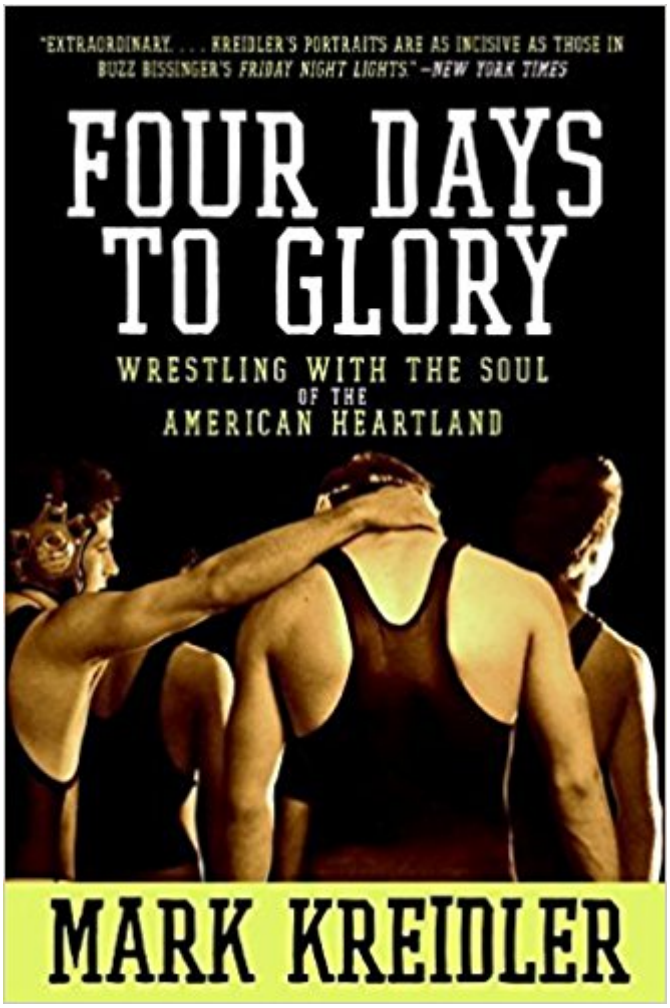
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Four Days To Glory: Wrestling With The Soul Of The American Heartland



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Synopsis

Somewhere beyond the circle of money, glitz, drugs, and controversy that characterizes professional sports in America, remnants of an ideal exist. In Iowa, that ideal survives in the form of high school wrestling. Each a three-time state champion, Jay Borschel and Dan LeClere have a chance in their senior year to join the sport's most elite group: the "four-timers," wrestlers who win four consecutive state titles. For Jay, a ferocious competitor who feeds off criticism and doubt, a victory would mean vindication over the great mass of skeptics waiting for him to fail. For Dan, who carries on his back the burdens of his tiny farming community, the dreams of his hard-driving coach and father, and his own personal demons, another title is the only acceptable outcome. Four Days to Glory is the story of America as told through its small towns and their connection to sport the way it was once routinely perceived: as a means of mattering to the folks next door.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sportswriter Kreidler, a columnist for the Sacramento Bee, immerses himself in "the largest event of its kind in the United States," the Iowa State High School Wrestling Tournament, and the result is a deeply insightful look into how young athletes and their families prepare for and participate in a yearly, four-day event where "Fathers and sons, coaches and wrestlers locked in screaming matches are as commonplace as injury timeouts." But this is no exposÃƒÂ©: Kreidler paints a highly sympathetic portrait of the struggles of two smalltown seniors to become the 15th and 16th four-time state champions in Iowa's history. One is motivated by the doubts raised about his abilities by Iowa wrestling fans, while the other struggles with a family history of depression. In Kreidler's final

stunning account of how both teens deal with the "recurring emotional whiplash" of the tournament itself, he more than proves his contention: "The really great ones, deep down, just don’t give a damn" about doubts and struggles external to the sport itself. (Feb.) Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Adult/High SchoolÃ¢â ¬â œIn most of the country, wrestling is a dying sport. However, in Iowa, thousands still turn out for the State Championships and the sport captures attention, particularly when a chance at greatness presents itself. In 2005, two young men had the opportunity to become only the 15th and 16th wrestlers to be four-time champions in the long history of the state tournament. Jay Borschel and Dan LeClere had known one another since childhood, and as seniors in high school faced similar pressures and roadblocks to establishing their legacies. Kreidler introduces readers to their world, if not their hearts and minds. Wrestling, a sport of deprivation that thrives on an ethos of pain, is a difficult form of athletic prowess to understand, and at times LeClere and Borschel are the embodiment of the difficulty of understanding the passion and commitment that it demands. They are enigmas. But the world of Iowa wrestling and the communities that embrace it are painted both in their glory and in the head-shaking dismay that the sport can induce. Teen wrestlers will appreciate a book that speaks to them and respectfully about them, and sports fans may find a new area to appreciate.Ã¢â ¬â œMary Ann Harlan, Eureka High School, CA Copyright Ã Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Bought it for my son who wrestles for his HS. Must be inspirational as he beat the crap out of everyone in his weight class in the first period. HooRaah!

I enjoyed Four Days To Glory. However, I am a wrestling coach who appreciates the blood, tears, sweat, and pain required to win a state championship in Rhode Island, nonetheless Iowa, where many boys are seemingly born wearing singlets.Kreidler does a very good job of chronicling the senior seasons of hopeful 4-time Iowa high school state champion wrestlers Jay Borschel and Dan Le Clere. Yet, I never obtained the passion for the key players that would have prompted me to give the book five stars. I never felt ready to cheer. I never felt involved enough to lament. I often stoically turned from one page to the next.The book provided an excellent informational account of the final season in the wrestlers’ elite quest to become Iowa four-timers. Yet, the book never

sufficiently communicated the human interest aspect that would have created more emotional appeal. Other than as wrestlers, I never felt that I knew Jay or Dan. There was very little depth developed about who the key players were away from the mat, which diminished the pleasure I received reading their biographical wrestling story.Nevertheless, despite the negativity expressed above, I enjoyed the book and am glad that I bought it. Moreover, I would highly recommend Four Days To Glory to the athletes that I coach and their motivated parents that have developed a love for the sport. However, I would hesitate recommending the book to the average person that lacks knowledge about amateur wrestling or who has never developed an emotional attachment to the sport. For these non-wrestling people, the narrow character development may hinder their appreciation of Jay and Dan's laudable personal and athletic accomplishments.

As the father of a son who wrestled for three years in high school after being cut from the varsity basketball team, this brought back all the memories of three years of agony and ecstacy. I remember going to my kid's matches and wishing they were over before I got there so I would not have my stomach in knots every time he was out there. And this, in the Philadelphia area, was not the same level as Iowa, but nonetheless the joy and pain was identical. The author kept you on edge throughout and I had no idea how it would end until I got to the final chapter. And I have to admit my heart was pounding as the state tournament began in the book. I cannot remember the last book which made me feel that way. I, too, saw my son sitting in his room with a small cup of water by his desk every week, especially when he went from 160 to 152 for the sectionals. I was on the road when he won his first two matches and he called my after each one. I made it home for the finals and I will never forget the parade of the final contestants that night as they entered the gym on opposite sides. My joy when he pinned his man (from the host school) in the first period to win the Sectionals in 1999 will last a lifetime and my wife went down to the floor when he got on the trophy stand to take photos. He had owed some money on a moving violation with his car and I told him if he won the Sectionals I would ay the fine. It was the happiest fine I ever paid. I also will never forget the disappointment when he blew a 5-0 lead in the first round of the Districts and lost 9-5 because he was out of gas from cutting weight two weeks in a row, so much so that he dropped out rather than try for the "wrestle backs" which, today, we both agree, he certainly could have won as the guy he pinned in the sectionals actually qualified through the wrestlebacks for the regionals until he was disqualified for poor sportsmanship. That was his senior year. This book brought it all back (senior night, etc.) and I was glued to the pages and finished it in less than two days. And I love Dan Gable. Anyone who ever participated or had a son who did should read this book.

My wrestler son says it’s a good read. He’s a sophomore in high school that is not fond of reading. Bought it to get him reading again. Mission accomplished :)

I have been a High School wrestling Coach in New York State for the past 19 years and nothing comes closer to telling the tale of our sport than this book. I couldn’t put it down. It is a great read about the trials and tribulations in the wrestling careers of two young men in the state of Iowa. Iowa is the mecca of our great sport and Mark Kreidler does a masterful job of bringing the sport of wrestling to life and showing that dedication and hardwork can lead to great things. Kreidler ’s account shows valuable insight into the sport and how it can prepare you for life. His chapter on America’s Ledgendary Olympian Dan Gable and his many contributions to the sport was filled with great information and details. I brought my copy to our year end Sectional wrestling championships and coaches all wrote down information and purchased this great book. The next weekend at our State Qualifiers I was lauded by those who bought the book and had read it quickly just like I had done.

Overall I thought this was a great book! I am a former wrestler and this book candidly captures what it’s like to live the wrestling lifestyle. It’s not glamorous and not a whole lot of fun most of the time- but as the author points out, this is what makes it such a great sport and such a character builder of young athletes. The author’s writing style is simple and easy to read, but again, is able to vividly and candidly express what it’s like to live the wrestling lifestyle and why there is an attraction to it. Make no mistake about, the author doesn’t paint a totally rosy picture of the sport, and certainly displays the not-so-great aspects as well; he doesn’t judge the sport or the athletes one way or the other, just presents the facts and issues as they are. This, in my opinion, is what makes the book great and will interest even those who are not fans of the sport.

Great read for any wrestling fan!

My wrestling days are long behind me but this book made me feel like I was back on the mats.

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