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Full Court Fever (All-Star Sports Stories: Basketball)



Synopsis

THE FALCONS HAVE a problem: they've lost the first two games of the season. Although they have skill, they lack height. When Michael Mancino comes across an old issue of Sports Illustrated and he discovers the similarly vertically challenged UCLA Bruins who won the 1964 NCAA Championship with an aggressive and hard-to-beat full-court zone press used to compensate for a short team. Will the Falcons be able to make a comeback and win the dreaded end-of-the-season game against the much bigger eighth-grade team?

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 640 (What's this?)

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Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #519,527 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #222 in [Books > Children's Books > Sports & Outdoors > Basketball](#) #1124 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Boys & Men](#)

Age Range: 8 - 11 years

Grade Level: 3 - 6

Customer Reviews

"Full Court Fever" tells the story of Michael Mancino and his friends on the seventh-grade basketball team, who are facing a dismal season because although these are good shooters, they are also short. Their coach teaches them how to box out to get rebounds, but the teams they play have kids tall enough to just reach over and grab the missed shots. Then Michael and his friends discover some old issues of "Sports Illustrated" that explain the full-court press that U.C.L.A. used to win back-to-back N.C.A.A. championships in 1964-1965, the first in the storied career of the Wizard of Westwood, John Wooden. The Bruins did not have a player taller than 6-5, but by working a full-court press and being in better condition, they won. Michael and his friends decide to practice

the U.C.L.A. press and see if it can help them. Consequently, "Full Court Fever" is exactly the type of juvenile sports story we have come to expect from Fred Bowen, where the point is to teach the kids who read this book a lesson about a particular sport, in this case basketball. If there is a sport where kids need to learn the right way to play the game, then that is basketball, when dunking the ball is more important than playing defense, learning to shoot, knowing how to block out, and all the other things that win games put together. Bowen always accomplishes this by using real world examples, with "The Real Story" provided in the back of the book with accompanying photographs. Of course, if you are trying to teach a lesson about basketball, there is nobody better to learn from than John Wooden (the first man to be in the Basketball Hall of Fame as both a player and a coach), and this particular lesson can certainly provide results, although obviously a coach who understands the principles of this or any other press would be helpful. A subplot in this book involves Dikembe Obiku, a new seventh-grader from Nigeria who is taller than most of the teachers and who could be the "big man" the teams so desperately wants. But while Dikembe likes to play ball and played forward or center on his team back home, he is, of course, talking about soccer and not basketball. It reminds me of a short story I read a long time ago about a high school basketball team that lacked a big man when a 7-foot student suddenly showed up at the school. The joke was that he was from France, and was a very good skier, but he joins the team and sits on the bench for the big game. The other team keeps looking at him and in the final minute of a close game he comes on the court and the other team falls apart. But Bowen has a more realistic goal for Dikembe to play in the climax this story. However, I was surprised the Bowen did not point out that some of NBA basketball stars at center who started out in life playing lots of soccer (e.g., Patrick Ewing, Hakeem Olajuwon), developed the hand-foot coordination that helped them become great shot blockers, because that is another less worth learning (especially if you are not short enough to help out on the full-court press).

Full Court Fever was a good book. I did it for a book report, so that kind of ruined it. I'm here because I was looking for a summary and I saw this. The plot is good. The Falcons seventh grade basketball team can't win a game because of a lack of big men. Then Mike, a Falcons player, discovers the Full Court Press used by UCLA, who won a championship with it! The 7-grade Falcons beat their biggest rivals in the end, the eighth-graders.

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