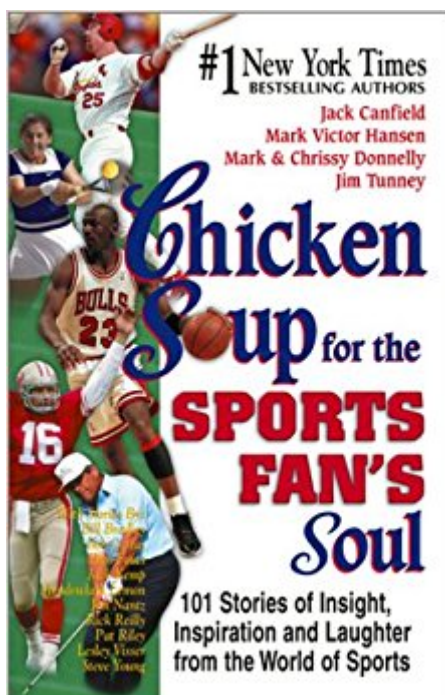


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# Chicken Soup For The Sports Fan's Soul: Stories Of Insight, Inspiration And Laughter In The World Of Sport (Chicken Soup For The Soul)



## Synopsis

For pure exhilaration and drama, there's nothing quite like sports: It's the crack of the bat as it connects with the baseball, hurtling it into the bleachers for a home run; the swish of the basketball as it drops into the net for a three-point play at the buzzer; the roar of the crowd as the quarterback delivers a perfect spiral pass for the winning touchdown. Most importantly, sports bring out the best in the human spirit. There is an intensity and a richness inherent in every sporting experience that amplifies our emotions and our connection with the moment and, indeed, with ourselves. This latest collection of Chicken Soup honors all that is good in the world of sports. From major leaguers to little leaguers, from hockey stars to figure skaters, and from horseracing to mushing, the stories in this book highlight the positive and transformative nature of sports. Readers will come to see sports as one of our most important and powerful teachers. They can teach us to focus and stay the course, or to develop a new strategy and rededicate ourselves to a goal. They can teach us to be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. They can teach us the importance of teamwork and remind us that we must strive to give our individual all. At their best, sports will build us up and they will wear us down; they will build character and teach us to overcome adversity. This book is for anyone who has ever enjoyed watching or participating in any sport, from the professional athlete to the weekend warrior, from the soccer mom to the diehard sports fan, from the marathon runner to the neighborhood jogger.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen, the #1 New York Times and USA Today bestselling coauthors of the Chicken Soup for the Soul series, have dedicated their lives to the personal and professional development of others. Jim Tunney, Ed.D., is regarded as the "Dean of NFL Referees." In his 31 years as an NFL official, Jim received a record 29 postseason assignments, including 10 Championships, three Super Bowls and six Pro Bowls. Named Sporting News Best NFL Official and awarded the highest accolade of the National Association of Sports Officials, the Gold Whistle (1992), Jim was the first official named to the "All-Madden Team" and is in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Today, Jim is a celebrated and respected professional speaker. His credentials place him in the top 2 percent of professional speakers working today, and he is past president of the National Speakers Association. Mark and Chrissy Donnelly are coauthors of the #1 New York Times bestsellers Chicken Soup for the Couple's Soul and Chicken Soup for the Golfer's Soul.

It's How You Play the Game Things turn out best for those who make the best of the way things turn out. ~ Daniel Considine When I was growing up, I remember hearing and reading many times, "It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game." In spite of these constant positive affirmations, I didn't believe that. The real world taught me the importance of winning. Finishing first at whatever I was doing became a priority, and if that didn't happen, "how I played the game" was meaningless. In my mind, second place meant first loser. I've since learned that this winner-take-all attitude ultimately leads an individual in any phase of life to frustration and misery. And it was the world of sports ~ specifically as a fan of competitive wrestling ~ that opened my eyes to the value of doing my best and taking pride in the results, regardless of the outcome. My son Kevin loved wrestling when he was growing up. I remember taking him to his first practice when he was only ten years old. On that warm spring afternoon, we walked into the wrestling room at Father Ryan High School, and he immediately wanted to know what was on the back wall. As we walked closer, he could see that there were fifteen or twenty plaques, each bearing an individual's picture. I explained to him that everyone on the wall was a Father Ryan wrestler who had won a state championship. Years later, when Kevin entered high school, it was clear he was blessed with a lot of athletic ability. Even as a freshman wrestler he showed promise, and he continued to improve each year. As a senior, he was captain of a team that compiled an incredible record, and he went into the state tournament ranked number one. He won his first match . . . he won his second match . . . he won his third match . . . and he won his fourth match. Here we were, in the finals of the state tournament, ready to claim our championship. Unfortunately, the next match didn't go well. I don't know if it was the stress of the season, the level of competition or just plain bad luck, but Kevin fell

behind early in the match and he never recovered. As I watched the clock wind down in the final period, it was obvious that he wasn't going to win. His season had ended, his high-school career was over, and we didn't have a state championship. Oh, I was devastated. I felt horrible, and I knew I was going to hurt for a long time. I believe at that moment you could've smacked me across the head with a two-by-four and I wouldn't have noticed. I stood there in shock, unwilling to believe what had just happened, and unable to accept it. I painfully watched Kevin as he slowly took off his headgear, shook his opponent's hand, and stood calmly in the center of the mat as the referee raised his opponent's hand in victory. Then he quietly walked out of the gymnasium. A few weeks later I received a newsletter in the mail from Holy Rosary Academy, where Kevin had attended grade school as a young boy. The school's principal wrote the following words: One of our more recent graduates has been the subject of our daily newspaper's sports section. In two of the articles about Kevin Baltz, his prowess in the sport of wrestling was discussed. While Kevin enjoys an impressive reputation statewide in the sport of his dreams, it is his noble character that is the focus of the newspaper articles. We who knew Kevin as a boy at Holy Rosary are not surprised that he should be honored. We enjoyed that same quiet heroism in him here. The impeccable courtesy now described by sportswriters was a hallmark of Kevin Baltz five years ago. His self-sacrificing manner, his respectful approach to peers, his devotion to friends and his spirit of cooperation were all very evident. We are proud that Kevin's character has left its mark at Father Ryan High School, and in the sport of wrestling in Tennessee. We are grateful he was a part of our lives here. May his spirit continue to bless those he will touch in all his life's journeys. When I read this, I sat down and cried. For Kevin, they were tears of joy. Wouldn't any parent be proud after hearing comments like these about his or her child? For myself, though, they were tears of gut-wrenching disappointment. You see, I had watched every single match Kevin had wrestled in high school, yet I hadn't noticed all the outstanding qualities that the sportswriters and his principal recognized. I was focused on the wins, the victories, the championships. And when he didn't get that final win, I was especially hurt and disappointed. I'd failed to recognize that Kevin was diligently working to achieve victories, but always performing with character regardless of whether he won or lost. In that moment, my eighteen-year-old son became my mentor. He taught me that the pursuit of victory is a noble goal, but that winners in life appreciate the pursuit more than the victory itself. I wish my son had won that state championship and claimed his plaque on the wall in the Father Ryan wrestling room. It was his goal, and I know how badly he wanted it. But really, he got so much more by not winning. That's because his championship plaque would forever be nailed to that wall, visible only to the eyes that walked into that room. Now, every second of the day, regardless of where I am or whom I'm with, I

carry a much bigger announcement across my chest, which I'm sure most people see. And it says: "I'm proud of my son." I applaud my son's effort and accomplishments, and his fortitude to accept that he had done his best. He taught me a valuable lesson about the game of life that has had a profound effect on me, and I am only grateful for his wisdom. I have now achieved an inner peace by refusing to accept losing as an outcome, rather recognizing that it is only a step in the process of growing. In reality, all of us face adversities throughout our life, some that can destroy us physically, emotionally and financially. Our challenge is to stay in the game and enjoy the competition, whatever the outcome. Yes, we will experience obstacles, we will experience setbacks, we will experience defeat. They are inevitable. But winning in life is not based on the final score. It is only measured by "how we play the game." Ã Å 2000 Larry Bantz, Reprinted with Permission Ã Å (c)2000. All rights reserved. Reprinted from Chicken Soup for the Sports Fan's Soul by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Mark & Chrissy Donnelly, Jim Tunney. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the written permission of the publisher. Publisher: Health Communications, Inc., 3201 SW 15th Street, Deerfield Beach, FL 33442.

fun short stories for sports fans! Great gift!

Awesome 10+.... go to page 201 and you'll see my story... A Simple Kindness. John Gross...

I especially liked the stories written by the sports stars themselves. It let me see the human side of them.

I was looking for some motivational stories for my P.E. class. I haven't gone through them all yet, but some of the ones I have read do fit the bill.

Many of the stories are poorly written missing the quality of writing and inspiration seen in Chicken Soup for the....

I teach a young teen Sunday School class and each year I try to think of something to give them for Christmas that will help them or, at least, they will like. I like to give books. One of my students is an avid sports fan. He liked the book.

Any sports fan should read this book to realize the power of sports in so many different contexts.

very inspirational.

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