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*Wayne Coffey, Jim Craig (Foreword by)*

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## **The Boys of Winter: The Untold Story of a Coach, a Dream, and the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team**

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### **The Story of the Greatest Sports Moment of the Twentieth Century**

Once upon a time, they taught us to believe. They were the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team, a blue-collar bunch led by an unconventional coach, and they engineered what *Sports Illustrated* called the greatest sports moment of the twentieth century. Their “Miracle on Ice” has become a national fairy tale, but the real Cinderella story is even more remarkable.

Wayne Coffey casts a fresh eye on this seminal sports event, giving readers an ice-level view of the amateurs who took on a Russian hockey juggernaut at the height of the Cold War. He details the unusual chemistry of the Americans—formulated by their fiercely determined coach, Herb Brooks—and seamlessly weaves portraits of the boys with the fluid action of the game itself. Coffey also traces the paths of the players and coaches since their stunning victory, examining how the Olympic events affected their lives.

Told with warmth and an uncanny eye for detail, *The Boys of Winter* is an intimate, perceptive portrayal of one Friday night in Lake Placid and the enduring power of the extraordinary.

Also available as an eBook

## **The Boys of Winter: The Untold Story of a Coach, a Dream, and the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Boys of Winter: The Untold Story of a Coach, a Dream, and the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team for online ebook**

### **Diane Schneider says**

I think I was expecting this book to be more about the team and the full Olympic experience than just the Miracle on Ice. The author takes an interesting approach by narrating the game and breaking it up throughout with vignettes describing the coaching staff, the players, and the preparation for the game. Personally, I found this to be distracting. Because I wasn't given an opportunity to get to know the players before he started describing the game, I had a hard time keeping them straight. I also found it hard to appreciate the drama of the game narrative because the author kept interrupting the narrative to talk about the players and coaches. The book captures the excitement of the win and the effect it had on the nation and the sport, but I feel it could have been related in a more organized fashion.

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### **Tommy says**

I have to start off by saying the movie that is based of this event, is my favorite movie of all time, and this book doesn't fall short of the movie at all! I absolutely loved this book. It was a perfect reflection of the movie, and truly told a great story, all in just a book. I thoroughly enjoyed it. I would recommend this book to any of my classmates that enjoy sports, or sports books. I read the book The Boys Of Winter by Wayne Coffey. It is the incredible story about the 1980 U.S. Olympic Gold metal team. The book goes more indebted than the movie does, by getting prospective or more personal story's from players, like Jim Craig(the goalie) who played a key roll in the win over the Russians in the final game. This book really surprised me of how much the movie is true to it. It amazed me of how hard the hockey players worked to beat the Russian or U.S.S.R. Back then. If you didn't know, back then the Russians were able to use professional players, which are players that get payed and played hockey for a living. But every other team had to use amateur players, which were college, to junior players, and could even be high school players. But at this time the Russians were the raining champs and no one could take them down. They played a "different" style of hockey, I think it's actually more of a modern style to now. They passed the puck fast not having it for more than 3 seconds, they took slap shots, they were faster, and stronger. They were everything and more than every other country. That is why this story is so amazing. The U.S. took down the Russian 4-3, winning the gold metal. It goes on to talk about some of the players, thoughts and experiences after winning the game. Especially Jim Craig's who forwarded the story to the author Wayne Coffey. Craig then went on to talk about, how he still has the U.S. flag he skated around the ice with, and how the first thing he did was look for his dad in the crowd. "Do you Believe in miracles!" This quote is not only my favorite quote, but it sums up the book in only 5 words.

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### **Luke Koran says**

After hearing about Miracle on Ice - the ULTIMATE achievement and upset in all of sports in the 20th century - my entire life, from numerous viewings of Disney's "Miracle" and readings concerning iconic coach Herb Brooks to my upbringing on the East Side of Saint Paul, Minnesota, I wasn't so sure that any

book could tell me something new about the 1980 Olympics, let alone blow my mind. Well, be surprised when I tell you that author Wayne Coffey accomplished both of these things with the incredible literary masterpiece that is “The Boys of Winter”!

From detailing the lives of each and every one of the twenty players that wore “USA” on the front of their jerseys in 1980 - as well as some commentary on the coaching and training staff - to a thorough re-telling of most of the Olympic games, especially the semi-final versus the Soviet Union, Coffey provides a fresh, in-depth look on an event that nearly every American knows at least a little about. Bookended by the sudden death of Herbie Brooks in 2003, this book succeeds in revisiting Miracle on Ice at the proper time and with the appropriate research and literary ingenuity. My only qualms with any telling of the 1980 USA Olympic hockey team - from the New York Times editorials of February 1980 to the 2004 movie “Miracle” and 2005 book “Boys of Winter”, is the inadequate coverage of the 7-3 upset of #2 team in the world, Czechoslovakia. I firmly believe that this game has never been given its fair share of appreciation for the unfathomable victory it truly was. As famed defensemen Ken Morrow said it best, “It was the best game we played in the tournament.”

All in all, I couldn’t set this book down, as my thirst for more knowledge and surprises concerning my fellow East Sider Herb Brooks along with the greatest triumph in sports history really took control of my mind and feelings to thoroughly enjoy and finish this book as fast as possible. A GREAT story deserves a GREAT storyteller, and this book is proof that miracles do indeed happen.

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### **Michelle Connolly says**

#### **DO YOU BELIEVE IN MIRACLES?**

This quote perfectly captures the whole story of the 1980 Mens Olympic Hockey team, the definition of an underdog team. The USA had low goals in their own Olympics, basically just avoid being embarrassed on their home ice situated in the quaint little town of Lake Placid, New York. Under strict and manipulative coach Herb Brooks, the random college boys came together to win the gold medal against unbelievable odds. Even more impressive is the fact that to reach the medal, they defeated one of the greatest hockey teams ever assembled, the communist era USSR Hockey team. They were completely dominant in international competition for over a span of 20 plus years, the only major blip in their record being this one game. It is a great inspiring underdog story, and named one of the best sport moments of the American century.

This book is fantastic, Wayne Coffey seamlessly weaves in between the narrative of the game and the back stories of many of the players lives. The readers learn about how each player grew up and what inspired and drove them to pursue college hockey and a spot on the 1980 Olympic roster. All in all this is a great read, especially if you are interested in sports, the Olympics or just simply know the back story. Even if you don’t know much Coffey does a great job of setting the scene and explaining the events that led to this miracle on ice.

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### **Fred Shaw says**

The Boys of Winter, Tantor Audiobook

By Wayne Coffey

Narrated by Kirby Heyborne

5 Stars

This is a true story, taking the reader back in time to the 1980, Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY, where Eric Heiden won 5 gold medals in speed skating and the United States beat the USSR hockey team, the greatest team on the planet, setting the stage for the US to win the Gold Medal in hockey. Fewer people recall Heiden's feat, even though the accomplishment was by degrees greater than the hockey scores. However most people do recall "the Miracle on Ice" if you were around then, or if you are a hockey fan. I was a 30 something young man at the time and remember how I thought as I sat down to watch the game, wouldn't it be great if the US beat the "Reds"? (I didn't know at the time, the TV presentation was delayed due to skiing events!)

This book reads like a fast paced mystery novel, where the author tells of heart racing accounts of play by play and sometimes second by second action. Wayne Coffey intersperses the hockey action with bios of the coach Herb Brooks, how the team was selected and how Brooks' far fetched strategy came to fruition on a Friday night in February, 1980. Coffey also includes an intimate background of each of the players both before and after the Olympics.

He reminds the reader of how the 1980 Olympic games differ from those of today. All Olympic athletes at the time had to maintain amateur status - no professional players were allowed. But the world knew the Soviet athletes were essentially professional due to the fact that the sport was their job. They trained year round and all costs were covered by the Russian government.

I thoroughly enjoyed my trip back in time, but the behind the scenes stories made it memorable.

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## **Lance says**

Any American sports fan will know where he or she was on February 22, 1980. It was on that date that 20 young men from the United States defeated the hockey team from the Soviet Union in the Winter Olympics. It is considered by many, including this reviewer, as the greatest sports event that has occurred and will not be repeated. The stories behind this game and the players and Coach Herb Brooks are told in this book by Wayne Coffey.

The book starts and ends with scenes from Brooks' funeral after he was killed in an auto accident in 2003. There are short biographies of Brooks and each of the 20 players scattered throughout the description of the action on the ice during that game. The format makes for great reading for the print version and while also excellent for the audio version, the listener will have to pay close attention so that when the narration changes from player story back to the game, there is no disconnect.

The game replay is excellent with not only goals and saves described but each check, each penalty and each steal of the puck by either team relived in great detail. On occasion I will watch a video of the game and get chills, even after all these years. I had the same reaction when Coffey was describing key events of the game, such as Mark Johnson's goal with one second remaining in the first period, spectacular saves by goaltender Jim Craig and certainly the winning goal by Mike Eruzione.

Any reader who either wants to relive that special game or wants to learn why this team and event is still revered more than 35 years later will want to pick up this book. Even though it was originally published in

2005, the stories and events are just as thrilling to relive now as they were then.

<http://sportsbookguy.blogspot.com/201...>

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### **Nick Shelley says**

The Boys of Winter is a story about the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York and the U.S. Olympic hockey team playing the Soviets. This game wasn't played for a gold medal but a bigger cause, which was to beat the other way of government a Democracy vs Communism. This game would show which country is stronger and better and will symbolize the power of the country, it was a huge conflict and rivalry because this was the time of the Cold War and both teams were training years and years for this one game. Vladislav Tretiak the goalie for the Soviets trained every single day for this even on his wedding day. It was a tournament that had a total of 12 teams and everybody knew that we would be playing the Soviets. Even if you don't like hockey this book will intrigue anyone that reads it because it isn't just about the hockey but the political aspect that makes it good. The author Wayne Coffey makes the book become alive because of the way that he describes in first person from the player's point of view. The book goes into further detail before the 1980 winter Olympics and talks about how Herb Brooks picked out the guys to make the team. This tournament didn't allow any NHL or semi-pro's to play in it so every team had to pick the hardest working people that there was. I highly recommend this book to anybody that is interested into sports books or just anyone that wants to know what times were like during the cold war with all of the tensions.

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### **Caitlin says**

**"You watched them play and you were struck by the power of a simple, single thought: *Hey, we really can still do it.* In a profoundly pessimistic time, they brought hope...And the best part was they didn't even know they were doing it. They thought they were just trying to win hockey games."**

The Boys of Winter is the story of the United States Men's Hockey team that beat the Soviets in the winter of 1980, a David and Goliath victory which became a historic national moment during the Cold War. Wayne Coffey traces each moment of the game, interspersing the hockey plays with details about each of the players and how they came to join such a momentous game.

The Boys of Winter has been on my to-read list for awhile, I think since I saw it on a booklist for the greatest sports books ever. I've become a big fan of hockey but I haven't read all that many sports stories. Because Coffey gives a lot of details on the players' lives and backgrounds, the pace of the book moves from fast-paced to leisurely in waves, which may bother some readers. For me, it was fascinating to see how all these kids of various backgrounds came together against a Soviet team that had been training with each other for decades and was the better team in most ways. It's an intriguing story that doesn't hold back on the less glorious parts of the various personalities involved and doesn't sugarcoat the way that coach Herb Brooks managed to spur the team to victory. It's an intriguing, well-written story that had me looking up old footage of the game just so I could compare it to what I read in the book and still came away satisfied.

It also had the perfect quote to explain why I'm fascinated by goalies in hockey:

**"Goalies are different from other human beings. By workplace location and mindset, they occupy**

**their own distinct space. A goal cage is six feet wide and four feet high, twenty-four square feet to keep the puck from penetrating. You are quite literally the last line of defense, the ultimate determinant of who wins and who loses. You need a special sort of self-reliance to play the goal, and a willfulness that borders on defiance: *You are not getting this puck past me.*"**

If you're looking for a compelling sports story, *The Boys of Winter* may be up your alley. Coffey weaves together details of the game and details of the players lives and personalities with skill, though inconsistent pacing and I found myself intrigued throughout.

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### **Michelle says**

This is an amazing story, well told.

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### **Ben says**

I like the outline of this book. Tell the story of a single game, and use different moments within it to tell the stories of the players on the team. And I'm a sucker for anything Cold War-related, because it all seems so clear cut and understandable, while still providing a mysterious, impenetrable character. That character is the Soviets. You know all about them, yet you know nothing about what they are really like.

The backstories of all the U.S. players are interesting to various degrees. Most guys are from either Minnesota, Michigan, or Massachusetts. They all grew playing on ponds and rivers, and most went to the University of Minnesota or somewhere else freezing. But their personal stories vary greatly within these bounds. Some had great professional careers, more had decent ones, and some had almost none.

If you like underdog, feel-good stories, tales of determination and hard work... or if you just like hockey, you'll enjoy this quick read.

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### **Anna says**

One of my favorite books of all time. I love hockey and *Miracle on ice*. So this book was a must read. I could not put down this book. I liked learning about all the players and their lives. This team is a great one and I love it.

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### **Zachary Fier says**

I enjoyed this book because it helped me understand more about the event. Obviously I knew the basics of the *Miracle on Ice* but this book really went into detail of every little thing that happened which helped me understand the event even more clearly. I liked how the quotes were real quotes by Coach Brooks and how each detail was explained very clearly. This is a great book for any sports fans and I would definitely recommend this book.

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## **Patrick says**

Do you believe in miracles? The Boys of Winter: The Untold Story of a Coach, a Dream, and the 1980 Olympic Hockey Team goes through the phenomenon of the journey the US Men's Hockey Team to winning the gold medal. A household story to hockey fans is taken in depth through the unheard triumph and struggles of the 1980 US Men's Hockey Team. Wayne Coffey through the course of the novel goes through the teams tales of brotherhood with the stories of individual teammates, their outlandish coach Herb Brooks, and the Goliath of hockey the Soviets.

Wayne Coffey is a legendary sportswriter and journalist for The New York Daily News. Over the course of thirty books Coffey has one the "New York Times Bestseller List Award", on the The Boys Of Winter, and been nominated for three "Pulitzer Awards". Coffey has also been named one of the nation's top sports feature writers by the Associated Press three times in the past five years. Coffey still hard at work writing resides in the Hudson Valley region of New York.

The way Coffey tackled the format of the book was by structuring it like a hockey game and by naming each chapter after a period of the hockey game. Each period, or chapter he would begin with what happened during that period of play then transition to several substories of different players on the team. As the game rose in tension so would the substories, whether they were stories on specific players or the teams experience with Brooks at the helm. The story then goes on to describe the final buzzer and the triumph of the team defeating the soviets and going on to defeat Finland in the gold medal game.

Growing up being a very avid hockey fan, this book was a delight to read. As a kid I always watched the movie Miracle and constantly dreamed of one day sporting that classic red, white, and blue jersey reading USA in big blue letters, and this book brought back that nostalgic feeling I had for that movie and then some. I would most definitely recommend this book to someone who is very patriotic, a huge sports fan, or just someone who just enjoys a good underdog story. Overall The Boys Of Winter is a great read and I can definitely see myself rereading it in the near future.

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## **Nate says**

A beautifully told look back at the most famous hockey game in history: "Two days after the loss to the United States, the Soviet Union scored nine times in the first thirty-five minutes and crushed the Swedes, 9–2. The Soviets would not lose another official international game for five years. ... But the future domination came with no rewind mechanism, no clause that could undo what happened on Friday night, February 22, 1980. It was the thirtieth anniversary of the film debut of Walt Disney's Cinderella. Maybe it figured."

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## **Nathaniel says**

Everybody wants to write the next The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, but this ain't it. As a side note: you should google your title before you run with it. When I tried to look up this title on Goodreads to write this review now, the first page was nothing but romance / erotica. I had to enter the author's last name, too, to get this actual book. :-)

I've never really understood the "Miracle on Ice". One of the things I often hear, when people are talking about, is that you had to be there to understand, where "there" isn't necessarily Lake Placid, but is--at least--

the Cold War. I'm willing to grant that, but that means that if you want to really get someone like me--born after this event took place--to understand you're going to need to give me some context. Like, geopolitical context. That's one of the things Boys in the Boat did so well: frame it within the story of World War 2 to give the story the necessary context.

Anyway, what I learned in this book is that the American coach was a mean old tyrant and possibly had a screw lose, that the Russians outplayed the Americans and we just got lucky, and that Lake Placid really shouldn't have been hosting the Winter Games anyway because the town's too small. I'm not sure those are the lessons I'm supposed to have walked away--I'm pretty sure they are not--but that's what stuck.

As for the rest of it: telling the story of the game spread out over the entire book with a bunch of flash-backs and tangents between the important plays didn't work for me. I had no idea who anybody was, because 50+ names (20 players, a few coaches, and then family members for most of them) is way too many to keep track of. Other than Herb Brooks, the only one I can remember is Jim Craig, and I finished this book yesterday. And I only remember Jim Craig 'cause he married a Mormon.

Which--and this has nothing to do with the book, really--brought up the most unintentionally hilarious moment in the book, when Wayne Coffey explained what Mormons believe about family:

Sharlene Craig is a Mormon. One of the beliefs of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is that babies are gifts from heaven, sent to earth to replace people who are dying. Before the babies come down, they get to know the person who is about to pass away.

I read that and went all Episode 8 Luke Skywalker: Every word of what you just said... was wrong. I mean, how would that even work? The Earth's population is growing, so clearly babies can't be replacing people who are dying. Don't get me wrong, it's not really a *bad* belief to attribute to Mormons it's just... totally wrong. There was this really famous (within the Mormon community) musical from the 1980s called Saturday's Warrior that maybe kind of / sort of had this belief in it. I can't remember, I haven't seen it since I was like, 10 years old, and citing it to get Mormon belief is sort of like quoting Jesus Christ: Superstar as formal Catholic theology.

Anyway, I'm sure it's an innocent mistake--and it was hilarious--but wow. That one was *out there*.

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