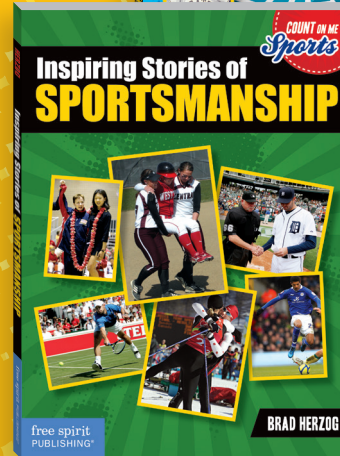
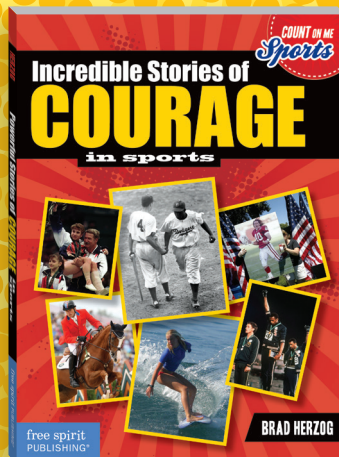
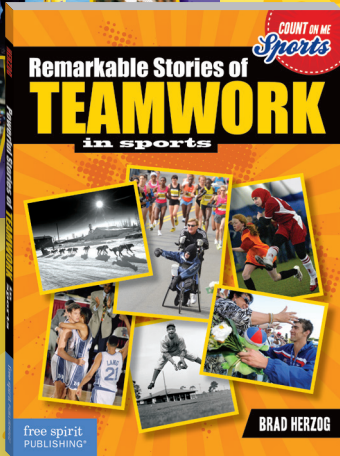
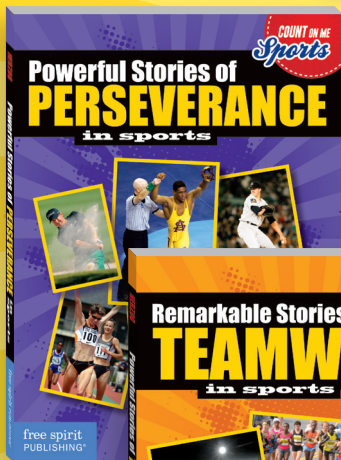


# A Leader's Guide to

## COUNT ON ME *Sports*

**BRAD HERZOG**



free spirit  
PUBLISHING®

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# A Note to Teachers, Coaches, Youth Leaders, Parents, and Other Adults

The Count on Me: Sports series is a collection of dramatic stories highlighting character in the athletic arena. By celebrating the inspiring accomplishments of sports figures—feats of sportsmanship, perseverance, teamwork, generosity, and courage—these five books show positive behavior in action instead of just preaching about it. Whether you lead in a classroom, at an after-school group, on a sports team, or in some other setting, this series gives you a tool with which you can teach kids about character by exploring real-life examples—from high school playing fields to the Olympic stage.

These stories will engage even reluctant readers, and can also serve as springboards for meaningful reflection and productive discussion about each character trait. In this guide, you'll find questions that you can use to kick off the conversation. You can also use these questions as writing prompts for essays. However you choose to use the Count on Me: Sports series with kids, I hope you enjoy exploring the many connections between sports and character that it presents.

As legendary track star Jesse Owens put it, the qualities that bring victory in the athletic arena also help us succeed in life:

*In the end, it's extra effort that separates a winner from second place. But winning takes a lot more than that, too. It starts with complete command of the fundamentals. Then it takes desire, determination, discipline, and self-sacrifice. And finally, it takes a great deal of love, fairness, and respect for your fellow man. Put all these together, and even if you don't win, how can you lose?*

—Brad Herzog

# Inspiring Stories of SPORTSMANSHIP

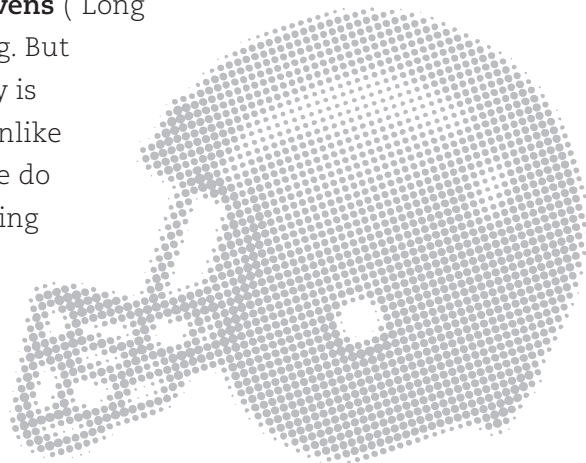
It seems as though young people are bombarded almost daily with accounts of lamentable behavior on and around the athletic fields. Callous coaches. Arrogant athletes. Bench-clearing brawls. Steroid tales. Twitter feuds. Amid these media-hyped stories, uplifting tales of character in sports may seem like the exceptions. But in fact, they're more common than we often realize. Players, coaches, referees, and fans consistently display good sportsmanship. People all over the world compete with integrity, win with honor, and lose with dignity. They do the right thing, even in the heat of fierce competition. The compelling tales in *Inspiring Stories of Sportsmanship* remind students and athletes that, indeed, sportsmanship abounds. As noted in the book's introduction, these are stories of winners, even if they didn't win. And these stories and their heroes offer readers a chance to take a closer look at that sort of winning attitude.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND WRITING

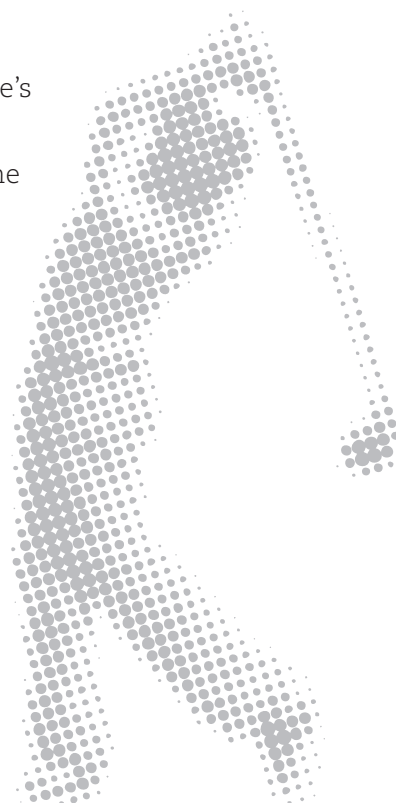
- It's not uncommon for professional athletes to do anything it takes to win. They might pretend to be hit by a pitched baseball. Maybe they stay silent when a referee makes an incorrect call, or exaggerate contact to draw a foul. Where do you draw the line between winning at all costs and winning with integrity? Do you believe that some of these tactics are simply part of how you're supposed to play? Do you think this is cheating, or is it competing? Why?
- While trying to set a world record in 1954, Australian distance runner **John Landy** ("Mile Marker") decided to stop and check on a fallen opponent before continuing his race. He still won the race, and he is legend in Australia for his athletic feats. There is even a bronze sculpture of him. But it doesn't show him crossing the finish line. Instead, it shows him stopping to help that fellow runner. Why do you think that moment was chosen? What do you think it might say about how a lot of Australians feel about sportsmanship compared to sports achievement?



- During an around-the-world yacht race, sailor **Pete Goss** (“Swell Guy”) veered far off course to save the life of one of his competitors, who had capsized. In situations that aren’t life-or-death, sometimes deciding whether to help someone isn’t so clear-cut. Making the choice to do the right thing can be especially difficult when you’re focused on winning. Do you ever find it hard to choose sportsmanship over achievement while in the middle of competition? When you’ve had the chance to reflect after a game or other event, have you ever wished you’d acted differently? How might you change your actions if you could go back?
- After high-school runner **Jenna Huff** helped **Deb Guthmann** across the finish line (“One Step Behind”), Guthmann’s coach marveled at Huff’s display of sportsmanship. He said, “Kids are always falling apart at or near the finish line . . . and they get passed. Over and over.” Why do you think some people (like Huff) have the instinct to show compassion in such times, while others do not? Do you think it depends on how intense the competition is or how close a person may be to winning? Should it matter? Why or why not?
- After umpire **Jim Joyce’s** mistaken call prevented **Armando Galarraga** from pitching a perfect game (“Accepting Imperfection”), Joyce immediately admitted his mistake and tearfully apologized. Galarraga then graciously forgave him. Two acts of sportsmanship came together in one inspiring story. Does one part of the story inspire you more than the other? If so, why? During the game, Galarraga’s manager and fans were furious at the umpire. But later, they praised him. What do you think about this change in attitude?
- In 1940, the **Cornell University football team** (“The Fifth Down”) decided to forfeit a game after discovering that they had made their winning score after a “fifth down” play. Fifty years later, the University of Colorado decided not to forfeit after winning in a very similar way. The Colorado coach later regretted that decision. How do you feel when you see adults make the wrong choices? What do you think can kids do about it? Have you ever witnessed a situation like this? How did you react?
- At the 1936 Summer Olympics, German track and field star **Luz Long** befriended his opponent, American star **Jesse Owens** (“Long Friendship”), while the whole world was watching. But often sportsmanship occurs when almost nobody is watching. Do you think it’s easier to be sportsmanlike in one situation as compared to the other? Where do you get your motivation to do the right thing during competition? Do you feel more pressure from the people watching, or from yourself? Why do you think that is?



- At the 1969 Ryder Cup Matches, golf great **Jack Nicklaus** decided to concede **Tony Jacklin's** two-foot putt (for a tie) instead of hoping he might miss it ("The Concession"). Do you think athletes should be concerned about embarrassing their opponents? If you've ever won something—whether it was a soccer match or a spelling bee—how much have you considered your competitors' feelings? How often do you think of your opponents' thoughts and feelings *during* the competition, as opposed to thinking about these things afterward? How could it help you, as an opponent and as a person, to consider those things?
- When high school basketball player **Johntel Franklin's** mother died before a game ("You're Going to Miss Them"), the opposing team made a touching gesture of sportsmanship. Later the coach said of his players, "They may not remember our record 20 years from now, but they'll remember what happened in the gym that night." Do you think that's true? Why do you think memories of sportsmanship might last longer than recollections of athletic success?
- After a spectator ran onto an Olympic marathon course and likely cost **Vanderlei de Lima** a gold medal ("Marathon Perspective"), de Lima still celebrated when he crossed the finish line in third place. Later, his countryman, volleyball player **Emanuel Rego**, offered de Lima his gold medal. The runner was touched, but he refused the gift. How would you have reacted in both instances if you were de Lima? What would you have done if you were Rego? When things don't go your way, do you find it easier to accept the situation as more time has passed? Why or why not?
- High school quarterback **Nate Haasis** ("Record Re-Set") set a conference passing record, but then he found out that the game's coaches (on both sides) had planned to help him do it. Haasis protested, saying, "I wanted the record, but I didn't want it in the way I got it." How hard is it to speak up if you disagree with an adult's behavior? Haasis's coach had good intentions. Have you ever acted a certain way because believed you were right about something—and later realized that your actions were wrong? If so, what did you do about it?

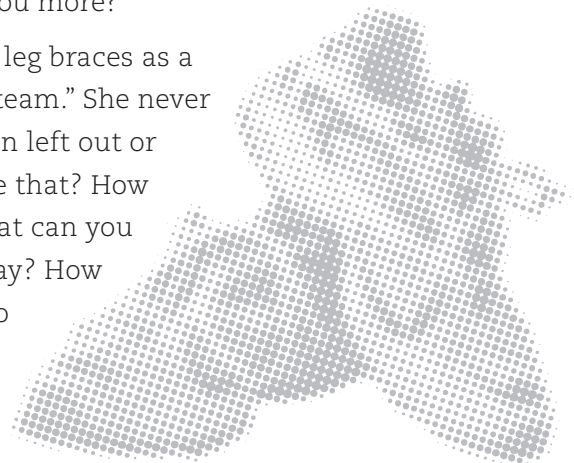


# Powerful Stories of **PERSEVERANCE** in Sports

Perseverance can reveal itself in many different ways. It can mean determination, as in the case of Dewey Bozella, the boxer who was wrongly imprisoned and spent years fighting for his freedom. Toughness can also be a form of perseverance, as demonstrated by Felicity Aston, the cross-country skier who spent 59 days crossing Antarctica alone. John Isner and Nicolas Mahut showed perseverance through endurance when they played a tennis match that lasted three days. Or perseverance might shine through incredible resolve, as in the story of swimmer Gertrude Ederle, who braved a dangerous crossing of the English Channel when most people said a woman couldn't accomplish such a feat. The true tales in *Powerful Stories of Perseverance in Sports* celebrate perseverance, whatever form it takes. Even more, these stories celebrate the people whose strength of mind helped them triumph over obstacles. After reading these inspiring stories, use them to think and talk more about what perseverance is, ways it can help athletes, and the role it plays in life outside the sporting world.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND WRITING

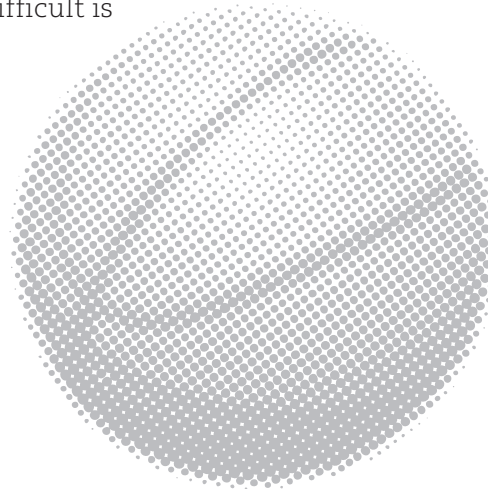
- Some stories of perseverance are about enduring extended challenges. Other stories are about overcoming obstacles, as in the stories of athletes who prevail despite severe illness and injuries. Which inspires you more: A lifetime of perseverance, or people who show intense determination over a matter of hours or days? How do you think these two kinds of perseverance differ, if at all? How do you think they are similar?
- Baseball star **Jim Abbott** (“Unhittable”) has said, “A few people told me that I wouldn’t go far in sports. I didn’t listen.” How do you feel when someone suggests that you’re unlikely to succeed in something? Which do you think is a better motivator—wanting to prove that someone’s faith in you was justified, or wanting to show that they should have believed in you all along? Why do you think this motivates you more?
- When **Wilma Rudolph** (“Beauty in Motion”) wore leg braces as a child, kids would say, “We don’t want her on our team.” She never forgot how that made her feel. Have you ever been left out or rejected? Have you seen someone else experience that? How did that make you feel? While playing sports, what can you do to make sure that other kids don’t feel that way? How do you balance a drive to succeed with a desire to allow everyone to compete?





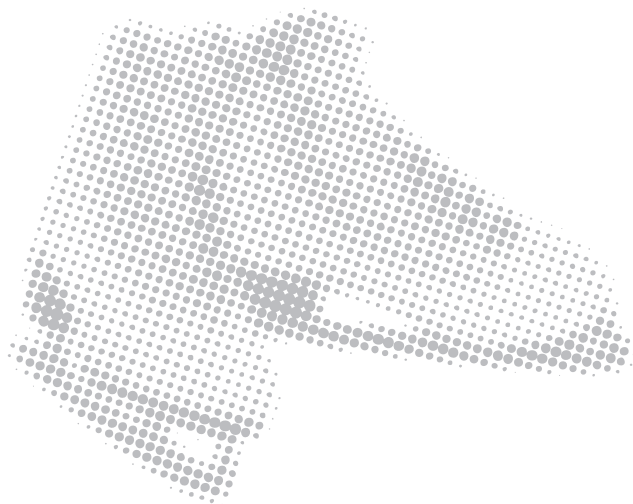
## PERSEVERANCE

- Sometimes a person's motivation to persevere comes from thoughts or memories of important people in his or her life. Golfer **Erik Compton** ("Heart of a Winner") often thinks about the two young people who died tragically and donated their hearts so that he could live on. Who inspires you? What have you learned from watching them and from seeing their determination?
- **Molly Sullivan Sliney** ("Deciding to Soar") had lost her confidence after being teased for dyslexia. Then she met a fencing coach who tried to encourage her. He wrote her name on a blackboard and used artistry to transform the words into a picture of a peacock. He said, "If you believe in yourself, this is what you can become." What do you think he was trying to say? What characteristics might a peacock have or represent that could help an athlete succeed? What other creatures in the animal kingdom do you think he could have used as inspiring examples? In what ways?
- **Alex Zanardi** ("Relentless Racer") prefers to describe himself as having *diverse ability*, rather than a *disability*. What do you think he means by that? How important do you think a person's attitude is when he is trying to overcome challenges? How do you think a positive attitude might make success more likely? In your life, do you tend to pay more attention to what you *can* accomplish, or what you *can't* do? Why do you think that is?
- Basketball player **Jessica Breland** ("Moving Forward") recalled that when she got sick she felt like she "went from being a basketball player to a person with cancer." Do you think it is healthy for people to define themselves by their challenges? Why or why not? Do you think it's easy to describe most people in a few simple terms, or do you think most are much more complex than that? How would you define yourself right now?
- During **Cory Weissman's** first and last college basketball game ("C Is for Comeback"), the opposing coach had his players purposely commit a foul so that Weissman would get the chance to make a free throw. Do you think this is something that most people might have done? Do you think it would have been different if the score of the game had been close? Why or why not? How difficult is it to make a gesture like this while you're right in the middle of intense competition?



## PERSEVERANCE

- After many years of heartbreak and personal tragedy, speed skater **Dan Jansen** (“Just Skate”) finally won an Olympic gold medal. It was one of the most heartwarming stories in sports history. But what if he hadn’t finished in first place? What if he had ended his Olympic career by finishing third, or fifth, or ninth? Is a tale of perseverance more inspiring to you when the story ends in success? Can you think of people in your life who may not have achieved their ultimate goals, but who showed remarkable resilience and grit? Can you find some examples in this book? What makes tales that don’t end with victory more or less inspiring to you?
- When figure skater **Scott Hamilton** (“Little Giant”) talked about falling down, he said, “The longer you lie there, the colder you get. So the first thing, and the obvious thing, is to get up.” Hamilton meant this as a metaphor. He was using it as a way to describe the first step toward overcoming a great challenge. Do you think the first moments or days following a big setback are the toughest, or do you think that as time goes on, obstacles become even harder to deal with? Why? After confronting difficulty or disappointment, what might the next step be?
- Because his hearing was impaired, baseball player **Curtis Pride** (“His Name Is Pride”) compensated with his sharp eyesight and his speed. For instance, instead of listening for the crack of the bat while standing in the outfield, he would watch the angle at which the batter hit the ball. Do you ever compensate in similar ways? Nobody can do everything well. In what ways do you use some of your stronger skills to make up for some areas in which you feel less confident?



# Remarkable Stories of Teamwork in Sports

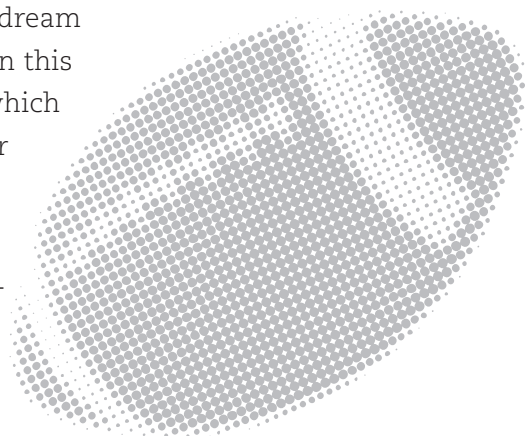
The big idea of teamwork goes far beyond traditional sports teams. It can mean a partnership that benefits both people, as in the inspiring story of 20-year-old amateur golfer Francis Ouimet (who needed someone to believe in him) and his 10-year-old caddie Eddie Lowery (who needed much the same thing). Teamwork can also appear in the form of a support system that inspires a person to greatness—a role played by swimmer Michael Phelps’s mother. It can be evident in one person’s sacrifice to help another, shown by the loving father who has pushed his disabled son through dozens of endurance races. At the same time, it can also be found in smaller gestures, as in the story of the baseball star who stood by his pioneering African-American teammate—by simply standing alongside him, literally, when he needed encouragement. The tales featured in *Remarkable Stories of Teamwork in Sports* are about relationships that inspire, whether it is the cooperation between a Sherpa and a mountain climber or a musher and her sled dogs. It has been said that **TEAM** could stand for **Together Everyone Achieves More**. The 20 tales in this book show the TEAM concept at work, and offer readers the chance to think about the many ways a team can be formed and work together.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND WRITING

- A “team” may be a community, a group of players, or a pair of individuals who are inspired by each other. The stories in this book explore various kinds of teams. Which type most inspires you? Is it the traditional kind—the teammates who support each other or motivate each other toward victory? Is it the grand kind—a community that rallies around a cause? Or is it the personal kind—the partners who cooperate, trust each other, or make each other better? Why does this specific type of teamwork speak to you? When have you been a part of each kind of team?
- **Dick Hoyt** (“Team Hoyt”) was so dedicated to pushing his son Rick’s wheelchair in endurance races that he would practice by pushing around bags of cement. His son’s response to his first race was, “It felt like I wasn’t disabled anymore.” Who do you think has received more from the countless races they have competed in together—the determined father or the delighted son? Why do you think that? Are there cases in which you think sacrifice might actually feel like the ultimate reward? Why or why not?



- After high school basketball player **Wes Leonard** (“Never Forgotten”) died suddenly following a game-winning layup, his family discovered that the “team” who rallied around his memory was bigger than they ever imagined. It included not only Wes Leonard’s teammates, but opposing teams, famous players and coaches, and other grieving families from around the country. How would you define “team” in this instance? One idea is that a team can be described as a group of people working toward a shared goal. What was the goal in this case?
- **Jackie Robinson** and **Harold “Pee Wee” Reese** (“Dodging Nothing”) were both Hall of Fame baseball players. But the statue of them in front of a minor league baseball field shows Reese draping his arm around Robinson’s shoulder. It is a simple gesture. So why is it so significant? The duo completed many double plays together as shortstop and second baseman, but there are no statues of that. What does the choice say about the difference between actions that are simply impressive compared to behavior that is truly inspiring?
- Twenty-year-old amateur golfer **Francis Ouimet** (“Francis and Eddie”) didn’t feel like he belonged among the world-class players at the 1913 U.S. Open tournament. But his 10-year-old caddie **Eddie Lowery** believed in him. In return, Ouimet gave Lowery a sense of belonging, too—the feeling that he mattered. How do you think great teammates draw strength from each other? Why do you think that can prove to be so powerful?
- Instead of focusing on all the things that people told **Michael Phelps** he *couldn’t* do, his mother (“Gold-Medal Mom”) helped him focus on all the things he *could* accomplish. She said, “I knew that, if I collaborated with Michael, he could achieve anything.” Think about times in your life when someone has pushed you beyond what you thought you could achieve. Who has believed in you when you didn’t necessarily believe in yourself? Did you understand and appreciate at the time how helpful this belief was, or did that realization only come later? How did that support help motivate or inspire you?
- After the whistle blew to end a home football game at Fairfield Union High School, both teams stayed on the field to let one more play happen—a touchdown scored by **Trent Glaze** (“Touching Touchdown”) in his wheelchair. The coach planned it. Both teams participated in it. The crowd cheered for it. In this case, the story is about teamwork among many people making one person’s dream come true. What do you think motivated the “team” in this story? Do you think there are cases of teamwork in which everybody truly wins? If so, what examples from your life illustrate this idea? If not, why not?
- When the **University of California football team** (“The Play”) surprised Stanford University with a last-second kickoff return for a touchdown, the ball was tossed from player to player. Finally one of them made it into the end zone—even while the Stanford



band streamed onto the field. “The Play” is a memorable event in football history because it involved so many players and such a desperate, end-of-game scramble. If one person’s perseverance is inspiring, what do you think the effect can be of watching *many* people persevere as a team? How often do you think players keep pushing forward because they see their determined teammates doing the same? Can you think of examples of this from your life?

- Even at their very best, neither **Bob** nor **Mike Bryan** (“Better Together”) ranked as one of the top 100 singles tennis players in the world. But together, they became the best doubles team in tennis history. What do you think made their performance as a team greater than each of them as individuals? (For example, Bob is better at serving and Mike is better at returning serves. Bob may be a bit stronger, but Mike is faster.) You might have heard the expression, “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.” How do you think that saying applies to the Bryan brothers? What other teams in sports do you think demonstrate this idea, and how? How do different individual skills work together and play a role in team success?
- When **Keara Kilbane** (“Uniform Support”) tried out to be a placekicker on her high school’s football team, the boys on the team rallied to support her and protect her from any taunting. One teammate explained, “None of us can kick as well as her.” Another teammate said, “She’s one of the most dedicated members of the team. She deserves our respect.” While both are supportive statements, how do they differ? How much is someone’s success often a reason for acceptance, as opposed to effort? Do you think a star player should be treated any different than a hard-working benchwarmer? Why or why not?
- When **Sean Brown** (“Butterflies in Lane Three”) won the Soap Box Derby, he was inspired by the memory of his older sister Carol Anne, a Derby competitor herself who had sadly committed suicide. Do you think teamwork is always a concrete, real-time example of cooperation, or can an emotion or memory inspire just as much motivation and be its own kind of teamwork? What memories of people in your life inspire you toward greatness, and how do you act on that inspiration?



# Awesome Stories of Generosity in Sports

Sometimes it can be easy to read about the business of sports and wonder if it's all about greed. Teams raise ticket prices. Coaches are offered multimillion-dollar contracts. Athletes sign jaw-dropping endorsement deals. Amid all the taking, you might wonder: Where is the giving? The answer: everywhere. *Awesome Stories of Generosity in Sports* tells 20 tales of sports figures who have performed wonderfully generous acts. Some made a career out of it, while others responded instinctively when the moment called for it. And the gifts they gave went to people around the globe. College baseball coach Tom Walter gave to a single person by donating a kidney to one of his players. The Cypress Cyclones under-10 soccer team gave to a rival team by making sure they could afford to attend the state tournament. NFL wide receivers Anquan Boldin and Larry Fitzgerald gave to an entire African community—by purchasing a couple of cows, and also by giving their time and using their fame to share information. And Emmanuel Ofose Yeboah gave to a whole nation by inspiring his country and its government to care for disabled citizens. What they have in common is the instinct to do the right thing. Readers can discuss what stories inspire them most in this book and consider ways in which they can turn that inspiration into motivation—and into generous acts of their own.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND WRITING

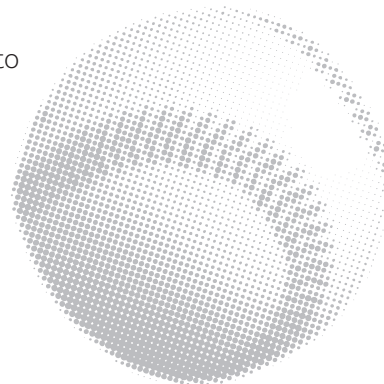
- **Arthur Ashe**, a Hall of Fame tennis player, once said that if he were remembered as only a tennis player, he would consider himself a failure. What do you believe he meant by that? Many generous people never receive nearly as much acclaim as star athletes. What do you think about that after considering Ashe's statement? How do you define success in *your* life?
- Olympic skier **Jeremy Bloom** ("Senior Promises") was inspired to start Wish of a Lifetime after watching bus passengers in Japan show respect and courtesy to an elderly woman. Bloom was also greatly influenced by his love and respect for his grandmother and grandfather. What behavior from others has inspired you to be more giving in your life? What people in your life—family members, friends, teachers, coaches, or others—have had this kind of effect on your outlook?
- **Elliot Mast** ("For the Kids") was only 11 years old when he decided to launch a charity called FTK (For The Kids). Mast was a very good ballplayer, so he used his baseball skills and social media to raise money for Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. How do the efforts of a generous kid compare to those of a famous athlete who devotes himself or herself to giving back?

Why might the charitable instincts of an 11-year-old be even *more* inspiring? What skill or passion in your life could you turn into an opportunity for generosity?

- When **Matt Woodrum** (“Cheering a Champ”) found himself struggling to complete a 400-meter race as a result of his cerebral palsy, his gym teacher joined him and spurred him forward. This inspired his classmates to cheer him on, too. And the video of the race even inspired a kind gesture from a woman hundreds of miles away. How does this story illustrate how generous acts can lead to more generous acts? Do you think a book like *Awesome Stories of Generosity in Sports* can have a similar effect? Why or why not?
- Legendary baseball player **Ted Williams** (“A Home Run Speech”) used his Hall of Fame acceptance speech to highlight the fact that many players from the former Negro Leagues deserved to be honored, too. Some acts of generosity seem small but can still have big results. What is it about sports figures that allows them to have an especially big impact when it comes to highlighting injustice or promoting good causes? Do you think people who have access to a brighter spotlight have a greater obligation to use it for generous purposes? Or do you think that is a burden they don’t deserve? Why or why not?
- NFL wide receiver **Anquan Boldin** (“Receivers Give Back”) was inspired to travel to Ethiopia after he saw news reports of severe food shortages there. He and fellow star receiver **Larry Fitzgerald** learned a great deal about the situation by spending four days in the country. What roles do you think education and observation play in encouraging people to become more generous? What information have you learned in your life that taught you about a need you hadn’t been aware of before? Once you knew about the need, did you take action? If so, what was that action? If not, why not?
- Wake Forest University baseball coach **Tom Walter** (“A Coach Who Cares”) bravely donated a kidney to his 19-year-old outfielder Kevin Jordan. Jordan’s father wasn’t completely surprised by this act. He had encouraged his son to go to Wake Forest in part because he had done research about Walter, and he judged him to be a kind and generous man. Do you think most people are good at judging the character of others? Why or why not? Do you think you can usually tell which of your friends, family members, or others are especially generous? What traits or behaviors help you make that judgment?
- One reason Hall of Fame hockey player **Stan Mikita** (“Setting Goals”) lent his name and efforts to the American Hearing Impaired Hockey Association was because he had experienced communication challenges when he moved from Czechoslovakia to Canada as a child. Sometimes people are more likely to give to a cause that connects to memories and challenges from their own lives. Why do you think that is? What is a difficult situation from your past, and how might you someday turn it into an act of generosity?



- In some ways, adoption may be the ultimate act of generosity because it offers a child a chance to enjoy a life of opportunity, belonging, and unconditional love. **Gay Masters** (“That’s My Child”) adopted her daughter, a severely disabled little girl named Oksana, when others had given up on her. Some people might see Masters’s actions as a sacrifice. But as Oksana’s mother, she was later able to watch her daughter compete as a rower in the Paralympics. What are some other ways in which an act of generosity can later be rewarded? Are there less obvious examples that you can find in this book? Which ones?
- The story of basketball player **Abbey Rhodes** (“Something to Hold Onto”) includes three inspiring examples of generosity. First, Rhodes started her Teddy Bear Toss program, which brings smiles to kids with serious diseases. Then Rhodes heard about a rival player who had been diagnosed with cancer, so she brought her a gift bag. Later, that rival’s team honored Rhodes at midcourt by presenting her with a parade of teddy bears for her program. The first act was a product of determined effort. The second showed instinctive kindheartedness. The third act represented sincere gratitude. Which one of these generous acts most inspires you? Why?
- **Mobolaji Akiode** (“Hope Through Hoops”) found that participation in basketball gave her a much-needed sense of confidence after she moved from Nigeria to Connecticut. So when she became an adult, she launched Hope4Girls in Nigeria. Her goal was to use basketball to bring that feeling of pride and belonging to girls in Africa. Can you find other stories in this book in which childhood memories later influenced a sports figure to give back in some way? Why do you think those memories remained so significant to them? When in your life has participation in some activity brought you a sense of pride, belonging, or confidence?
- When the **Army and Navy college sprint football teams** (“Small Wonder”) used to play an Anthracite Bowl game in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, both the town and the athletes benefited from the experience. As this book shows, people can be generous with their money, generous with their efforts, or generous with their time. In this case, the generosity shown was more of a generosity of spirit, as the Pottsville residents and the sprint football players shared friendship and positivity with each other. Which form of generosity are you usually most inclined to offer, and why?
- **Roberto Clemente** (“Leaving a Legacy”) died when his plane crashed as he tried to bring much-needed food and supplies to earthquake-ravaged Nicaragua. His body was never found. The story’s final words are: “While people sometimes say that Clemente disappeared without a trace, nothing could be further from the truth.” What do you think that means? What did Clemente leave behind? What kind of trace would you like to leave someday?



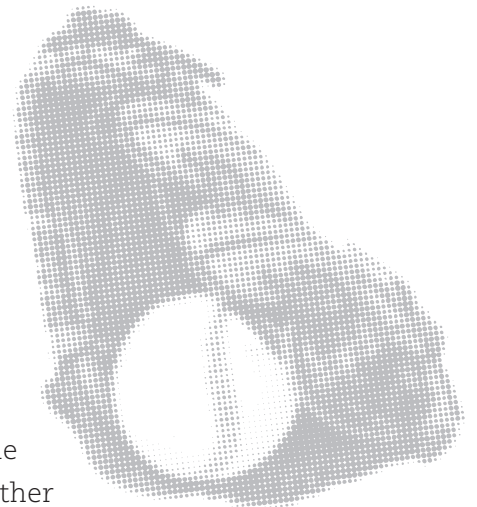


# Incredible Stories of Courage in Sports

“Courage” is a word that gets thrown around by athletes, coaches, announcers, and sportswriters on a daily basis. Is it really “courageous” when a football coach decides to go for it on fourth down? Or when a team hangs tough for a second-half comeback? Perhaps. But the sports world also includes more significant examples of courage and bravery, as revealed in *Incredible Stories of Courage in Sports*. There is the courage to play through illness (the college rower who fights cancer while serving as her team’s coxswain), to overcome fears (the pro golfer who refuses to let a stutter silence her voice), to return from tragedy (the surfer who loses an arm to a shark, only to later get back on her surfboard), to risk physical harm (the horse trainer who saves his horse from a burning barn), and to risk ridicule (the basketball Hall of Famer who uses an underhanded free throw). There are people who serve as courageous pioneers, like Magic Johnson and Billie Jean King, and people who take courageous stands, like football player-turned-soldier Pat Tillman. The stories in this book can serve as a jumping-off point for readers to discuss the many forms courage can take in sports, both on and off the field.

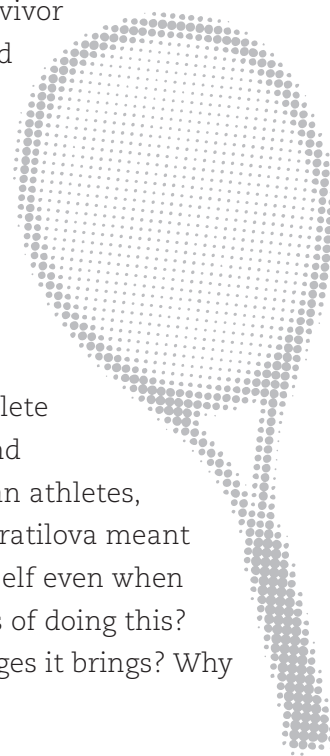
## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION, DISCUSSION, AND WRITING

- Which type of courage most inspires you? Is it physical courage, as in the stories of athletic figures who risk their lives or overcome illness or injury? Or is it the kind of courage shown by athletes who overcome fears, risk ridicule, or stand for something greater than themselves? What are the similarities and differences between these kinds of courage?
- **Jackie Robinson** (“Barrier Breaker”) broke baseball’s longstanding color barrier with a tremendous game in his first minor league appearance in 1946. He was justly applauded for his courageous performance. But what if he had not performed so well in that first game? Is courage shown only by success under pressure, or can it also be evident in the *attempt* to succeed under pressure? How do you think history might view Jackie Robinson differently if he hadn’t been a great athlete with a Hall of Fame career? What if he had been a mediocre player? Do you think that would in any way diminish the amount of courage he displayed? Why or why not?
- After surfer **Bethany Hamilton** (“Brave in the Waves”) lost her left arm during a shark attack at age 13, she showed tremendous courage by returning to competitive surfing. But she said she feared not being able to surf more than she feared another



shark attack. In other words, her emotional fear of not being able to do the thing she loved influenced her more than the physical fear of another attack. How do you think these fears affect people differently? How is courage in the face of these fears different? When have you faced up to a fear in your life, and how did you gather the courage to do so?

- When **Pat Tillman** (“Decision”) put his professional football career on hold to join the Army Rangers in 2002, he explained, “My voice is calling me in a different direction. It is up to me whether or not to listen.” Tillman had a great life and the potential to earn millions of dollars. Instead, he devoted himself to a greater cause. How tempting is it to take the easier path in life? Most of us don’t face choices as dramatic as Tillman’s, but we face many smaller ones on a daily basis. What are times in your life when you’ve taken on a difficult task or decision? How did you feel afterward? Have you ever regretted doing so—or not doing so? Why or why not?
- Hall of Fame basketball star **Magic Johnson** (“Magic Moment”) won a college basketball championship and five NBA titles. He also became a very successful businessman. But he may be most famous for the courage he showed after acquiring the HIV virus—a courageous retirement announcement, a courageous mission to fight HIV/AIDS and its stigma, and a courageous comeback. Why do you think people often view courage as being even more impressive than success? When you consider the peers or celebrities who impress you most, do you think first about what they have achieved, or about how they have displayed inspirational behavior?
- After a poor performance by college football placekicker **Alexis Serna** (“Kick Start”), many teammates and fans made him feel even worse. On the other hand, he received hundreds of letters of support, including one from 12-year-old cancer survivor Austan Pierce. The two became good friends, and Pierce inspired Serna to go on to a very successful football career. Why do you think some people are quick to show compassion, while others are not? “I’ve had some bad days myself,” the courageous Pierce wrote to Serna. When you see classmates or even strangers who are going through difficult times, do you find it easy or difficult to put yourself in their shoes? How does doing so change your point of view?
- **Martina Navratilova** (“First Lady”) was the first high-profile athlete to come out as gay while she was still a superstar. When a friend once told her that society wasn’t ready to accept gay and lesbian athletes, Navratilova replied, “We’re society, too.” What do you think Navratilova meant by that? In what ways do you think it takes courage to be yourself even when others aren’t willing to accept you? What are the pros and cons of doing this? Do you think showing courage in this case is worth the challenges it brings? Why or why not?



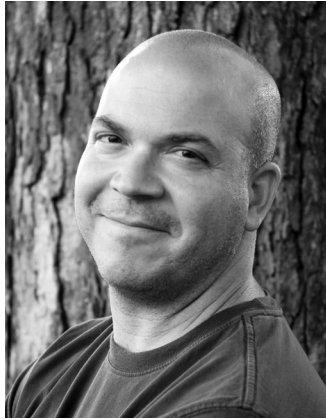
- Basketball star **Rick Barry** (“Free Spirit”) shot his free throws underhanded—“granny-style,” as they used to say. He became one of the best free throw shooters in NBA history. Wilt Chamberlain was one of the *best* players in NBA history, but also one of the worst free throw shooters. He once tried Barry’s method, but stopped because he “felt silly.” Why do you think some people are willing to risk mockery, while others aren’t? What are some times in your life when you’ve conformed to the way others were doing things even when you didn’t think it was really the best choice? How did you feel about this choice afterward? Would you do things differently if you had the chance? Why or why not?
- A number of people showed different kinds of courage after **Maria Pepe** (“League Leaders”) was banned from playing on a Little League team in 1972. Her coach and teammates stood by her side. The National Organization for Women fought for her. Little League Baseball eventually changed its rules to allow female players. Even one of the men who had opposed her attempt to play later had the courage to admit that he had been wrong. What do you think is it about one person’s bravery that can inspire others to act courageously themselves? How does reading about courageous acts in the world of sports teach you about courage in the world at large?
- When **Tommie Smith** and **John Carlos** (“Courageous Stand”) made a courageous statement for African-American equality on the medal stand at the 1968 Olympic Games, Australian silver medalist **Peter Norman** showed his support by wearing a badge in support of the Olympic Project for Human Rights. All three were later punished for their brave gestures. When someone else takes a courageous stand, it can be easy to avoid taking a risk and fade into the background instead. When have you found this to be the case in your life? What are the similarities and differences between people who take a courageous stand and people who express support for that stand? How do you think acts of support and solidarity affect other people and their lives?
- Because Swedish professional golfer **Sophie Gustafson** (“Revealing Her Voice”) has a severe stutter, it took her years to work up enough courage to do a television interview. But eventually, she took the plunge. “I wanted to go a little out of my comfort zone . . . and just see if I was able to do it,” she said. Some people show courage in the moment by overcoming an immediate obstacle or fear, while others show it by overcoming obstacles or fears that they have endured for years or even decades. Which of these challenges do you think is greater? Why? Do you think time lessens fears or makes them stronger? How so? Do you sometimes find it easier to act in the moment, or do you prefer to wait and think about the potential consequences first? What pros and cons do you see to each approach?



- Algerian track star **Hassiba Boulmerka** (“First and Fearless”) won her country’s first-ever Olympic gold medal. She also overcame threats from fellow Muslims who didn’t believe women should be competing in sports at all. At the same time, many people viewed her as an inspiring symbol of courage and freedom. After retiring as an athlete, Boulmerka joined the Athletes’ Commission of the International Olympic Committee and worked to end discrimination against female athletes. Which do you think is a more powerful force in the world—the people who inspire others by their personal achievements or the people who help others by making a practical difference in the world? Or do you think some combination of both often proves to be most influential? Why?
- After discovering that he had to retire from baseball due to a fatal disease, **Lou Gehrig** (“A First Baseman’s Farewell”) famously told a huge crowd at Yankee Stadium, “Today, I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth.” Gehrig’s speech is one of several examples from this book in which people have shown remarkable grace and courage in the face of illness or injury. Why do you think dramatic personal challenges sometimes spur people to become even more determined and strong in spirit? Who do you know in your own life who has shown this kind of courage?

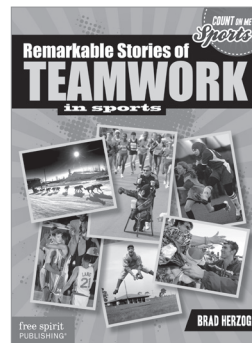
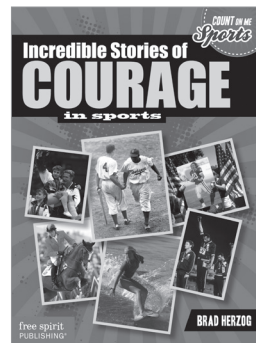
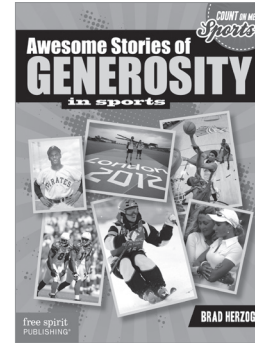
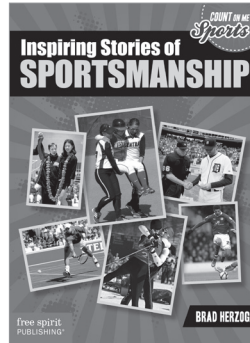
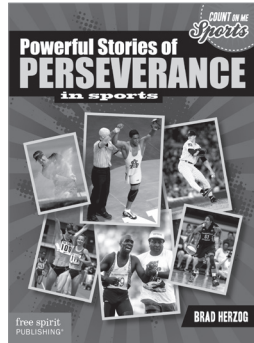


# About the Author



Brad Herzog is the author of more than 30 books for children, including more than two dozen sports books. He has also published three travel memoirs in addition to a fourth book for adults, *The Sports 100*, which ranks and profiles the 100 most important people in U.S. sports history. For his freelance magazine writing (including *Sports Illustrated* and *Sports Illustrated Kids*), Brad has won three gold medals from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education. Brad travels all over the United States visiting schools as a guest author. His website, [bradherzog.com](http://bradherzog.com), includes information about his other books and about his school visits and presentations. Brad lives on California's Monterey Peninsula with his wife and two sons.

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