matter, but he also learned that sometimes it is the one who has been knocked down repeatedly who has the most courage. This lesson has followed Oliver throughout his life, inspiring him in his career as a Naval Officer and later in life as he became a mentor to young men. Always competitive, Oliver learned how to work as a member of a team, another lesson that served him well in his Naval career.

Gerald Ford

Gerald Ford Summary and Analysis

Gerald Ford played football from the time he was ten or eleven. When he started high school, Gerald became captain of the team and All-State. Gerald's biological father was able to locate Gerald because of newspaper articles about Gerald's playing ability. In college, Gerald won the Meyer Morton Trophy for outstanding freshman player at spring practice. Gerald's team played well all through college until his senior year, when most of the starters had graduated and the quarterback had broken his leg. Gerald said that playing football helped him to handle critics in the stands and the press, allowing him to let their insults roll off his back.

Gerald Ford's story, like Oliver North's, introduces the theme of the general impact of sports on a person's life. Gerald had an unusual thing happen to him that he associates with sports, the discovery of his biological father. When Gerald was in high school he met and had lunch with his biological father. This incident surely had a large impact on Gerald's life because he had not known his biological father before this. Later, in college, Gerald learned to ignore the critics in the stands and the papers while playing football. This lesson would carry on in his later life when he became President of the United States. The President is always under scrutiny by the press and this lesson could only have made his job less stressful.

George Allen

George Allen Summary and Analysis

George Allen, U.S. Senator from Virginia, grew up around professional football players because his dad was an assistant coach first for the Rams and then the Chicago Bears. Although George's father encouraged him to play baseball, George played football during high school and college. George's father taught him to have strong morals, to pay attention to details and to work hard. Later, when George ran for political office, his father campaigned for him, using his competitive nature to help his son win in 1982.

George Allen's story is more about the relationship between a man and his father than it is about sports. However, it is the love of sports that brought father and son together and helped forge a lasting bond between them. George took the lessons his father taught him into his professional life, never quitting and always working hard. It is these lessons that have helped make George successful in his political career.



George H. W. Bush

George H. W. Bush Summary and Analysis

George H. W. Bush began playing baseball as a small child and continued throughout school. George learned the value of working with a team through sports. At Andover, George played under the coach Ethan Allen, a professional ballplayer who took Andover to the finals of the College World Series in 1947 and 1948. George had many idols in baseball players, including Lou Gehrig, Babe Ruth, Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio. George met Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio when he was President and was thrilled, despite his impressive job at the time.

George H. W. Bush's story is more of that of a fan than that of a player, even though he was a good ball player. George's love of baseball came from his father, who played in college. Sports became something the two men shared. Later in life, George wanted to grow up to be Lou Gehrig, who was loved by all his many fans. When George met two of his baseball idols, he was excited, despite being the President, which would seem more important than being a retired baseball player. Illustrating the theme of character builder, George learned from baseball how to be a member of a team and to work in tandem with other people. He was a man whose love of sports aided him in his position as President.



Harold Ford, Jr.

Harold Ford, Jr. Summary and Analysis

Harold Ford, Jr. began playing basketball when he was six. Harold's father came from a large family and had worked since he was a small child, so he never had time for sports. When Harold played, his father worked too much to attend his games. However, when his father could attend, he always had helpful advice for Harold. Harold played basketball throughout school. In college Harold learned the importance of playing as a team during one memorable game when his team was losing badly. Harold continued to play in the game and was teasingly called as the most competitive guy in the house on the basketball court.

Harold Ford Jr.'s story is about learning how to play as a member of a team, a lesson that has continued to help him in his career in Congress. The theme of character building is also important in Harold's story because he learned through sports how hard his father worked, how important it was to work as a team, and that sports was an outlet for his emotions. Harold used basketball to inspire young people to play, taking the lessons he learned as a young man to other young men.

Pat Williams

Pat Williams Summary and Analysis

Pat Williams's father took him to see his first professional baseball game when he was seven, and from that moment on, Pat wanted to be a baseball player. Pat played all through school and into college, then was drafted by the Phillies as a catcher where he played for two years. After two years, the Phillies gave Pat a job as general manager of the minor league club in Spartanburg, South Carolina. This led to Pat having a thirty-six year career as an executive with the NBA. Pat continued to play baseball, often catching for retired major league players at fantasy camps. All nineteen of Pat's children have all played a sport as well, teaching them the importance of being a part of a team.

Pat Williams' story is one of living a dream and taking the lessons he has learned to the next generation through his children. The theme of the impact of sports on a person's life is aptly illustrated here. Pat made a life of sports, first playing professionally and then making a career of working behind the scenes of professional sports. Sports became Pat's life. Later, Pat taught his children sports, encouraging them to learn how to work as a team.



George Will

George Will Summary and Analysis

George Will played baseball and football as a child, mostly in spontaneous neighborhood games. George was not a good ball player, but he continued to play because he felt it helped him learn to communicate with adults, and the rules gave him structure. For high school, George went to a special school at the University of Illinois called Laboratory High School. There George played basketball. The team had a losing record, but George enjoyed it anyway. While writing a book on baseball, George realized that of all the people he had interviewed, not a single one ever bragged. George put this down to the difficulty of the game. George loved the game and hoped he always would.

George Will's story is again one of love of the sport, not unlike George H. W. Bush's story. George learned to play the game because it was what the kids were doing in his neighborhood. George stayed with the game because he realized it put him on equal footing with the other kids, gave him structure, and provided a bonding conversation for him and the adults in his life. These lessons touch on the theme of the impact of sports on a person's life. George learned important lessons that he has taken into his adulthood, influencing the subject matter of one of his books.

Henry Kissinger

Henry Kissinger Summary and Analysis

Henry Kissinger began playing soccer when he was six in the German town where he was born. Although not a good player, Henry took the game very seriously. When Jews were segregated in 1933, Jewish teams were only allowed to play each other. Henry's family immigrated in 1938, managing to avoid the worst of the Jewish extermination that took place in Germany under Hitler's rule. Sports helped distract Henry from the terrible political climate. When he played soccer, Henry would employ a strategy similar to the Italians in which he would put a large number of defenders around the goal. Through this strategy and the simple act of playing soccer, Henry learned how to play as part of a team and about camaraderie.

Henry Kissinger's story is one of survival. Henry was a soccer player in order to be a part of a group, but he was also a soccer fan in order to keep his mind from the terrible political climate surrounding his country and his people. Henry's story again illuminates the theme of the general impact of sports on a person's life because sports made Henry's childhood more carefree than it might have been had he not had the distraction of soccer to keep his mind from the Jewish persecution going on in his country. Not only this, but learning strategies to win soccer games helped Henry to learn what it meant to be a part of a team and to build lasting friendships.



Jack Welch

Jack Welch Summary and Analysis

Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric, began playing baseball and hockey in the fields near his home when he was seven or eight. Jack credited his mother with teaching him to be competitive through their games of gin rummy. Jack's mother was a strict disciplinarian as well. Jack played baseball all through school and was always the captain of the team, more because of his personality than his athletic ability. Jack took the things he learned in sports, such as how to listen to other people's views and build a good team, and applied them to business to help him succeed.

Jack Welch's story illuminates the theme of sports as a character builder. Jack took what he learned not only from playing sports but from competing with his mother in cards and molded the person he became. Jack took the lessons learned from losing to his mother to give him confidence, from being a team captain to gain leadership skills, and from being part of a team to learn teamwork and applied all those lessons to help him become a successful businessman.

James Brown

James Brown Summary and Analysis

James Brown, the television sports anchor, began playing baseball in eighth grade. James was not good at baseball at first, but learned to listen closely to the coaches in order to help him hone his skills. When James's baseball team was in the playoffs one year, the football and basketball coach from DeMatha Catholic High School recruited him to play basketball for him. James was worried because he was not a good basketball player, but he discovered he preferred basketball over baseball because there were no curve balls. James listened to his coach and worked hard even during the summer and ended up being the Player of the Year in the Washington D.C. area. The things James learned from sports and his coach helped him get into Harvard. After college James became a professional basketball player, being cut first by the Atlanta hawks. Although crushed, James learned from the experience. In his professional life, James Brown took those lessons learned and has never backed down from a challenge or allowed anyone to tell him he cannot do something.

James Brown's story touches on the theme of sports as a character builder. James used sports to help him learn that he could do anything if he simply put in the effort. James went to Harvard because he knew that academics were important, thanks to his parents, and that hard work can help you achieve any goal, a lesson learned from his high school coach. James even continued to learn from sports when he was cut from a professional basketball team, learning from this experience that failure is not the end of everything. James continued to use these lessons later in life and they have helped him to become successful in his career as a sports anchor.

J.C. Watts

J.C. Watts Summary and Analysis

J.C. Watts, former Congressman from Oklahoma, began playing sports as a child for entertainment. In the eighth grade J.C. began playing football. At first J.C. played fullback and then tailback, but later was moved to quarterback. J.C. did so well that he continued to play quarterback all through school and into college. Once, J.C. saw a local boy play football on television and that helped him decide he could be better and do better if he worked hard at both football and academics. After college, J.C. was drafted in the eighth round by the New York Jets but turned down the opportunity when he learned he would not play quarterback. Instead, J.C. played in the Canadian football league until he retired at age twenty eight. Through sports, J.C. learned to be a team player. When J.C. went to Congress, he remembered those lessons and attempted to use them to keep his perspective clear.

J.C. Watts' story illustrates the theme of sports as character builder. J.C. used sports as a motivation to work hard at his academics, so he could climb out of the blue collar world he had grown up in and become something more important. J.C. worked hard, went to college, and became an important man through his work in the church and in politics. J.C. learned how to be a member of a team and how hard work can bring success and brought these lessons to his adult life, using them to have a successful career and to help the people in his church and his community.

Bill O'Reilly

Bill O'Reilly Summary and Analysis

Bill O'Reilly began playing sports at seven, choosing ice hockey in high school because space on the football team was reserved. Bill discouraged his father from coming to see him play because his father was an emotional man, who made playing spontaneously difficult for Bill. When Bill was eighteen, several scouts from the Mets came to talk to him. Bill went to try out for the team, but his pitches were not good enough, ending Bill's dream of being a professional ball player. Bill also learned that he was not a good enough football player for the professional teams. However, from his experiences with sports, Bill learned that he could push himself to prove how good he was.

Bill O'Reilly's story illustrates the theme of sports as a character builder because sports taught him how to push himself to achieve the goals he wanted. Even though Bill did not become a professional ball player, he learned from the experiences of pushing himself to try and not quitting. Bill has taken these lessons into adulthood and has become a successful television commentator.

Jon Bon Jovi

Jon Bon Jovi Summary and Analysis

Jon Bon Jovi played football as a child until he moved into the higher weight class and found himself in competition with other boys who were tougher than he. However, Jon continued in athletics in order to stay fit for his rock band. Jon also learned from sports that being part of a team is important.

Jon Bon Jovi's story relates to the reader that you do not have to possess professional skills in sports in order to gain a lesson that will serve you well. Through the use of sports as a confidence builder, Jon learned how to stay fit for his current career and how to work with a team in order to be successful. Not only this, but Jon did not lose his enthusiasm for sports even when he did not succeed. This is probably the most important element of the Jovi's story, sports as a confidence builder.

William Cohen

William Cohen Summary and Analysis

William Cohen, former Secretary of Defense, played basketball and baseball as a child. William's father never missed a single game in which William played, but he was critical of his son's performance. William's father was a perfectionist and expected perfection from his son. William practiced all winter and was usually the captain of the basketball teams on which he played. William hoped to go on to professional basketball after college, but chose law school instead. In 1987, William was named to the Silver Anniversary All Star team by the National Association of Basketball Coaches.

William Cohen's story is one of a drive to succeed and an understanding of the hard work required to do so. William played ball for entertainment, but sports became something he could share with his father and something that helped him achieve other goals in his life. William worked hard, not only to please his father but because he wanted to succeed. This touches on the theme of sports as a character builder because it was sports and his father's encouragement that built the person William became and helped him with his chosen profession.

Howard Schultz

Howard Schultz Summary and Analysis

Howard Schultz, the founder of Starbucks, lived in Brooklyn and played sports with the neighborhood kids. Howard's family lived in subsidized housing in a diverse neighborhood where race nor religion had a bearing on the athletic field. Only a competitive spirit counted. Howard played football in high school and was quarterback his senior year. Thanks to his football skills, Howard was accepted to Northern Michigan University, where he played with Steve Mariucci, the current coach of the Detroit Lions. However, Howard became injured and could no longer play football. Howard took the lessons that come with playing on a team and applied them to his personal and business career.

Howard Schultz's story is another example of how working as a part of a team can teach a young man valuable lessons that he can draw on later in life. Wildly successful as an adult, Howard worked hard to achieve success in football only to ultimately be disappointed by an injury that ended his ability to play. However, Howard took the lessons of being a part of a team into his personal and professional lives in order to help him achieve his wild success.

Roger Ailes

Roger Ailes Summary and Analysis

Roger Ailes, television producer, had a father who was athletic as a young man. Roger also played many sports as a child, perhaps because his early years were filled with illnesses and injuries. When Roger was a child, he was hit by a car and had stiff joints as a result. Roger's father would make him run in order to loosen his joints. Sports reinforced Roger's desire to win at all costs. This desire followed Roger into adulthood when he played a game against the cast and crew of the *Today Show* and injured a man to make it to home plate. Roger learned from sports that you do not know how to win until you lose. This lesson was one Roger took with him into his professional career, and it helped him become a success.

Roger Ailes's story is about perseverance and fighting to overcome weakness. Roger learned from his father that hard work was the only way to get past a set back. Sports taught Roger how to win, but more importantly, how to lose. Roger's story illuminates the theme of sports as a character builder because it was primarily sports that taught Roger these lessons that he has taken into his adulthood to help him succeed in his chosen career.



Denis Leary

Denis Leary Summary and Analysis

Denis Leary's father was an Irish immigrant, who became a big fan of ice hockey because it was similar to hurling, one of the national sports of Ireland. Hurling is similar to ice hockey. Denis and his father would sleep outside Boston Garden to get tickets for a game. Denis began to play hockey when he was only three, competing with his older brother before joining an organized team. One year Denis's team went undefeated, a special feat that has never been repeated in that league. In high school, Denis missed being on the hockey team because he was not a good student. Denis performed in a musical one year, and when his friends saw how many girls were in the musical, they all auditioned for the next one.

Denis saw sports as a way out of his working-class neighborhood. Denis got a scholarship to Emerson College because of his acting in high school musicals, a scholarship that he credits with saving his life. However, from sports Denis learned how to play as part of a team, a lesson he took into his professional life where he discovered that most actors work as a team on a movie to make the best movie possible. Denis also discovered that there is nothing better than playing ball with his kids.

Denis Leary's story is one of bonding with his father, of bonding with his brother, and of using sports as a way to escape. Denis thought his only way out of his middle-class neighborhood was sports until his grades made this unrealistic. Denis turned to acting as another outlet but never forgot sports. Sports were an important part of his childhood because of the connection it provided for him between himself and his father and brother. Denis's story touches on the theme of the general impact of sports on a person's life, where sports are not only entertainment, but a way of life. Denis has continued to play sports in his adulthood, using the lessons from sports to be a better actor and teaching his children those same lessons.

Molly Culver

Molly Culver Summary and Analysis

Molly Culver played sports because her brother and sister played. Sports were a family affair for Molly. When she was a sophomore in high school, Molly injured her knee while riding a motorcycle. Before that, however, Molly played on a basketball team that her sister coached. Molly wanted to play like her sister, but she was never quite as good. Molly learned to be aggressive to keep up with the other girls and fell down a lot, though she still found the game fun. Molly took the lessons she learned playing basketball and applied them to her career as an actress. An actress has to be competitive, aggressive and willing to do anything for a job. Molly also took her skills in baseball and began coaching inner-city kids in order to give them the advantages that sports offer.

Molly Culver's story is not only about bonding with her family and being a success by working hard, but it also about picking yourself up and going on after a tragedy. Touching on the theme of character building, Molly was terribly disappointed when she blew out her knee in her sophomore year in high school, an injury that meant she would never play basketball again. However, she took that disappointment and applied it to her career as a model and actress, competing with other actresses in the same aggressive manner she used when playing basketball. Molly learned from sports and has continued to use those lessons, not only for herself, but also to teach inner city kids.



Ron Reagan on his father, Ronald Reagan,

Ron Reagan on his father, Ronald Reagan, Summary and Analysis

Ronald Reagan was not a big guy, and he was near-sighted, so his positions in football were limited. However, Ronald worked on strategies to make up for his limitations. Ronald had a strong sense of fairness. There was an African American man on his team. Once the team they were playing against purposely played dirty against this teammate. Ronald, instead of returning their actions in kind, stepped up the play and left that team with lots of grass stains on their jerseys. Later, when he was an actor, Ronald wanted to do a movie about, George Gipp, a football hero, nicknamed "The Gipper." Warner Brothers beat Reagan to it. Ronald went and asked for the part of the Gipper in their movie and was turned down because they did not think he looked like a football player. Ronald showed them a picture of him playing college football and got the part.

Unlike most actors, Ronald was athletic and spry even into his older years, always lifting weights and doing work on his ranch. Ronald was also a swimmer in his younger days, having saved more than seventy people from the river during his days as a lifeguard. Ronald was tough, but he also had a soft side. Ronald would not tolerate a bully, even when he was President. Ronald loved to get into physical contests with his son when his son was young; Ronald never let his son win. Ron believes that Ronald knew that it was not winning that was important, it was how he played the game that was important, and Ron believed this was the best lesson his father taught him.

Ronald Reagan did not play sports in order to prove himself manly or some of the other reasons a person might have but because he enjoyed the physical side of sports. Ronald was a strong, athletic man, who knew what his body was capable of and enjoyed pushing it to the limits even as an older man. The lesson Ronald Reagan seemed to have taken from sports was the sheer joy in playing the game, not winning or learning to play as a member of a team. Ronald was a good man, whom his son remembers fondly. His son continues sports with Ronald's strong sense of right and wrong. This is a touching and intimate look at a famous man that only his son could have provided.



Tom Ridge

Tom Ridge Summary and Analysis

Tom Ridge, the first Secretary of Homeland Security, began playing baseball when he was only five or six. Tom played catcher because he felt more in control in that position and believed himself to be very good. Tom tried out with the high school team his senior year and failed miserably, though he took it in stride. Tom also caddied from the time he was ten or eleven. Tom credits caddying with teaching him about human nature as well as integrity and character. Tom also played basketball, but was not very good. However, he was highly competitive and Tom credits this as the reason he is in politics.

Tom Ridge played a lot of sports as a child and credits each one with teaching him character, a theme of the book. Tom was good at baseball, but his level of play did not reach the standards of his high school team, a fact he took in stride. Tom was also a caddy, learning to take criticism without complaint. Finally, Tom credits his competitive nature for giving him a career in politics, an important step in his overall adulthood.



Burt Reynolds

Burt Reynolds Summary and Analysis

Burt Reynolds noticed that the athletes had more girls and felt that was a good reason to join a team. In eighth grade, a fellow student asked him to race a boy they called Flash. Burt won the race. The fellow student, Dick Howser, grew up to be manager of the Yankees. Burt played football in high school and intended to go to Miami on a scholarship, but Dick talked him into checking out Florida State. When Burt learned that the majority of the school's population was female, he decided to go to Florida State. Burt did well at Florida State, but his dreams of turning pro ended when he had a car accident and injured his knee. Burt's father was chief of police, and Burt hung out with outlaws in defiance, never gaining from his father the approval he desperately needed. When he filmed the movie *The Longest Yard*, Burt was challenged by the football players hired to act in the film because they saw him as just Hollywood fluff. One day they had played for eight hours and were tired. The other team promised to let them go home if they could get a yard. Burt and his team did so, and the subsequent celebration in the movie was a result of this success, providing the best analogy between sports and acting Burt could think of. It was not acting, it was reacting.

Burt Reynolds had different reasons for getting into sports, mainly the pursuit of girls. However, Burt credited sports with saving his life by taking him from the reckless behavior being the son of a police chief prompted. Sports helped Burt not only build character, touching on a theme of the book, but also saved him from a life of crime and gave him a work ethic he carried on to his career in acting. Sports also taught him an important lesson about acting, that it is about reacting, not acting.

Ray Kelly

Ray Kelly Summary and Analysis

Ray Kelly, New York City Police Chief, began playing stick ball at five or six. Ray credited sports with saving him from a life of crime, by allowing him to put his energies into sports, rather than the trouble that was taking place in his every day life. Ray boxed as a youth and felt that because he had a short reach, he did not do as well as he might have. Ray played football later in life, suggesting the reason he enjoyed it so much was because he was aggressive by nature. Ray continued to work out into adulthood at a gym, encouraging the men who worked under him to keep fit as well.

Ray Kelly learned from sports that there are better places to work out aggression, touching on the theme of sports as a character builder. Like others in this book, Ray credits sports with saving him from a life of crime, ironically turning him from crime to becoming a police officer. Ray still works out in his adulthood and encourages the same of the officers who work under him, creating a sports-oriented police force in the most populous city in the country.



David Dreier

David Dreier Summary and Analysis

David Dreier, Congressman from California, was never a good athlete, but had a moment of glory while playing baseball in fifth grade. Everyone else in David's family were athletes, causing him to feel inadequate, even though his family never made a big deal out of it. David's father was a Marine Corps drill instructor and David often felt as if he were on combat duty at home. David's father was highly competitive and taught him to be so as well, although David and his father often had arguments over the depth of his father's competitiveness. David compared sports to politics, citing the competitiveness of politics as similar to that of sports.

David Dreier grew up in an athletic family, teaching him the value of listening to his coaches and of discipline. David took these lessons into politics, which he sees as a metaphor for sports in its competitiveness. David was not good at sports, but took from it the lesson of confidence, a theme of the book.



Gray Davis

Gray Davis Summary and Analysis

Gray Davis, former governor of California, was told by a coach in high school that he had no ambition or direction, a moment that changed his life. Gray was so surprised that this coach had noticed him and cared enough to offer help that he was motivated to find a direction in his life. Gray played baseball all through high school and tried to play in college, but the players were all bigger than he at the time, so he switched to golf, a sport he shared with his mother. Gray credits the competitiveness he learned in sports with his ability to handle the competitiveness of politics.

Gray Davis was a good ball player, but he had no motivation. Sports and a caring coach taught him this, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports. Gray learned to aspire to greatness, crediting sports with helping him through the competition of politics. If not for sports and a kind coach, Gray might have lived a different life.



Peter Pace

Peter Pace Summary and Analysis

Peter Pace, General and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, began playing Little League as a small child. Peter was not extremely good at sports, but played harder than the other kids on the team to prove himself. Peter began playing soccer in junior high and credits the high school coach with making him a better player than he might have been on his own. When Peter applied to the Naval Academy, he failed the eye exam, and it was only a recommendation from his soccer coach that got him in. Peter was eventually inducted into the Little League Hall of Excellence for making a mark on society after playing the game.

Peter Pace was not a good athlete, but he learned to work as a member of a team. His fight to to play sports built within him a strong character, touching on a theme of the book, and helped him to do well in his military career and life in general.



Henry Kravis

Henry Kravis Summary and Analysis

Henry Kravis, co-founder of Kohlberg, Kravis, Roberts, &Co., played football as a young child. Henry was small for his age, but he ran fast and continuously proved himself to doubtful coaches. Henry played not only football, but wrestling and golf as a child. Henry credited these things with teaching him perseverance. Henry also credited sports with teaching him how important it was to be in good shape. Henry also learned about team work, which was something he continued to learn from when he started his company with partner George Roberts.

Henry Kravis learned about team work and perseverance through sports, teaching him confidence, which is a theme of the book. Henry was a small child, who fought hard to be allowed to play in the sports of his choice, later using this struggle in his career to help him keep ahead of the competition.



Bob Kerrey

Bob Kerrey Summary and Analysis

Bob Kerry, former Senator from Nebraska, grew up in a home full of athletes. When he was about ten, Bob began playing midget ball and later learned that he was so small his father to buy uniforms for the team in order for the coaches to allow him to play. Bob played football in high school, but was never a starter until his senior year. Bob once got to play against Gayle Sayers during one game and even then Bob could recognize Sayers' greatness. Bob learned from sports that you do the best you can and that is all you can do.

Bob Kerrey was a small, sickly child who fought hard to play the sports he loved. Bob learned from playing sports to never quit, touching on the theme of sports as a character builder. Bob took the lessons he learned from sports into his adulthood, never quitting and always doing the best he could do, and found that it provided him a satisfying career.

Hannah Storm

Hannah Storm Summary and Analysis

Hannah Storm, television sportscaster, came from a sports-oriented family, since her father was a sports executive. Hannah was not an outstanding athlete, but she was enthusiastic at track and field. By showing up at a track meet while ill, and winning a star, Hannah learned that by just showing up, she could be recognized and rewarded. Hannah also learned the importance of team work by observing teams and the psychology that occasionally causes a team to fail at reaching a goal. Hannah learned through sports that a person has to relax a little to be successful.

Hannah learned a great deal about sports, not only through her own participation in sports but also through her observations as a sportscaster. Hannah learned about team work, about showing up no matter what, and about the psychology of sports. Hannah learned confidence, a theme of the book, through sports not only as a participant in track, but also through her observations of other athletes. Hannah took these lessons to her career as a sportscaster and found success.



Joe Biden

Joe Biden Summary and Analysis

Joe Biden, Senator from Delaware, began playing sports as a small boy in Little League. Later Joe played football. Joe was a good athlete, always willing to keep going no matter what. Joe stuttered as a child, and sports helped him build the confidence that his stuttering took from him. Joe's father, an equestrian himself, taught Joe the importance of competition, rather than pressuring him to win. Joe learned from sports about teamwork, about always trying his best, and about never quitting or letting his pride get in his way. Joe took these lessons with him into adulthood, and when faced with the possibility of dying, Joe wanted to be remembered as a husband, father, and athlete, rather than as a Senator.

Joe Biden grew up with a father who had never participated in group sports, so his father never coached him on how to play his sports. However, Joe's father taught him to never quit and never let the other guy see him fail. Joe took this lesson and became a success at his chosen sports. Joe continued to keep athletics a part of his life and took the lessons learned and the confidence gained through sports to make a success of his life. Joe wanted to be remembered, should he die, as being an athlete, allowing the reader to see just how deeply his connection to sports goes.



Flight 93, Dave Kupiecki on his friend, Mark Bingham,

Flight 93, Dave Kupiecki on his friend, Mark Bingham, Summary and Analysis

Dave and Mark met at Berkley where Mark played on the rugby team. Mark was an outstanding rugby player, but he was not conceited about it. Dave remembered Mark as a strong, brave and outgoing guy who never would have shied away from conflict. Dave did not know what happened on Flight 93, but felt sure that Mark was in the middle of the confrontation between the passengers and the hijackers. Dave felt that Mark learned from sports not to hold a grudge, stemming from rough games in which Mark would often make apologies afterward.

Mark Bingham was a passenger on board Flight 93, which crashed on September 11, 2001, before it could damage either the Pentagon or the White House. Dave Kupiecki remembered his friend as strong and brave, and was certain his friend had something to do with the confrontation that took place on board that plane. Dave credits sports for teaching Mark about compassion, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports. Mark was a brave man, who, in his last moments, saved lives.



Flight 93, Lloyd Glick on his son Jeremy Glick,

Flight 93, Lloyd Glick on his son Jeremy Glick, Summary and Analysis

Jeremy was an accomplished athlete who won the NCAA championships in judo without a team or a coach. Jeremy learned from sports to think under pressure and to deal with difficult situations, proving to his father that it was this lesson from sports that aided Jeremy that morning on Flight 93.

Jeremy learned how to deal with difficult situations through sports, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports, as well as how to compete on his own, an enormous accomplishment. Jeremy was a brave man who took lessons learned in sports in order to act on that fateful day and save perhaps hundreds of lives.



Flight 93, Doug MacMillan on his friend Todd Beamer,

Flight 93, Doug MacMillan on his friend Todd Beamer, Summary and Analysis

Doug met Todd when they were both adults playing baseball for their church. Doug thought Todd was a wonderful person and must have been a great athlete in his prime. Doug credits sports with teaching Todd teamwork and discipline, and also how to set goals. Doug was thrilled in the aftermath of Flight 93, that the whole world got to see Todd the way he did, as heroic and decisive.

Doug thought his friend Todd was a great person, who was motivated and decisive, character traits that Doug believes Todd gained through sports. Todd learned to be a team leader from sports, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports, and it was this skill that helped Todd organize the other people on board Flight 93, to confront and stop the hijackers.



Flight 93, Deena Burnett on her husband Tom Burnett,

Flight 93, Deena Burnett on her husband Tom Burnett, Summary and Analysis

Tom Burnett played quarterback for both his high school and college football teams. Tom often told Deena how that experience prepared him for obstacles he faced in his adulthood. Although he never spoke of his accomplishments in sports, Deena learned about those accomplishments from others. On the morning of September 11, Tom called Deena four times, telling her about the hijacking and the plan the passengers were making in order to stop the hijackers. Deena felt sure Tom was one of the leaders, because of his calmness each time he called her and her experiences with him in the past. When Deena heard the tapes, this assumption was confirmed.

Tom Burnett learned through playing football how to be a leader, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports. Tom used this lesson to help lead the passengers on Flight 93, in fighting the hijackers to stop them from crashing the plane into either the White House or the Pentagon. Deena knew, from her experiences with her husband, that he was the leader on board that flight, and her belief was later confirmed.

Dennis Hastert

Dennis Hastert Summary and Analysis

Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House, grew up in a rural community. Dennis wrestled all through high school and college. After college, Dennis took a job coaching wrestling at a rival school. Dennis was proud of that job because all the kids he worked with went on to be good citizens. Wrestling taught Dennis discipline and how to rely on himself for success. When he became Speaker of the House, Dennis was surprised, but found it to be much like coaching.

Dennis Hastert took from sports discipline and confidence, touching on the theme of sports as a confidence builder, and became Speaker of the House. Dennis credited not only his experiences with being an athlete, but also his experiences as a coach with the success he has had in his adulthood and his career. Dennis also learned how to rely on himself for that success and that has helped him in many ways throughout his life.



Michelle Lombardo

Michelle Lombardo Summary and Analysis

Michelle Lombardo, *Sports Illustrated's* 2004 Fresh Faces Winner, came from a family of athletes. Michelle joined sports early in life and continued throughout her childhood, playing soccer with an aggression whose roots she cannot name. Michelle was a shy child, but in sports she was always outgoing. In high school, Michelle took the confidence she had learned on the sports field and transferred it to her regular life, becoming more outgoing. After high school, a friend of the family saw an ad for *Sports Illustrated's* fresh faces and thought Michelle would be perfect. Michelle entered, not expecting anything, and won.

Michelle Lombardo had always been athletic, but shy. Confidence learned on the sports field, a theme of the book, taught Michelle how to be more outgoing in her every day life. Michelle took this confidence and put in an application to be *Sports Illustrated's* 2004 Fresh Face, and winning, despite her claim that she did not want to win.



Robert Shapiro

Robert Shapiro Summary and Analysis

Robert Shapiro, a lawyer, played sports as a child but was often considered too small. In college, after a growth spurt, Robert was able to play football. Robert began to box as an adult, often working himself into exhaustion. Once, Robert had the opportunity to spar with James Toney, World Boxing Champion. Robert went two rounds with Toney, ending with Toney complimenting him on his lack of fear. Robert learned from boxing that he had to rely on himself and how to focus.

Robert Shapiro was always an athlete, even though he was much too small as a kid to play. When he was an adult, Robert, who had always been a fan of boxing, began to box. When given the chance to fight James Toney, Robert did not back down, but went two rounds with the champion. This, and the other sports Robert played, taught him to focus and to rely on himself, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports.

Jake Steinfeld

Jake Steinfeld Summary and Analysis

Jake Steinfeld, personal trainer and fitness entrepreneur, failed to make the basketball team in eighth grade and became determined to make it the following year. A game during his ninth grade year changed Jake forever when he won the game with a foul shot. Jake continued to play basketball through high school. Jake began lifting weights in high school and in college made the decision to be a body builder. Several years later, a girl asked Jake to help her prepare for a commercial she was about to do. Jake helped her work out and from word of mouth gained more interested customers, thus beginning his career as a personal trainer.

Jake Steinfeld used sports to help him learn confidence, touching on a theme of the book, as well as a starting point for a lifelong career. Jake wanted to be a body builder, but found himself helping other people work out and improve their own health, becoming a personal trainer in a time when personal trainers were not common place. Jake took from sports not only confidence, but a way to a successful career that has kept him in work for many years.

Emme

Emme Summary and Analysis

Emme, a model and television host, was always athletic as a child. In high school Emme was watching the rowers and was challenged to get into a boat. Emme had never been in a boat before, so she was not very good at first but after hard work became good enough to not only get a scholarship, but to be invited to be part of the Olympic trial team in 1986. Athletics taught Emme how to focus on positive things and how to not expect to win every time.

Emme began rowing because it challenged her. Emme loved a challenge, and she learned from this challenge how to focus and how to survive a loss, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports. Emme also found that sports gave her confidence and helped her to not dwell on the negatives of life.

John Irving

John Irving Summary and Analysis

John Irving, writer, wrestled from the time he was fourteen. John was a small kid, who loved wrestling, a sport that required self discipline and devotion. John took the discipline he learned from wrestling to his career as a writer, finding that it takes as much discipline, if not more, to stick with a large manuscript as it does to train to wrestle. John also coached wrestling after college to pay the bills while he waited for his writing to become successful. John discovered after success as an author that it took far more practice to become a full-time writer than he had expected.

John Irving took from wrestling the discipline and work ethic necessary to play an individual sport and applied it to his writing career. John applied the lessons learned from sports to his career as a writer, focusing on his writing with the same discipline he applied to his wrestling and became a successful writer.

David Hunt

David Hunt Summary and Analysis

David Hunt, a US Marine Colonel, came from a family of athletes. David's father was a swimmer and his brothers were competitive as well. David played baseball and hockey, getting a scholarship to play hockey in college. David said that many people believe that good athletes translate into good soldiers, but he did not think this was true, since being hit on the sports field and being hit by a bullet are two very different things.

David Hunt played sports out of fun and competition with his brothers. David was a good athlete, though not good enough to be a pro. David had confidence, however, touching on a theme of the book. David took this confidence and became a soldier, although David does not see a relationship between sports and the military.



Steve Doocy

Steve Doocy Summary and Analysis

Steve Doocy, television anchor, grew up in a small, rural community where sports were a part of every day life. Steve did not play much as a kid, however, because he was small and often did not play well. In high school, Steve discovered wrestling and found it was a sport he could actually do well. Steve learned discipline from this experience, even though he rarely got to wrestle because there was never anyone his size.

Steve Doocy learned discipline from wrestling, but he also learned persistence when he could not find a sport where he could be successful. Steve took these lessons into his adulthood and has become successful in his life, and he fondly remembered sports simply because with wrestling he had finally found something he could do well.



Condoleezza Rice

Condoleezza Rice Summary and Analysis

Condoleezza Rice's father was athletic, and because she was an only child, he encouraged her to be as well. Condoleezza took up ice skating as a child because her parents were going to graduate school in Denver, and it was something she could do all day while they were in class. Condoleezza was very tall and therefore had difficulties with skating, but she enjoyed it and learned confidence from the various competitions in which she competed, helping her to make speeches in front of large crowds in her adult career.

Condoleezza Rice learned confidence from skating, touching on a theme of the book. This confidence which Condoleezza gained from skating gave her the confidence to succeed in public service.

E.D. Hill

E.D. Hill Summary and Analysis

E.D. Hill, a television reporter, was tall as a child and assumed she would be a good basketball player, but she was not. E.D. began playing tennis because she could control her practices and abilities to a certain extent. E.D. was successful at tennis, and this taught her confidence.

E.D. Hill learned confidence through sports, a theme of this book, and took that confidence with her into her adulthood, using it to help her in her career on television. E.D. learned through sports everything she needed to know to be successful, specifically how to rely on herself, how to not allow adversity get her down, and how to succeed even when the odds were against her.



Kevin Sorbo

Kevin Sorbo Summary and Analysis

Kevin Sorbo, an actor, wanted to be a pro athlete from the time he was a child. Kevin played basketball all through school, but when he got to college he realized that the game was a business, and he did not want to be part of that. Kevin was highly competitive and continued to play golf with some of the most famous and talented athletes of our time.

Kevin Sorbo learned the joy of the game and refused to allow business to interfere with that, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports. Kevin also learned confidence in his many successes on the sports court, a lesson that he has continued to draw on in his acting career.



Sean Hannity

Sean Hannity Summary and Analysis

Sean Hannity, television and radio talk show host, author, played sports constantly as a child. Sean always felt like he was the best athlete on the field no matter what sport he played because he played his heart out, and because he was often the only athlete among the contestants.

Sean Hannity learned confidence through sports, touching on a theme of the book, and used that confidence to play his heart out and attempt to win every contest he competed in. Sean was very competitive and this probably served him well in his career on television and the radio.



Robin Williams

Robin Williams Summary and Analysis

Robin Williams was a small child, who was often tortured by the older, bigger kids. When Robin discovered wrestling, he finally found a way he could fight back against all those bullies. Wrestling turned Robin's life around, giving him confidence, along with muscles. Robin turned to track when he got older, finding success in the endurance the sport taught him. Robin learned how to be a member of a team and how endurance could really help his later career.

Robin Williams learned confidence from sports, touching on a theme of the book, teaching him how to be more confident even as a small child, who was often picked on by the older, bigger boys. Robin also learned how endurance could help him, even in his career as a comedian as he struggles to make it through hours of stand-up comedy without becoming exhausted under the physical and mental strain.

John Kerry

John Kerry Summary and Analysis

John Kerry played baseball and football as a kid, moving to hockey when he was older. John thought that although he never concentrated on one specific sport, he was best at hockey. John remembered his time in sports with fondness, having taken from the experience the sense of being a part of a team and discipline.

John Kerry learned discipline from sports as well as the meaning of being part of a team. John took his experiences with sports, the fond ones as well as the more difficult ones, into his adulthood with a nostalgia that keeps the lessons he learned fresh in his mind.

Joan Lunden

Joan Lunden Summary and Analysis

Joan Lunden was a dance student most of her childhood, but stopped when she got into high school. Joan began riding horses in high school but had to quit in college. As an adult, Joan got her daughters into riding, and they became competitive. Joan regretted not being more athletic as a child and got back into athletics as an adult, feeling better in her later years than she felt in the earlier years.

Joan Lunden learned from sports that she had to push herself and not give up so easily, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports. Joan became more athletic as an older adult and found she had so much more energy than she had had as a child that she felt extremely energetic. Joan learned that it was never too late to try.



David Pottruck

David Pottruck Summary and Analysis

David Pottruck, co-CEO of Charles Schwab, was a mediocre football player as a child, but in high school became a good football player as well as a wrestler. David learned through his experiences in college that he could control his talent and his success, making himself a champ in wrestling and getting MVP in football in one year. Later, while coaching college wrestling, David discovered that he could not put limits on himself or he would never succeed.

David Pottruck learned from sports not only confidence, but stamina and the ability to challenge himself, touching on the theme of the impact of sports. David took the lessons he learned and applied them to his career, becoming successful even in the face of adversity.

Carol Alt

Carol Alt Summary and Analysis

Carol Alt, model and actress, grew up with a love of the challenge that sports could provide, playing as many sports as she could. No matter what sport she played, Carol prided herself on her ability to anticipate where the ball would be and her ability to make peace with her other teammates no matter the situation, a talent she took with her to her acting career.

Carol Alt learned confidence through sports, a theme of the book, and felt that sports helped her with her coordination and her femininity. Carol learned to be confident and has found that this confidence has helped her with her career in both acting and modeling.

Ken Wolfe

Ken Wolfe Summary and Analysis

Ken Wolfe, former chairman and CEO of Hershey's, was twelve when he was injured on the football field by another player and was forced to prove his bravery to that child. It was a lesson that stayed with Ken his entire life. Ken continued to play football into high school and college where he had great successes and learned the power of a team.

Ken Wolfe learned how to deal with diversity on the football field, while learning, too, how to defend himself. Ken also learned the value of working as part of a team, a lesson he continues to draw on in his adulthood and his career.

Bernie Mac

Bernie Mac Summary and Analysis

Bernie Mac played basketball, football, and baseball as a child, but boxing was the sport he enjoyed the most. Bernie did not like the idea of getting hit in the face but quickly discovered it was not as bad as he first thought. Bernie always fought hard on the sports field, always coming back for more even after he was injured. Bernie applied this same confidence to giving speeches in school. Sports taught Bernie to always strive to do better than the day before, something he also used in his comedy routines, attempting to always top prior acts.

Bernie Mac took confidence and determination from sports, as well as self discipline, taking from his experiences in sports the ability to force himself to do better every time he presents a stand-up comedy routine. Bernie Mac is self confident, determined, and talented, and he learned a great deal of these things from his experience with sports.

Jim Caviezel

Jim Caviezel Summary and Analysis

Jim Caviezel came from an athletic family and strove to be a good basketball player. Jim worked harder than everyone else, always afraid someone else would be better than he was. Jim learned to live in the moment even while training for every conceivable situation. Jim also learned to reinvent himself through intense focus in order to be a success in Hollywood. Jim credits sports with helping him film *The Passion of the Christ*, despite being injured and ill.

Jim Caviezel learned focus and intensity from sports, and those things helped him not only to be success in Hollywood, but to get through the very difficult task of filming a movie while injured and ill. Jim learned how to train hard and how to prepare, another set of lessons that have continued to help him.

John McCain

John McCain Summary and Analysis

John McCain, Senator from Arizona, felt he was never an outstanding athlete, but enjoyed his experiences nonetheless. John wrestled in school and boxed at the Naval Academy. John's experiences with boxing helped him through his imprisonment in Vietnam, giving him the perseverance to survive. As a senator, John began working to clean up American sports because he felt they had such an impact on people that it was important to keep them pure.

John McCain used his good memories of sports and his love of the games to help him in his career to make a difference for all of sports and its fans. John also learned through sports how to persevere and how to survive, and from that, survived the worst five years of his life when he was held prisoner in Vietnam.

Hank Paulson

Hank Paulson Summary and Analysis

Hank Paulson, CEO and Chairman of Goldman Sachs, began playing sports thanks to a fifth-grade teacher, who taught him how to play flag football. Hank played football and also wrestled in high school. At college Hank nearly quit the football team because he sat the bench most of the time, but he ended up helping the team win the Lambert Trophy. Football taught Hank confidence and the importance of working as part of a team, something he took with him into his career and uses to help him choose the right people to work for him.

Hank Paulson learned confidence and the importance of being part of a team, touching on two themes of the book, sports as a confidence builder and the general impact of sports. Hank also learned to never quit. All these things combined to help Hank make a successful career for himself in business.



Kurt Russell

Kurt Russell Summary and Analysis

Kurt Russell's father was a minor league baseball player, so when Kurt began playing baseball at nine, his father was his first coach. Later, when Kurt realized how good he was, he decided he wanted to be a pro baseball player, and his life began to revolve around the game and practices. Kurt learned that the game was just as much mental as it was physical. Kurt also saw that he could have gone all the way and been a pro, but an injury ended his career. However, Kurt has no regrets because the injury led him into an acting career, and to enjoy life to the fullest, and to spend time with his family.

Kurt Russell learned that playing ball requires a person's full attention at all times, and this was something he ultimately didn't mind giving up, since it enabled him to get into acting. However, sports also taught him a good lesson that he utilizes today to aid his son in his own career as a minor league hockey player. Kurt felt that the games do count, but they do not have to be everything, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports.

Ron Shelton

Ron Shelton Summary and Analysis

Ron Shelton, director and screenwriter, began playing sports as a small child. Ron was a good baseball player who continued to play despite being injured. Ron had many good memories from his playing days. Ron also took the lessons he learned, such as how to deal with the ups and downs without losing his commitment, and applied them to his adult life. Ron also liked to work with ex-athletes because they know how to take direction better.

Ron learned how to keep himself committed to his sport no matter what, and this helped him through marriage and work problems as an adult. Ron also found that athletes are more disciplined and easier to work with, finding himself more comfortable working with actors who were once athletes in his work as a director.

Donna Lopiano

Donna Lopiano Summary and Analysis

Donna Lopiano, executive director of the Women's Sports Foundation, grew up playing sports with the kids in her neighborhood. Donna was once banned from playing Little League because she was a girl. Later, in high school Donna was frustrated with the extremely short seasons, so she played as many sports as she could. Donna took her approach to sports and applied it to everything she did as an adult, using it to help her pass legislation in order to help other girls such as herself to be allowed to play in any sport they chose.

Donna Lopiano learned that sports can be discriminatory and used this knowledge to help her change things for other girls. Donna believed she could have been a much better athlete if she had been given the chance; therefore, Donna decided to change things for other girls just like her. Donna learned that as great as sports are, change can make them better, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports as well as sports as a character builder.

Laurie Dhue

Laurie Dhue Summary and Analysis

Laurie Dhue, television anchor and reporter, got involved in sports as a way to bond with her father. Later, Laurie felt that sports was a way for her to become more sociably acceptable, since she felt she was a bit of a dork. Sports gave Laurie confidence and discipline, two things she draws on in her career in order to help her deal with the pressure.

Laurie Dhue got involved in sports because of her father, but later learned to draw from sports the confidence and discipline she needed to become successful at her chosen career, touching on the theme of sports as a character builder as well as the theme sports as a confidence builder. Laurie looks back on her experience with sports as a positive way to prepare her for life.



Darius Rucker

Darius Rucker Summary and Analysis

Darius Rucker, lead singer of Hootie and the Blowfish, began playing football as a small child. Football was everything to Darius, and he dreamed of being a player with the NFL. However, Darius knew he was too small so began to focus on his music. Even so, Darius learned the value of being part of a team, and that lesson helped him deal with being a part of his band.

Darius Rucker learned how important being a part of a team was and used that lesson to help him with his musical career and dealing with the ups and downs of being part of a band. Darius also learned how to adjust his dreams from wanting to join the NFL to learning to be happy with his music, helping him to become a success in the music business.



Donald Trump

Donald Trump Summary and Analysis

Donald Trump played baseball as a kid and enjoyed the game too much to call it work. Donald also played soccer and football, finding soccer much more enjoyable. Donald learned to be highly competitive, and this helped him enjoy sports all the more. Donald applied this competitiveness to his career and found that it brought him great success.

Donald Trump was a strong athlete, who developed a strong sense of competition and used this sense of competition to help him become successful in his career.

Jerry Bruckheimer

Jerry Bruckheimer Summary and Analysis

Jerry Bruckheimer, movie and television producer, began playing sports as a small child. Hockey and baseball were Jerry's two best sports. However, Jerry gave up hockey at twelve until he was an adult and had the opportunity to meet Wayne Gretzky. This meeting made him enthusiastic enough that he got back into the game.

Jerry learned how talent could get an athlete far, and he used that knowledge in his career to pick actors with the same level of talent to make good movies. Jerry also learned a love of sports that has helped him spread that love to his friends and family through a special tournament he sponsors every year.



Melissa Payner-Gregor

Melissa Payner-Gregor Summary and Analysis

Melissa Payner-Gregor, president of BlueFly, began participating in gymnastics at eleven and continued through college. Melissa learned focus through gymnastics and strict self discipline. Melissa learned to be calm under pressure and to simply do her best rather than to expect to win every time.

Melissa Payner-Gregor learned focus and strict self-discipline through gymnastics and took these lessons into her career to help her become a success in business. These lessons helped Melissa to be calm under pressure and to focus on what was important rather than the overall win, making her successful in her chosen career.

George W. Bush

George W. Bush Summary and Analysis

George Bush grew up in a competitive family with a father who was the captain of the Yale baseball team. George began playing baseball at a young age but never felt pressured to do well, just to enjoy the game. George played baseball at Yale like his father, but did not take it nearly as seriously as the other boys because his talent simply did not match his enthusiasm. Later, as owner of the Texas Rangers, George learned to view the players not by their stats but by who they were as men. George liked to find out what other world leaders played and to join them in their favorite sports activity. George also believed that sports are a great way to help Americans remain healthy.

George Bush learned that games are meant to be fun, touching on the theme of the general impact of sports. George also remembered his father never pushing him to be better at sports, something he remembered fondly about his father. George used sports as a way to connect with foreign leaders as well, helping him in his career as President of the United States.

Kim Alexis

Kim Alexis Summary and Analysis

Kim Alexis, model, television reporter, and talk show host, began swimming when she was small in order to be with a girlfriend. Swimming soon became an important interest in her life. Kim learned confidence in her body through swimming, which helped with her modeling career, a strategy that helped later with her television career.

Kim Alexis fell into sports almost by accident, but found a competitive streak inside herself that helped her as she grew older and began searching for a career. Kim also learned confidence, a theme of the book, which helped her in both her career and her personal life, aiding her in making the right decisions for the life she wanted to have.



Brian Kilmeade

Brian Kilmeade Summary and Analysis

Brian joined soccer in second grade because his parents would not let him join baseball in first grade. The first practice was a disaster, so Brian quit. Brian changed his mind and made soccer an important part of his life, bringing his brothers into it as well. Brian went on to play soccer in college, despite being a mediocre player. Soccer gave Brian confidence that he took with him through the struggle of making a career for himself on television.

Brian Kilmeade began playing soccer to make his parents stick to a promise they had made. Despite a rough start, Brian stuck with it through college and learned confidence from the game and the discipline it provided, touching on a theme of the book. Later, Brian took this confidence and created a career for himself on television of which he was be proud.



Characters

Brian Kilmeade

Todd Beamer

Tom Burnett

Condoleezza Rice

Jim Caviezel

Jerry Bruckheimer

John Irving

Henry Kissinger

Robin Williams

Ronald Reagan



Objects/Places

Basketball

Basketball is a game that is played with two teams of players, normally five on each team, who attempt to get a ball into each other's basket. This is a game that is played by several of the people profiled within this book.

Baseball

Baseball is a game that is played with two teams of nine. The object is for a player to hit a small ball with a bat and run around the four bases without being touched by the ball. This game was at one time considered America's Pastime and is a game played by many of the people profiled within this book.

Football

Football can refer to either American football, in which two teams attempt to score points, or touchdowns, by running the ball into the end zone. Football can also refer to a game in which two teams compete to kick a ball into a goal, also known as soccer in America. These two games are played by several of the people profiled within this book.

Wrestling

Wrestling is a sport in which two people attempt to pin their opponent to the mat on which they are fighting. Wrestling is a sport that several of the people profiled in this book competed in.

Horseback Riding and Horse Shows

Horsemanship is the act of taking care of horses and showing one's riding abilities with in a competitive setting. Several of the people profiled in this book competed in horse-related activities.

Hockey

Hockey is a competitive sport that can be played either on ice or a field. Hockey is a sport in which several people profiled in this book have competed.



Gymnastics

Gymnastics is a sport in which athletes compete using flexibility and agility. Gymnastics is a sport in which several people profiled in this book have competed.

Swimming

Swimming can be both a competitive activity as well as a leisure activity. Many of the people profiled in this book have swum both competitively and for pleasure.

Boxing

Boxing is a sport in which two people get into a ring and fight each other, following certain rules. Boxing is a sport in which several of the people profiled in this book have competed.

Golf

Golf is a sport in which a person attempts to get a small ball into a small hole from many yards away in the fewest strokes possible, often competing with several other people. Golf is a sport in which several of the people profiled in this book have participated.



Themes

Sports as a Character Builder

One of the reasons Brian Kilmeade gives for writing this book is the impact that sports have had on his life and the lives of other people. One aspect of this impact is sports as a character builder. Many of the people profiled in the book will tell the reader that sports helped mold the person they became by providing one of several things, including structure, discipline, and a united goal. Structure gave many of these people the security and protection that they did not have in their personal lives for one reason or another, providing for them as children the things they needed in order to feel secure in who they were as a person. Discipline helped show these people as children what to expect from the world in general as far as laws and punishment go. Finally, a united goal taught many of these people how to work as a team to obtain a goal, a lesson that many of the people profiled considered the most profound aspect of their sports career and the one lesson they took with them into their adult lives.

Sports helped many of the people profiled in this book with their personal characters not only for the reasons listed above, but in some cases, sports also gave some of these people a way out of poverty, lawlessness, and despair. Several people profiled in this book mentioned that their lives would have consisted of street gangs or remaining in a blue-collar neighborhood, if they had not begun to play organized sports and found that there was another life outside their neighborhoods. The people profiled within this book are politicians, writers, actors, and business people, many of them wildly successful. However, had their lives not been affected by sports, they might not be the people they are today. Sports changed their character in a fundamental way and helped them see what hard work could achieve. Sports gave them the tools with which to be successful and taught them structure, discipline, and teamwork. In this way, sports built their fundamental character by changing the way they look at the world and the way they look at themselves, especially in regards to their own abilities to achieve a goal.

Sports as a Confidence Builder

Another aspect of sports that Brian Kilmeade and the people he has profiled for this book point out is the idea that sports builds confidence in people. Some of the people profiled in this book admit that they were not good at sports and that they never became good at sports, and they never expect to be good at sports. However, each of these people speaks of their sports experience with nostalgia and pleasure because of the confidence sports gave them. Sports helped build confidence in these people because it made them a part of a team and helped them see what they could achieve, even if they were not the best at their sport.

Several people profiled in the book talk about how they were too small or too tall or otherwise physically unattractive or weak. These people then explain how becoming a



part of an organized sports team taught them that their individual weakness did not matter because they were a small part of a larger whole. Not only this, but many of the people profiled talk about the experiences of learning that hard work could make a bad player into a passable player. Suddenly kids who thought they were too awkward or clumsy to be athletic find themselves a part of winning teams. This experience taught many of the people profiled that they could do anything they set their minds to as long as they were willing to put in the work. This built confidence and taught them they could achieve any goal, which many took into their adult lives and used to help them achieve even larger goals, such as becoming politicians, entertainers, or business people. Confidence is extremely important in the success of a person's life, and sports taught each of the people profiled in this book that one important lesson.

The General Impact of Sports on a Person's Life

Sports offers any number of lessons to a person, and every person who has ever participated in an organized sports activity will walk away from the experience with a different lesson learned. Though there are many people profiled in this book and many different lessons learned, a general theme runs throughout. Included in this theme could be the idea of team work as it applies not only to sports but to real life. One person even equates the teamwork of a sports team to the teamwork of the United States Congress. Another lesson is the idea of how to protect oneself. Many of the people profiled participated in sports that taught them how to defend themselves in dangerous situations and took those lessons with them into adulthood.

An important lesson a few of the women profiled in the book learned was that women are not as different from men on the sports field as some people might believe. One woman mentioned how she played many sports that might be considered a male sport and not only did well, but excelled beside the men. Another lesson could be persuasion, such the example told by Ronald Regan's son, when he recounts how his father received a movie role by proving he had played football in college. Robin Williams found that sports finally evened the playing field, allowing him, even though he was small, to be able to battle against other boys instead of always being the victim. There are an endless number of lessons people can learn by participating in sports. This book covers just a few of them, but surely the reader will be able to find many more.



Style

Perspective

The book was compiled by Brian Kilmeade in an attempt to show the impact of sports on the lives of many successful people, including actors, politicians, and business people. Mr. Kilmeade also includes the stories of several of the survivors of Flight 93, attributing a small portion of their heroism to their past experiences with sports. Mr. Kilmeade is a sports reporter, who has spent most of his career around sports and sports figures. It is through this career that Mr. Kilmeade's perspective comes, through his love of sports and his curiosity over how sports has affected the lives of other people. However, it is not sports figures that he features in this book, but people who played sports in their youth and attribute much of their success to the lessons learned during the playing of these sports.

This book is told in more than seventy, short essays written by the subjects themselves, except in the case of Ronald Reagan and the victims of Flight 93, whose stories are told by family members or friends. Their perspective is personal and intimate, telling stories that perhaps they have shared with few people before this compilation. The book is an intimate portrayal of these many successful people and shares with the reader the impact of sports on their lives, from simple character building to life lessons, such as good sportsmanship. This perspective is intended to encourage budding athletes, to inspire sports participation, and to make a connection to sports for successful people, who have never looked at their character and perseverance quite that way before.

Tone

The tone of this book is highly subjective, hailing sports as the number one reason why successful people have managed to survive in their own stressful environments. The book suggests that by playing sports, each of these individuals have drawn from lessons learned in order to help shape their character and influence their success as business men and women, as politicians, as actors, and as successful people. There is a lot of nostalgia in most of the stories as these people remember a time in their lives when things were either easier or perhaps, in some situations, more difficult and how sports either changed their perspectives of their own lives, their situation, or their ability to be successful people.

The tone impacts the reader by making the reader almost like a cheerleader, hailing sports and wanting to run out and put their child in every sport available in order to help them become as successful as the people in this book. The tone can also allow the reader to empathize with the writers, seeing in these people, who are often idolized by ordinary people, something they have in common, such as a common love of a certain sport or perhaps a similar home life when they were young. The tone promotes the overall theme of the book, which is the impact of sports on extraordinary people.



Structure

The book is divided into seventy-three chapters, each titled by the name of the person who either wrote the chapter or the name of the person discussed within the chapter, as in the case of Ronald Regan and the heroes from Flight 93. Each of these chapters is a short essay in which the subject discusses the impact of sports on his or her life. The beginning of the book contains a foreword by Jim Brown, who discusses the importance of the lessons of sports, and an introduction by the author, Brian Kilmeade, explaining why he felt this book should be written. Following the final chapter, there is an afterward where Brian Kilmeade describes his feelings about the book and warns coaches of the power they hold over children's lives. The book ends with an acknowledgement in which Mr. Kilmeade thanks many of the people involved in his life and the creation of this book.

This book is well put together with an easy-to-use table of contents for those readers who are only interested in the stories of their favorite celebrity, politician, or business person. Most of the essays are well written and easy to read, full of fascinating facts any sports fan or anyone might enjoy learning about their favorite celebrity. It is a personal book, full of intimate details of the lives of these people, giving the reader insight into other people's lives that might not have been available without this book. The structure, overall, is reader friendly and appropriate for its subject.



Quotes

"They just filled out an entry blank in the *Daily News* and a short time later I got a notice to appear for my physical. For a second, I thought I'd gotten drafted." Tony Danza, pg. 5

"It was all about just getting good at something." Jon Stewart, pg. 11

"There's always the 'thrill of victory, the agony of defeat,' but it's also about matching your skills up against someone else, as well as answering the question, 'Can I still do this?'"

Geraldo Rivera, pg. 26

"My real pride and joy was my letter jacket. I think I was the only kid at Garden City Junior High and Garden City High School who wore his jacket every day." Jon Tesh, pg. 33

"Some of us are natural athletes. I'm not." Oliver North, pg. 38

"As a football player, you have critics in the stands and critics in the press. Few of them have ever centered a ball, kicked a punt, or thrown a touchdown pass with 100,000 people looking on, yet they assume they know all the answers." Gerald Ford, pg. 41

"Nevertheless, I was thinking, My gosh, I'd like to go to this camp, because basketball seemed to be more to my liking. Why? Because I was afraid of curve balls." James Brown, pg. 71

"I once talked to a guy who was one of Richard Nixon's coaches. I asked him, 'Was Nixon any good?'

He said, 'No, he was the worst player I ever had.'

I said, 'Well, what's the story?'

He said, 'He showed up first for practice every day. Guys would run over his position and stomp him into the ground, and he always got back up. I finally put him in a game, so he'd win a letter, because the guy never quit.'" Roger Ailes, pg. 99

"Another thing I've learned from participating in sports is that rather than forcing the issue, you have to relax a little bit. Stay focused, yet at the same time, stay relaxed."

Hannah Storm, pg. 153

"And you can't be scared. All those things go into being a trial lawyer, and they're the same things that go into being a boxer." Robert Shapiro, pg. 194



"Basically, it was a chance for a small kid like me to get a chance to wail on another small kid." Robin Williams, pg. 235

"From playing the game, I learned that if you have a setback, if you get hurt, you get up, make the adjustment, and go for it again. Make as few mistakes as possible, and that's what takes you higher." Kurt Russell, pg. 279



Topics for Discussion

What is the point of this book? What was Brian Kilmeade attempting to show his readers? Did he get this message across?

Why did Brian Kilmeade present the stories of the people he profiled in their own words? What impact does this have on the overall success of the book? Does this technique enhance or detract from the book?

Do you notice a similar thread to each of the profiled stories? What is this similarity? Why do you think this similarity exists? Do you notice differences? What are these differences? Do the differences detract from the overall theme of the book?

Can you think of other themes of this book? Are any of them separate from the main theme of sports? If so, what are these themes? How do these themes differ from the others regarding sports? How are they similar?

Can you relate to the stories in this book? If so, explain. How have sports affected your life? Do you agree with most of the opinions listed in this book regarding the impact of sports on your life?

Why do you think Brian Kilmeade included the stories of several of the passengers of Flight 93? What did sports have to do with their heroic final acts? Do you think sports affected their reactions on board that flight? In what way?

Which story affected you the deepest? Why? Can you relate to this story more than the others? Is it similar to your own story? Does your reaction to this story surprise you? If so, why?