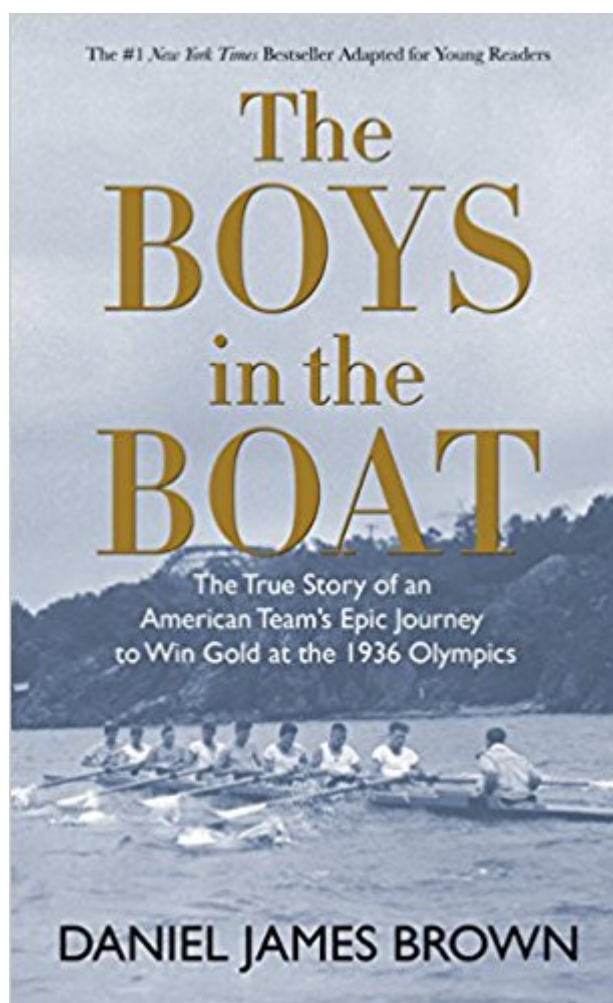


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# The Boys In The Boat: The True Story Of An American Team's Epic Journey To Win Gold At The 1936 Olympics



## Synopsis

A #1 New York Times Bestseller Adapted for Young Readers Inspiration for the PBS American Experience Documentary 'The Boys of '36' For readers of Unbroken, out of the depths of the Great Depression comes the astonishing tale of nine working-class boys from the American West who at the 1936 Olympics showed the world what true grit really meant. With rowers who were the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington's eight-oar crew was never expected to defeat the elite East Coast teams, yet they did, going on to shock the world by challenging the German boat rowing for Adolf Hitler. At the center of the tale is Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, whose personal quest captures the spirit of his generation – the generation that would prove in the coming years that the Nazis could not prevail over American determination and optimism.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 11 - 17 years

Grade Level: 6 - 12

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-7 • This adaptation of the adult title *The Boys in the Boat: Nine Americans and Their Epic Quest for Gold at the 1936 Berlin Olympics* (Viking, 2013) chronicles the powerful University of Washington crew team that took the gold in Berlin. The book centers on one untrained rower, Joe Rantz, who was working his way through college. The team was guided by the determined UW coach, Al Ulbrickson, whose obstacles to success were the rival rowing team from the University of California, Berkeley, and his own inconsistent rowers. Introductions to figures such as George Pocock, the team's boat builder, are fascinating, and the photos of races and the team

help to build an understanding of this unique world. The descriptions of the team's trajectory and their tense races are suspenseful, and readers will be fully invested. Rantz is a relatable underdog. However, the accounts of his struggles and triumphs come at the expense of his teammates, who are relegated to the background, existing only as sketchy, underdeveloped figures. Brown's portrayal of the Olympic games is full of thrilling details, but it's also impersonal, with little insight into the boys' thoughts, and Nazi Germany is mentioned only briefly. A "Who's Who" at the front of the book and a time line and introduction to rowing at the back are helpful and well laid out. VERDICT Those seeking an inspiring true story or a great sports tale will be pleased with this stirring work. —Marian McLeod, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Greenwich, CT --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Accolades for *The Boys in the Boat* (Young Readers Adaptation):- New York Times #1 bestseller- #1 Pacific Northwest Bookseller Association bestseller "The word teamwork, which can sound humdrum to kids in coaches' droning lectures, doesn't adequately describe the connection shared by the men in that boat in 1936. Illustrated with vintage photos, this moving book offers young people a vivid sense of that shared experience. A Depression-era story with timeless appeal." —Booklist, starred review "Offering a model of masterful nonfiction writing, Brown expertly balances the leisurely pacing of the protagonists' back stories with the exciting race scenes, related with concrete nouns, lively verbs, and short sentences, selected and adapted for this edition by Mone. Many photographs, an easy-to-read timeline, and notes on "The Art of Rowing," complete with a diagram, add visual appeal. A fine companion to Laura Hillenbrand's *Unbroken* (2014), also about the 1936 Olympics and also adapted for young readers." —Kirkus "Those seeking an inspiring true story or a great sports tale will be pleased with this stirring work." —School Library Journal "It becomes almost impossible not to root for such a hardscrabble collection of underdogs as they exhibit hard work, sacrifice, teamwork, and loyalty at every stage of their collective journey to Berlin." —Horn Book "With a lyrical flair, Brown tells the story of these men in a manner that intersperses the drama of the time period with the emotional and physical turmoil of their lives." —Young adult readers may not understand or even know about the desperation of the Depression, or what it was like at the genesis of Nazi Germany, but the tale of these persistent men, each with their own personal struggle, will entice readers of all ages." —VOYA Accolades for the adult edition of *The Boys in the Boat*: - #1 New York Times #1 bestseller- 2014 ABA Adult Nonfiction Book of the Year- 2014 Washington State Book Award "A suspenseful tale of triumph." —USA Today "Evocative, cinematic prose."

• Publishers Weekly "This is Chariots of Fire with oars." • David Laskin, author of The Children's Blizzard "A great and inspiring true story." • Nathaniel Philbrick, author of Mayflower "A thrilling, heart-thumping tale." • Timothy Egan, author of The Worst Hard Time "A robust, emotional snapshot of an era." • James Bradley, author of Flags of Our Fathers -- This text refers to the Paperback edition.

A wonderful book for people of all ages. An easier read for the younger set; however, all of the important messages are still included. It relays the hopes and dreams of those who came from a somewhat common upbringing to the World Stage of sports.

This book is one of my favorites to date, not only is it a true story that takes place in my own region, but also it clearly shows how hard it was to live in the middle of the 1930s. Even though Joe Rantz has an incredibly hard childhood, he achieves success as a person and an athlete with physical strength, perseverance, and becoming a self-made man. The author uses descriptive language and powerful emotion to show exactly what is going on throughout the book. In the end, you feel the book has taught you that working hard impacted his success the most. Boys in the Boat takes place in the mid-1930s in Washington State. The main character, Joe Rantz wants to be successful in life. To do this, he must overcome many challenges such as poverty, lack of family and most of all, his struggle to do it all on his own. Joe wants to be successful without any help. But Joe realizes how many people helped him on his way to his goal. Ultimately, Joe's success in rowing is linked to his work on a team. In order to pay for college at The University of Washington, Joe gets a job at the Grand Coulee Dam construction site. To work on the dam, you need to be strong. "The jackhammer work was brutal, for eight hours a day he dangled on a rope in furnace like heat of the canyon, pounding at the wall of rock in front of him. The jackhammer seemed to have a life of its own, constantly trying to rip itself out of his (Joe's) grip." (P.119). This shows how Joe must use his physical strength to succeed at the dam. Joe faces many challenges on his way to success. His perseverance is seen repeatedly throughout the book. One example of this is when he was living in Sequim as a teenager without a family. "Joe began to fend entirely for himself. He drove iron stakes into the ground to defend the chicken coop [ ] He foraged in the dripping woods for mushrooms." (P.52). We see that Joe just keeps pushing himself to be able to survive without anyone around to help him. When Joe was in Sequim, he had to be a self-made man to survive. "He dug tunnels under tree stumps and pried them out of the earth with

iron bars [ÃfÂçÃ â -Ã Â] He stooped and scraped with a shovel, digging irrigation ditches by hand [ÃfÂçÃ â -Ã Â] He lugged one hundred twenty pound cans of milk and sweet cream around dairy farms.ÃfÂçÃ â -Ã Â• (P.54). This shows how many different jobs Joe needed to survive without a family. Another example of Joe being a self-made man is when he is in Sequim trying to make a living. ÃfÂçÃ â -Ã Â“From now on, he would make his own way. He would find his own route to happiness, as his father had said.ÃfÂçÃ â -Ã Â• (P.52). Joe is making a big decision to move forward. Throughout everything, Joe deals with being abandoned at a young age and struggling to survive. JoeÃfÂçÃ â -Ã Â„çs story gives us an example of how physical strength, perseverance, and being a self-made man leads to great success. I give this book 5 out of 5 stars and 2 thumbs up! This book is a great read.

What a great story about young boys who overcame a lot of hardships to win the Olympic gold in Germany in rowing and coming from the backgrounds they all had. It was heart-breaking to read about a young boy being abandoned by his parents. Mary DeBoer

The Boys in the Boat was the selection for our book club but no copies were available! Turning to for the book I was pleased to see a version for my KINDLE. However- I was surprised to find it to be a Young Readers Adaptation. With just 2 days remaining before the book club meeting I had no choice but to go ahead and read it. I don't know what differences there are between this version and the one for adults but I certainly would recommend either for the example of success through hard work, determination and trust -- a difficult attitude to acquire for young and "old alike. A story about real people

Having read the adult book I bought this young readers edition of The Boys in the Boat right away for two of my grandchildren. This true story of team work, overcoming hardships and courage is one that is as important today as it was newsworthy 80 years ago. We can all learn from their example.

My 8-year old son reads a lot of the "Diary of a Wimpy Kid" books and that sort of "book" :/, so it was such a breath of fresh air to introduce him to a book that is SO WELL WRITTEN, and has such a great message of perseverance and overcoming obstacles. The Audience Guide says 4th-7th grade, but I think even younger grades might be ok, especially if parents read it with, or to, their 1st-4th grader, as the subject matter in parts can be a little emotional, and a few concepts would be helpful to pause and talk about. (I wanted to pause and talk about ALL the parts!!) The way the book

jumps from Joe's childhood to adulthood every-other chapter might be confusing at first if kids aren't familiar with that literary device. One thing that would have helped this confusion is if the book designer/publisher made the little icon of the rowers under the chapter # (which is ALWAYS the same) different for the chapters that have to do with his youth. For example, only use that crew/boat icon on the chapters about the UW team, but for the other chapters use a different icon/illustration that has to do with his childhood to help guide the reader when there's a time switch. I have not read the original version, but plan to because this was such a compelling and captivating story. I hope they make a movie out of it, too.

While the ending was not a surprise, everything else about the lives of these young men was. It was a remarkable true story that I never had heard before. Knowing that then as it is today, this sport tends to lend itself to being the environment of the upper class, it was fantastic to read about boys from less fortunate beginnings having what it took to win the biggest prize of all. The writer was engaging and truly made you feel like you got to know what motivated the athletes.

Growing up in Seattle, with a historian for a mother, I cannot imagine a richer, more immersive journey through my home town and surrounding areas during the depression and early years. The story of Joe Rantz is inspiring and his humble nature and character carry the story. The boat itself is an amazing blend of hard work and the most precise level of collaborative effort I now feel I have "experienced" by reading this. I bought the abridged version to read to my children and now have started the documentary online -- make sure to read the book first! The last book I could not put down and felt I learned much during the process was *Seabiscuit* which this book has been compared to over and over again.

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