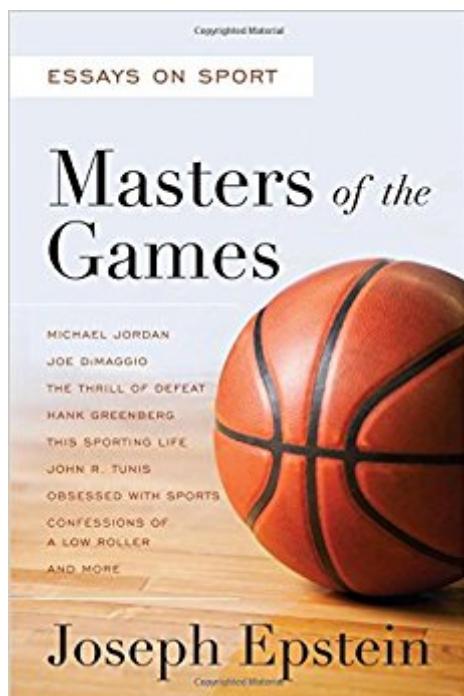


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# Masters Of The Games: Essays And Stories On Sport



## Synopsis

In this collection, his twenty-fifth book, Joseph Epstein departs from writing about literature and culture to indulge his fondness for the world of sport in all its forms. In these essays and stories on such subjects as saving Joe DiMaggio's reputation from the clutches of an iconoclastic biographer, marveling at the skills of Michael Jordan, shaking free of an addiction to radio sports talk shows, or contemplating the changing nature of the games he grew up with and played as a boy, Epstein turns writing about sports into an art at once penetrating and highly amusing.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The erudite and witty Epstein, former editor of *The American Scholar*, has from the time of his Chicago childhood been a devoted, habituated sports fan, although in a prolific career, this is his first book on the subject. There are long and short nonfiction pieces here and three related short stories. . . . [T]here is . . . a good deal of eloquence and insight. His opening piece on John R. Tunis, the author of children's sports books, is especially well done and will stir memories in several generations of mostly male readers. Essays on standout individual sports figures, sometimes in the context of reviews of others' books, are also quite good. The emphasis is on the Windy City (Michael Jordan, Bob Love, the Cubs) and secondarily on Jewish athletes, including Hank Greenberg, but neither focus is a detriment. (Booklist) Epstein includes three solid pieces of fiction set in Chicago in the middle of this collection, the best of which is simply titled "The Goldin Boys," a coming-of-age story told through the melancholy eyes of a physician whose best boyhood friends were popular twin athletes. Epstein's eulogy for the long-gone magazine

Sport . . . is also worth a read. (Publishers Weekly)Masters of the Games, Mr. Epstein's collection of sports-themed essays, memoir vignettes and short stories, shows a writerly approach to sports without the usual clichÃ©s. This is not a book about playing catch across the generations. And the simplicity of Mr. Epstein's argument is winning. The essence of sport, he says, is "the practice of craft at a very high order"; married to "the absence of fraudulence and fakery." (The Wall Street Journal)Epstein is well-known, well-regarded and remarkably prolific, yet despite an affection for sports that dates back to his Chicago childhood, this is his first book on the subject. Consider it worth the wait. . . . His understanding of the nature of his fandom offers a reflection of our own sporting interests . . . [I]t's when Epstein personalizes that he's at his most engaging. Stories about his boyhood predilection for sports and his self-recognized desire for style as opposed to substance on the playing field paint a wonderful portrait of the youthful sports fan of an era bygone. . . . [H]e's phenomenal when he offers his thoughts on the inherent irrationality of being a sports fan — particularly as the times have changed. . . . Put it all together and it makes for a remarkable collection of one man's legacy of fandom. . . . Masters of the Games is a book that will draw in the sports fan, with an understanding of the highs and lows that come with loving a game or a team. (The Maine Edge)A tribute to sports and its pleasures by one of our master writers. (American Spectator)

Joseph Epstein is the former editor of *The American Scholar*. For thirty years he taught English at Northwestern University. His essays, short stories, and reviews have appeared in many magazines, both in America and abroad, among them *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic*, *Commentary*, and the *London Times Literary Supplement*. He lives in Evanston, Illinois.

This book contains a part- sardonic, part- sensible look into the influence of sports on the American culture. Worth the time. Should be a national recommendation for a "Drop the phone- pick up a book" month.

Any and all of Joseph Epstein's essay collections merit four or five stars. the only reason for the lack of the fifth star is that Epstein fans may have read some of these offerings before. Sport's fans who have not read him are in for a treat.

Mr. Epstein can make even sports interesting. Many essays, you can pick and choose. My only complaint is that he often bemoans the Cubs lack of success - ha! He should try being a Mariners

fan.

Wonderful, especially the John R. Tunis essay.

Joe Epstein is always fun to read.

Great nostalgia; exactly how I played 75 years ago

Epstein is the best and never disappoints

Beautifully written

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