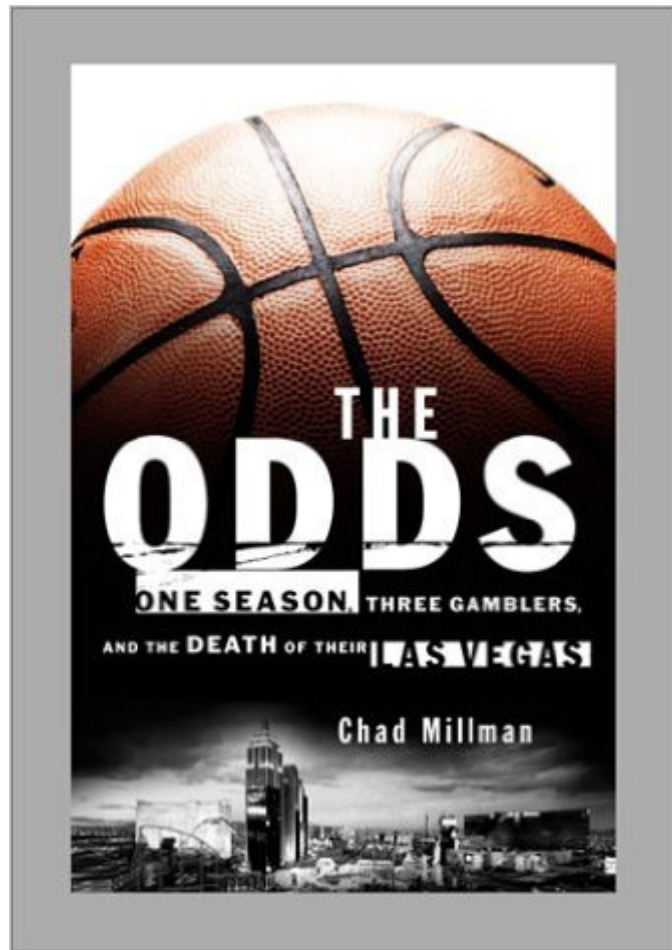


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The Odds: One Season, Three Gamblers, And The Death Of Their Las Vegas



Synopsis

Chad Millman takes readers inside Las Vegas's high-stakes gambling machine where even the unlikeliest characters find something in common. . Chad Millman takes readers inside Las Vegas's high-stakes gambling machine where even the unlikeliest characters find something in common. There's the intense high roller with the shaved head who morphed from cocaine addict to vegan bodybuilder without missing a bet. There's the college dropout whose parents kicked him out of the house when he decided betting would be his way of life. And there's the bookmaker who wonders what could have been if he had the guts to take the same risks as the bettors he despises. Between them and glory was the 1999-2000 NCAA basketball season, with its thousands of games, hundreds of teams, and "March Madness. " The bets were big-sometimes hundreds of thousands of dollars in a single day-but the stakes were even larger. For the bookmaker, the need for the thrill would put his whole career at risk. For the high roller, the need for a big win kept his demons churning. And for the kid, what was at stake was quite possibly his soul. Millman paints a vivid portrait of Las Vegas in light and shadow as he follows the three players throughout the NCAA season, taking readers behind the scenes and into their lives as they win, lose and eventually risk everything.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Chad Millman has written the book I had always dreamed of writing since my days in the Stardust sports book sharing nachos and hotdogs with the homeless, deadbroke souls who made it their home. I could not put this book down and read it in one night. It hit home with enormous impact since I knew in person or by reputation most of the main characters in book. I grieve for Joe Lupo

and Alan Boston for their soon to be lost way of life. I have witnessed first hand the death of the Las Vegas Millman so touchingly pays tribute to and am grateful that Millman captured the last battle in the war in Vegas between Wiseguys and Bookmakers across the counter. Even if one is not familiar with the subject matter, the book is still a must read. It is a roadmap of what pumps blood in the veins of young college educated affluent Americans in their spare time. An entire generation has become obsessed with gambling on the stock market and on sports and Millman interweaves the book with psychological insights on why people gamble and why risk takers who win are so revered in American pop culture. Lastly, Millman takes a shot at the hypocrisy of Congress and the NCAA. Reading about their attempts at stemming the tide of young sports bettors with legislation outlawing college gambling in Las Vegas (which accounts for less than 1% of the total wagering handle on sports betting) leaves one with the distinct impression that lawmakers are bumbling into a "New Prohibition" where government should be regulating and making taxes from sports gambling, instead of only protecting lotteries and casino gambling which gives gamblers no mathematical chance at ever beating the house.

The Odds is a first hand look at what is going on in the sportsbook environment. Whether you want a view from the bookmaker's perspective, the wiseguy's perspective, or the casual sports bettor's perspective, this book is terrific. The bookmaker, Joe Lupo of The Stardust is one cool customer. He is under constant pressure to get it right as the manager of The Stardust sports book. Traditionally, the line comes out first from The Stardust, hence, the added pressure of being the focus of attention in Las Vegas sports gambling circles. He knows the details of every game from his collective sources of sports oddsmakers. This would make one cool movie...

It's an engaging read, but in the end it comes across as a frustratingly superficial write. As a tale of three diverse role-players in the Vegas sports betting scene, it gives us little in the way of character depth or development. As a tale of how one season pans out for these guys, we learn only the outline of their cumulative performance - some occasional snapshots. As a primer in how to make sports bets, only a tempting morsel is briefly revealed. As a history of sports betting in a crucial transition period - just a glimpse. Yet it still has a journalistic pull on our attention...almost despite ourselves, we really get involved in how two college basketball teams we'd hardly blinked an eye at in our lives fare head-to-head on a random night, and we do end up wanting our featured bettors to go home winners. Yet it's hard not to feel this could have been so much better had the research been more thorough, the characters more closely followed, the history less skimpy. I read it in two

sittings - goes down smooth as a Dove bar.

This book inspired me to make personal changes in my life. After reading the book my senior year of college, I submitted an application to the Las Vegas Sports Consultants (LVSC) and attained a summer internship with the group. I referenced this book in my interview, and that my interest in LVSC was driven by Chad's portrayal of the firm. It was a fantastic experience that I will never forget. Needless to say, I am slightly biased when it comes to reviewing this book. I typically take something from all books, but this book obviously delivered more than I expected (A JOB!). Here is my best objective summary of the book. The greatest strength of this book is the development of the many characters in the book. I say the word "character" because these are definitely not your average Joe. My personal favorite is Alan Boston. Alan is a lovable curmudgeon that means well, but often shoots himself in the foot. I pleasantly laughed out loud at some of the remarks he made while watching games (primarily because I have made the same comments myself). If I would change the book in any way, I would strike the section on legislation and legalization of sports wagering. Although it is relevant to the story, I felt like it dragged on at times, and took away from the excitement of the "action." Also, like most things concerning the law, a lot has changed amongst the wagering landscape since this book was released (DraftKings, FanDuel, etc.). The writing is strong, and not without moments of "tongue-in-cheek" humor. Chad is an interesting guy himself, who I have corresponded with since reading the book. He is a very friendly person who cares deeply about his audience. Buy this book, and if you don't enjoy it, find a degenerate gambler to give it to. He or she will be sure to find a special place in their heart for it.

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