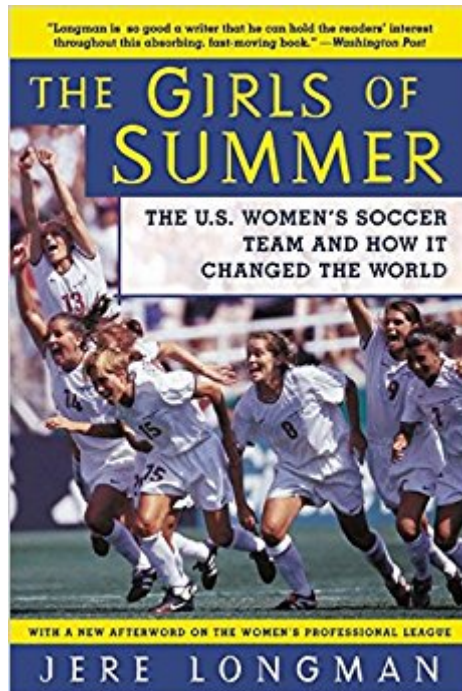


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The Girls Of Summer: The U.S. Women's Soccer Team And How It Changed The World



Synopsis

Now with a new afterword, *The Girls of Summer*, by the award-winning New York Times sportswriter Jere Longman, takes a serious, compelling look at the women who won the 1999 World Cup and brings to life the skills and victories of the American team. Longman explores the issues this unprecedented achievement has raised: the importance of the players as role models; the significance of race and class; the sexualization of the team members; and the differences between men and women's sports. Provocative and insightful, this book reminds us that the real struggles are off the field -- and some remain to be won.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (21 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Good things come to those who wait; that's what we're always told. The NY Times' chief Olympics writer comes through with a book that delivers what it promises - a description of every facet of the women's world cup tournament. It shows just how much the national governing body of soccer disrespected them, from the coach on down, in the months after their win. The reservations which were expressed when Brandi Chastain posed for *Gear Magazine* with a strategically placed soccer ball. And the debunking once and for all of her "orchestrated" shirt-doffing at the end of the final by conspiracy theorists who've watched one too many Oliver Stone movies. It also lets us in on just how much people in the U.S. news media were staggeringly asleep at the switch, when reporters had to to cover the tournament and only later were refunded by their sports editors. But first and foremost it comes back to 20 women who became the warm-weather version of the 1980 US men's Olympic hockey team; a team which an entire nation closed ranks behind. They are brought to vivid life by

Longman here. Reading it also harkens back to a time when you could pick up a newspaper's sports section and not have it resemble a police blotter. Or a litany of overpaid, underachieving athletes who, no matter how much they stink out their sports, always want to get paid even more. Of a time when American sport used to be pretty nice, unlike what it is now. That the same people who moan about the success of women's sports are the same ones who complain about no role models in sport. Longman presents 20 compelling ones here.

I read this book at a critical time in my professional life as a fundraiser, and it couldn't have come at a better time. As a budding athlete (a runner), I hadn't played soccer since I was on a YMCA team in the 2nd grade, but I was very interested in learning more about these women athletes who seemed so dedicated to their sport in an era of big-money sports and disintegrating team loyalty. I figured, hey, I need a role model, and here I have an entire team of them! But what struck me the most as I read the book was exactly that: the team. I mean the whole concept of the team itself, beyond the individual personalities that comprise it. Anyone with a desire to learn how to achieve team work in any setting -- whether on the soccer field or in the office -- should read this book. At a time in my job when teamwork at my all-women office seemed to be at its lowest ebb, with backstabbing and harsh hallway gossiping eating away at office morale, it was a joyous relief to read of a group of strong, hard-driving, hard-playing women who feared each other, respected each other, screamed at each other, laughed with each other, cried with each other, all the while pursuing and ACHIEVING a common goal with such ferocity and drive and sheer dignity that was breathtaking to behold. It left me with tremendous hope for my own group of strong, hard-driving, hard-playing women and our certain ability to achieve our lofty goal ... for a cause we each personally believe in. Sure, we don't have 90,000 people watching us, but we do have 3,000 -- and more -- who do depend on us and the money we hope to bring in. I have the urge to buy a copy of this book for every woman in my office.

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