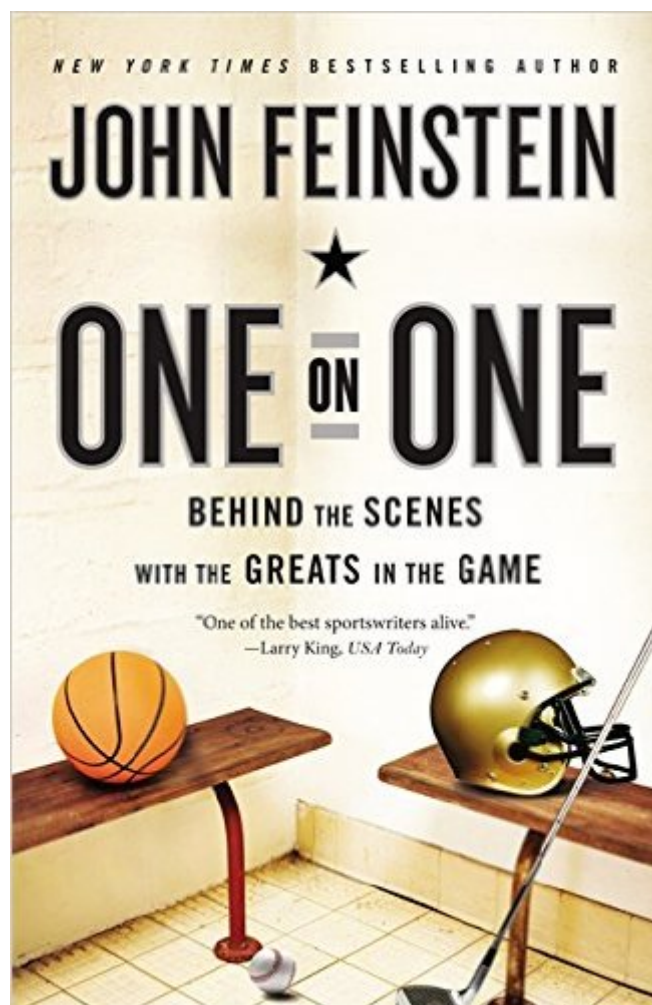


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One On One: Behind The Scenes With The Greats In The Game



Synopsis

John Feinstein's illuminating recollections from two decades of interviews with sports legends. John Feinstein's career is a sports fan's dream-a lifetime of encounters with the great figures in sports, not just on the field, but in the locker room and behind the scenes with legends like Bob Knight, Dean Smith, Mike Krzyzewski, Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, and John McEnroe. Since his days as a young Washington Post journalist, Feinstein has written twenty-eight books and countless magazine articles and newspaper columns, covering college basketball, golf, tennis, baseball, and very nearly every sport in between. He has told us of victory and defeat, of athletes and coaches we love--and love to hate. But some of his best stories have been left untold, until now. One on One is an incredible portal into the sports we love-from the box scores and the pageantry of game night and into the hard work and intensity that turn players and coaches into legends.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A long-time John Feinstein fan, I eagerly awaited "One-on-One: Behind the Scenes with the Greats in the Game," especially after hearing the author interviewed on NPR's "Fresh Air" last week. He told some fascinating stories about McEnroe, Woods, Capriati and others that we ordinary folks can't glean from the mainstream media. Such intimate telling, one could hope, would let us in on what makes some of our sports greats tick; and, what they, and Feinstein, think of the outsized roles they and their sports have come to play in our society. This, sadly, is not that book. The title is a complete misnomer. This book, rather, as Feinstein states clearly in his Introduction, is "a trip through reporting my first ten books, bringing me--and the reader--up to the present day." What's

more, although the author adds: "This isn't meant to be a memoir," to this reader, the book most definitely has the pace, tone, look, structure and content of a memoir. There is very little "one-on-one behind the scenes," and hardly any that reveals something more interesting than what kind of tennis racquet someone used, or how nobly Bill Buckner owned up to an error. Taking the book as the memoir it really is (and a very shallow one at that), other Feinstein fans surely will enjoy reading recaps of the author's long and up-and-down relationship with his "mentor," Bobby Knight, leading to the break-through book "A Season on the Brink"; his encounters with other great college basketball coaches; his passion for professional tennis and golf (also resulting in splendid books); his experience reporting on Army-Navy.

Memorable moments and unforgettable people during a ten-book journey...thus far...featured in an eleventh book Others have their reasons for holding this book in high regard. Here are three of mine. First, with all due respect to the celebrities in sports with whom John Feinstein has been directly associated (e.g. Bob Knight, Mike Krzyzewski, John McEnroe, Arnold Palmer, Dean Smith, and Tiger Woods), I enjoyed even more being introduced to others who offer unique insights into the sub texture of "the thrill of victory ...and the agony of defeat," a tag line associated with the ABC's Wide World of Sports program on television (1961-1998). They include Steve Alford, Damon Bailey, Jim Cantelupe, Steve Kerr, Christina and Derek Klein, Esther Newberg, George Solomon, and Ted Tinling. For reasons best revealed in the book, each is a major contributor to Feinstein's personal growth and professional development. Also, I really appreciate sharing Feinstein's perspectives on what he enjoys most (and least) about his career in sports journalism thus far, especially his take on what it is like to have access to so many major events, scrambling to make both domestic and international travel connections, and coping with hamster-brained "officials" who deny access (i.e. handlers, gatekeepers, security guards). What did he learn (and from whom did he learn it) about how to manage the logistics of travel, access, accommodations, food, rest and relaxation, and aspects of extensive travel? Finally, there are his thorny relationships with various people, notably with Bob Knight, but also with Jim Courier, Rick Pitino, Bobby Valentine, Jim Valvano, and Tiger Woods. Eventually, he seems to have achieved mutual (albeit somewhat grudging) respect with each.

As a long-time John Feinstein fan, I was really looking forward to reading this book. However, I found the title to be a bit of a misnomer. There was very little sitting down "one on one" with any greats, and a lot of the interviews were simple rehashed stories. Now, there were some new stories

as well, which were good, but on the whole, I felt like he drifted a bit from the purpose of the book. He seemed to make too many stories about him, which was annoying. I have read every one of Feinstein's books, and I absolutely loved them all. Very insightful, you could tell how much work he put into the interviews, etc. Having said that, I feel like I walked away from One on One with very little new information. Now, when he was describing his research on the Majors, his '99 book, he was talking about how he was scheduled to sit and interview Tiger, and as I was reading this, I thought, "hmmm, I remember Tiger was hardly mentioned in that book, and I always wondered why." Then he proceeded to tell the backstory in One on One, about how Tiger couldn't forgive JF for writing many bad things about his Father in the past, and it was nice, fresh information. The backstory on A Season on the Brink was also very insightful; how it came to pass, the fallout with Knight in the intervening 25 years, it was a fascinating story. But sadly, these are few and far between. Too many rehashed interviews, it was almost as if he couldn't figure out what to do for his next book, so he just threw this together. Yes, there were untold interviews with Payne Stewart, Ivan Lendl (did anyone honestly care about the tennis portion? It's beyond a dead sport) etc, but they weren't all that interesting.

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