

Football Hero

By: Tim Green

Publisher: Harper Collins

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Genre: Fiction

Setting: New Jersey/New York, present day

SUMMARY: Ty Lewis, a recent orphan, hopes that by moving to New Jersey with his guardian, Uncle Gus, he will be able to play football and be closer to his older brother, Thane, who is on the verge of starting an NFL career. Instead of letting him play football, Gus at first presses him into service scrubbing toilets and gathering insider gambling information. Ty eventually gets to play, but with a cost that could endanger him and his brother, and involves the FBI and the Mafia before it's over.

AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

Tim Green has reached both of his life-long goals: to be a professional football player and best-selling author. After graduating from Syracuse University, he was a first-round draft choice of the Atlanta Falcons. During the eight years he played in the NFL, he earned a law degree and published his first book. After fifteen books written for adults, he ventured into the publishing for children. During frequent visits to schools, he connects his experiences as a student, athlete and author to students, while stressing the importance and enjoyment of reading.

Other books written by the author:

Baseball Great (2009)
Football Champ (2009)
Football Genius (2007)
Fifteen adult titles

SIMILAR BOOKS/BOOKS WITH A SIMILAR THEME:

Cover Up by John Feinstein
Two-Minute Drill by Mike Lupica
The Greatest Game Ever Played by Phil Bildner
The Team that Couldn't Lose by Matt Christopher
Quarterback Exchange by Gordon Korman
Tangerine by Edward Bloor

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: (If question is related to a specific chapter, chapter is in parenthesis following question)

1. How is Ty's life like yours? Different from yours?
2. In exchange for doing something he really likes, playing football, Ty is forced to do something he doesn't like, sharing inside information with Gus. Would you have done the same thing? Why or why not?
3. What personal qualities does Ty exhibit that allow him to persevere, even though his parents have died, his uncle at times treats him unfairly, and the students at the school bully him?
4. What surprised you the most about this book? At the end, what is most important to Ty?

LITERARY LINKS:

Tim Green's website: <http://www.timgreenbooks.com/kids/index.php>

Teen Reads <http://www.teenreads.com/reviews/9780061122743.asp>

Language Arts (List each and Indiana Academic Standards Grades 6-8 addressed by each):

6.1, 7.1, 8.1: Students use their knowledge of word parts and word relationships, as well as context (the meaning of the text around a word), to determine the meaning of specialized vocabulary and to understand the precise meaning of grade-level-appropriate words.

This would include the use of football terminology.

6.1.2, 7.1.2, 8.1.2 Vocabulary and Concept Development:

Identify and interpret figurative language (including similes, comparisons that use like or as, and metaphors, implied comparisons) and words with multiple meanings.

Give examples of figurative language the author uses to indicate action or emotions.

Social Studies (List each and Indiana Academic Standards Grades 6-8 addressed by each):

8.3 (Relating to this standard) Locate on a map all the cities and towns mentioned in this book, including the different football teams.

Additional Links

“Students Tackle Math via Fantasy Football.”

<http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/top-news/index.cfm?i=36556&CFID=23196264&CFTOKEN=20695349>

An article about using Fantasy Football to help students understand math.

Math: Math teachers can take the football theme to this novel and use it in their classrooms. Lessons on patterns and statistics would especially be a great tie-in for this novel.

Football Math: Students calculate team yardage in a football game using positive and negative numbers. <http://learnnc.org/lp/pages/3150>

Mathematics and Football: Several lessons where students analyze graphs. <http://illuminations.nctm.org/LessonDetail.aspx?ID=U85>

Fantasy Football and Math: <http://www.squidoo.com/fantasy-football-math>

Health and Wellness:

High Performance: Sports: In groups, students get to develop their own game, and then reflect on how teamwork and skill building affects their mind and body. <http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/highperformance/>