



The Greatest: The Quest for Sporting Perfection

Matthew Syed

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What can Roger Federer teach us about the secret of longevity?

What do the All Blacks have in common with improvised jazz musicians?

What can cognitive neuroscientists tell us about what happens to the brains of sportspeople when they perform?

And why did Johan Cruyff believe that beauty was more important than winning?

Matthew Syed, the 'Sports Journalist of the Year 2016', answers these questions and more in a fascinating, wide-ranging and provocative book about the mental game of sport.

How do we become the best that we can be, as individuals, teams and as organisations? Sport, with its innate sense of drama, its competitive edge, its psychological pressures, its sense of morality and its illusive quest for perfection, provides the answers.

The Greatest: The Quest for Sporting Perfection Details

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Author : Matthew Syed

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Simon Fisher says

Pretty good book, particularly enjoyed the case studies.

Paris Hadjisoteriou says

“May your hands always be busy, may your feet always be swift. May you have a strong foundation, when the winds of changes shift. May your hear always be joyful, and may your song always be sung. May you stay for ever young. “ - Bob Dylan

Jason Lawless says

I loved Matthew Syed's previous books, Bounce and Black Box Thinking. Two of my favourite all-time non-fiction books. I picked the paperback version up without reading the back page blurb. I was disappointed to find it was simply a collection of articles (although very well written) he had previously published. My mistake. I was expecting to find another ground breaking work on how success works. I had read several of the articles before, so I felt somewhat disappointed. That said it is very well written and I did enjoy the read, but don't expect anything revolutionary.

Mark says

Ironically this book is very mediocre. Dilettantism. A ping-pong player writing about boxing.

Jeanette says

This is an interesting book, especially if you are a sports enthusiast. Pleased to have won this book in a recent Goodreads First Reads giveaway.

Jono says

3.75

Felicity says

A book about what makes someone the greatest. What do they do that makes them stand apart from the crowd in the world of sport?

Matthew Syed's best book so far. I found this fascinating and particularly liked the interviews at the end. A lot of the knowledge Syed shares is transferable to life/other professions.

A really well structured book with some useful tips on how to make yourself the best if not better.

Piotr says

very good, although found it a bit repetitive with others by Matthew Syed. Enjoyed it nevertheless.

David Margetts says

Not bad, and good in parts. Syed uses a number of written stories / diary entries to form a book about his observations / opinions on sport and some of the sporting heroes and anti-heroes. At times the book is revealing and insightful, at others it seems a regurgitation of previous books or 'old facts'. He talks a lot about the 'what' of the 'Greatest', but falls short on the 'why' and the 'how'....giving many facts, but little in the way of instruction for others. The best parts surround the mental areas of sport in the earlier chapters, and also the latter stages surrounding icons. It is well researched and well written, but could have done more to unleash 'advice and help' for mere 'earthlings'.

Karthik Ram says

Bought this for the man pictured playing Chetan Baboor in the pages of Sportstar in the early 2000s, as much as the writer. Didn't quite do it for me. Syed's knowledge of multiple sports and characters is obvious; passion (romance?) seems to be the missing ingredient.

Paul says

Not an original idea in sight. The concept is gripping but other books address the topic far better and in an original way. This is a cut & paste of previous newspaper columns. Very disappointing.

Jamie Bowen says

This book differs from Bounce and Black Box Thinking by using Matthew's newspaper articles to create the narrative of what makes sporting perfection. This means that it's broken down into nice bite size chunks with 5 overarching chapters. There's something about sports writing that makes it come alive and is so evocative, and this book ticks a lot of those boxes. Some great stories as well which I never knew.
