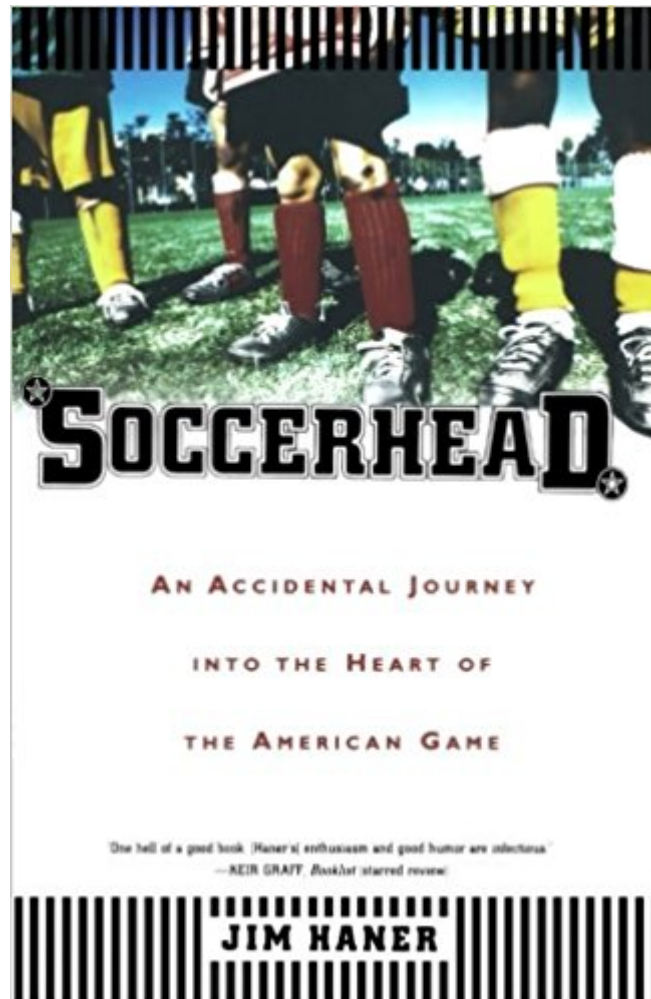


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# Soccerhead: An Accidental Journey Into The Heart Of The American Game



## Synopsis

**A YOUTH SOCCER COACH'S INVESTIGATION INTO THE ORIGINS OF SOCCERMANIA** Before his son enlisted for a season of Youth Soccer at the neighborhood Boys and Girls Club in College Park, Maryland, Jim Haner was just your typical white, middle-class, suburban father. And as an award-winning journalist for The Sun (Baltimore), he was more likely to write about scoundrels than soccer. But his son caught the bug, and before long, Haner was giving pep talks to nine-year-olds in shin guards and cleats and the game had become an all-consuming obsession. Digging deep into the historical record, Haner sets out to document the soccer craze from the bottom up, tracing the rises and falls in the game's popularity in the decades since "Mob Ball" fever was spread by the influx of immigrants on our shores, up to the current wave of "soccermania." The result is a rollicking and timely read. "[Haner's] enthusiasm and good humor is infectious, the history is genuinely interesting, and anyone who doubts that soccer games between nine-year-olds can be chronicled with the same verve and intensity of professional or collegiate sports need look no further . . . Belongs with Franklin Foer's *How Soccer Explains the World* (2004) as a must-read for people puzzled by soccer's popularity." â••Booklist (starred review)

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Folks, soccer is different. You will learn, the author learned. You want to coach and you do not know soccer. OK, welcome to the club. Before you start, learn what it is really all about - PARENTS, KIDS, REFS, relationships... And then we will get to the GAME of SOCCER. It will come, you will learn the game. The big picture; what is really going on across our country - is in this book. Read it. Read the book, get the kids to play hard, and love the game.

Funny, realistic, intelligent and beautifully written. I'm a "draftee" soccerhead, thanks to my son. Thanks to Jim Haner, I have an understanding of what this game is about. More importantly, I gain from him the understanding of what the game looks like from the inside. Jim writes about soccer kids with the same passion other writers save for major league athletes, and makes those kids live in your imagination. His description of individual soccer games alone is worth the price of admission, but his study of the game's history and analysis of the strategy (more Sun Tzu, less Clausewitz) has added immeasurably to my understanding of what happens on the field. I should add that Jim Haner has been my son's soccer trainer, and he's as dynamic and alive on the field as he is on the printed page. A wonderful read.

A story about a team, a history of the game in the U.S., a coach's odyssey, a rumination on what youth sports have become ... "Soccerhead" has it all. I accidentally came across this while searching for books to advance my one-step-ahead-of-my-team coaching knowledge, and the perspective it offers is better than any nuts and bolts primer. And you'll find yourself rooting for a bunch of kids from College Park, MD, as if they were the national team. I can truthfully say I couldn't put it down -- read it start to finish in an evening.

Great book. It reveals the storied history of soccer in America unfamiliar to most of us. Jim Haner gives the reader a peek into a surprisingly glorious early past of US soccer, the decades of ostracism based on perception as a sport of immigrants, and the ups and downs that took us from New York Cosmos to the present-day 20-team Major League Soccer.

Basically this is an excellent description of a novice to the soccer world learning its vaules and benefits. The author well documents his passage from novice to becoming a "soccer nut" whom goes overboard like many before him with his passion for this sport. His primary experience is in the recreational levels of the game, but his professional experience allows him to get a unexpected glimpse into the history of the sport in America.I would recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the game itself at any level. His enjoyment of youth sports and their demands upon its paritcipants is an accurate reflection of how many youth sports become a passion, not just an interest.It is a positive journey about a sport which its fans give their hearts to and will follow throughout their lives.

Grabbed this off the shelf at the library and read it. A very well-written and humorous book, great for parents who are just getting their kids into soccer for the first time at the five to ten year old level. There are many books about coaching and skills for sure, with loads of drills, but this is a more holistic and entertaining look at youth and American soccer, blending some fantastical historical research with the author's first hand experience of coaching his kids team. The author is a journalist by trade, so he has an obvious knack for writing in a funny, witty style. I read this very quickly within a few weeks and had a hard time putting it down, and highly recommend to other parents. The book is a few years old now, but every bit as relevant as when he first wrote it.

Jim's style of writing is captivating and comedic. Being myself an assistant coach, and a parent of youth players, I found his anecdotes very similar to my own experiences. His research of the sport provides a goldmine of information for anyone who wishes to learn the roots of the sport in the USA, or its rich but little known highly competitive history amongst migrant cultures flocking to America. A must read for the parent or coach alike as Jim shares its all too common experiences.

This is an excellent soccer book. It's one that every Weekend warrior soccer coach will love.

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