

# *Athletic Fiction*



## **BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL**

### **Summerland** by Michael Chabon (M,S)

Ethan Feld, the worst baseball player in the history of the game, finds himself recruited by a 100-year-old scout to help a band of fairies triumph over an ancient enemy.

### **Free Baseball** by Sue Corbett (M)

Angry with his mother for having too little time for him, eleven-year-old Felix takes advantage of an opportunity to become bat boy for a minor league baseball team, hoping to someday be like his father, a famous Cuban outfielder. Includes glossaries of baseball terms and Spanish words and phrases.

### **Jackie and Me : A baseball card adventure** by Dan Gutman (M)

With his ability to travel through time by using baseball cards, Joe goes back to 1947 to meet Jackie Robinson, turning into a black boy in the process.

### **Heat** by Mike Lupica (M, S)

Pitching prodigy Michael Arroyo is on the run from social services after being banned from playing Little League baseball because rival coaches doubt he is only twelve years old and he has no parents to offer them proof.

### **The Boy who Saved Baseball** by John H. Ritter (M)

The fate of a small California town rests on the outcome of one baseball game, and Tom Gallagher hopes to lead his team to victory with the secrets of the now-disgraced player, Dante Del Gato.

### **Over the Wall** by John H. Ritter (M, S)

Thirteen-year-old Tyler, who has trouble controlling his anger, spends an important summer with his cousins in New York City, playing baseball and sorting out how he feels about violence, war, and in particular the Vietnamese conflict that took his grandfather's life.

### **My 13th Season** by Kristi Roberts (M)

Already downhearted due to the loss of her mother and her father's overwhelming grief, thirteen-year-old Fran decides to give up her dream of becoming the first female in professional baseball after a coach attacks her just for being a girl.

## **BASKETBALL**

### **Night Hoops** by Carl Deuker (S)

While trying to prove that he is good enough to on his high school's varsity basketball team, Nick must also deal with his parents' divorce and erratic behavior of a troubled classmate who lives across the street.

### **Travel Team** by Mike Lupica (M)

After he is cut from his travel basketball team--the very same team that his father once led to national prominence--twelve-year-old Danny Walker forms his own team of cast-offs that might have a shot at victory.

### **Boost** by Kathryn Mackel (M)

Thirteen-year-old Savvy's dreams of starting for her elite basketball team are in danger when she is accused of taking steroids.

### **Hoops** by Walter Dean Myers (S)

A teenage basketball player from Harlem is befriended by a former professional player who, after being forced to quit because of a point shaving scandal, hopes to prevent other young athletes from repeating his mistake.

## **BOXING AND WRESTLING**

### **The Boxer** by Kathleen Karr (M, S)

Having learned how to box while in prison, fifteen-year-old Johnny sets out to discover if he can make a decent living as a fighter in late nineteenth-century New York City.

### **The Contender** by Robert Lipsyte (S)

A Harlem high school dropout escapes from a gang of punks into a boxing gym, where he learns that being a contender is hard and often discouraging work, but that you don't know anything until you try.

### **There's a Girl in my Hammerlock** by Jerry Spinelli (M)

Thirteen-year-old Maisie joins her school's formerly all-male wrestling team and tries to last through the season, despite opposition from other students, her best friend, and her own teammates.

## **FOOTBALL**

### **Leverage** by Joshua C. Cohen (S)

High school sophomore Danny excels at gymnastics but is bullied, like the rest of the gymnasts, by members of the football team, until an emotionally and physically scarred new student joins the football team and forms an unlikely friendship with Danny.

### **No More Dead Dogs** by Gordon Korman (M)

Eighth-grade football hero Wallace Wallace is sentenced to detention attending rehearsals of the school play where, in spite of himself, he becomes wrapped up in the production and begins to suggest changes that improve not only the play but his life as well.

### **Crossing Lines** by Paul Volponi (S)

High school senior Adonis struggles to do the right thing when his fellow football players escalate their bullying of a new classmate, Alan, who is transgendered.

## **OTHER SPORTS**

### **Tangerine** by Edward Bloor (M,S)

Twelve-year-old Paul, who lives in the shadow of his football hero brother Erik, fights for the right to play soccer despite his near blindness and slowly begins to remember the incident that damaged his eyesight.

### **Whale Talk** by Chris Crutcher (S)

Intellectually and athletically gifted, TJ, a multiracial, adopted teenager, shuns organized sports and the gung-ho athletes at his high school until he agrees to form a swimming team and recruits some of the school's less popular students.

### **The Sports Beat Series** by John Feinstein (M,S)

Book 1: *Last Shot: A Final Four Mystery*: When Stevie wins a writing contest for aspiring sports journalists, his prize is a press pass to the Final Four in New Orleans. While exploring the Superdome, he overhears a plot to throw the championship game. With the help of fellow contest winner Susan Carol, Stevie has just 48 hours to figure out who is blackmailing one of the star players . . . and why.

### **Downriver** by Will Hobbs (S)

A group of teenagers steal a canoe and try their hands at challenging the Colorado river's tempestuous white water.

### **The Runner** by Cynthia Voight (S)

As a dedicated runner, a teenage boy has always managed to distance himself from other people until the experience of coaching one of his teammates on the track team gradually helps him see the value of giving and receiving.

### **Grade Level Interest**

**M** Middle School (defined as grades 6-8).

**S** Senior High (defined as grades 9-12).