



The Wonder Crew: The Untold Story of a Coach, Navy Rowing, and Olympic Immortality

Susan Saint Sing

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THE WONDER CREW is the fascinating story of how the salty coach of the Annapolis crew team, Coach Richard Glendon, seized the sport of rowing first from the Ivy League schools and then the imposing British with a new style both uniquely American and very much his own. He took a group of young midshipmen with humble origins and dominated a sport once the domain of the privileged.

After stunning the Ivy Leagues in race after race, the US Naval Academy team won a shot at the Olympics. Their task was nearly impossible: for hundreds of years, the British Navy ruled the world and their supremacy of the seas naturally made them dominant in the sport of rowing. With the hopes of a nation, Navy went into the heart of Europe and in thrilling fashion defeated the heavily favored Brits to win the gold medal in 1920. With Glendon's new American style, the US won Gold for forty straight years, the longest winning streak in any single sport in Olympic history.

Rich in history, with brave characters, American ingenuity, and dramatic training and competition, THE WONDER CREW is the first comprehensive account of the 1920 Olympic Navy crew team and their inspirational coach who forged the dramatic story of their quest for Olympic gold.

The Wonder Crew: The Untold Story of a Coach, Navy Rowing, and Olympic Immortality Details

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Rose says

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Darcy Whitsett says

An easy read, interesting history of Crew. Especially interesting to me after watching many regattas and being part of the Navy Crew with Danny. The Annapolitan Club is still in Annapolis - I hope to check it out on our next trip.

Cheryl says

In 1904, crew teams primarily were comprised of wealthy young men. Britain dominated the sport. The Ivy League colleges dominated the American scene until Richard Glendon, son of an immigrant Irish family, became the Naval Academy's coach, and the sport of rowing was changed forever. If you like the sport of crew, this book is rich in history and a great read!

Wystan says

I found the writing style to be slightly nauseating, as most things seemed to be written like "Little did he know, fate was drawing him closer to historical glory!" (not a real quotation).

Other than that, it was neat to read a bit about the evolution of the American rowing stroke, blade and hull design. Cool stuff.

Joe White says

The meat of the book is the largest part of the midsection, which focuses on the actual composition and strategy of the 1920 crew and race. This part of the book is worth reading.

I felt that the introductory section of around 60 pages contained superfluous information, too many flowery adjectives, and leaned toward idolized hero worship. I did feel that several of the statements regarding personnel, techniques, and history were mentioned 2 to 3 times leading to the deja vu redundancy.

Jen says

If you don't know anything about rowing, or crew as it is more commonly called, this book will tell you all about it. If you're a rower, then you will find much understanding and inspiration within these pages. Thanks to knee surgery I had an abrupt end to my collegiate rowing career, and when another opportunity to row came along I was hesitant to take it, remembering how much it had hurt to lose my life as a rower once; and then I read this book. It reminded me of what I love about crew, the camaraderie, the dedication, the feel of blistered hands on weathered oars. If you want a glance into the life of a competitive rower, or if you want to understand someone's obsession with something that seems so useless, then read this book and understand. Crew is life, and this book will teach you that and make you believe it and feel the magic and power of the oars, too.

Kathryn says

Slow at first, but a really interesting look at the sport and inter-country relations going on at the time.

Dpalange44 says

Not very well written, but it is about my great-grandfather!
