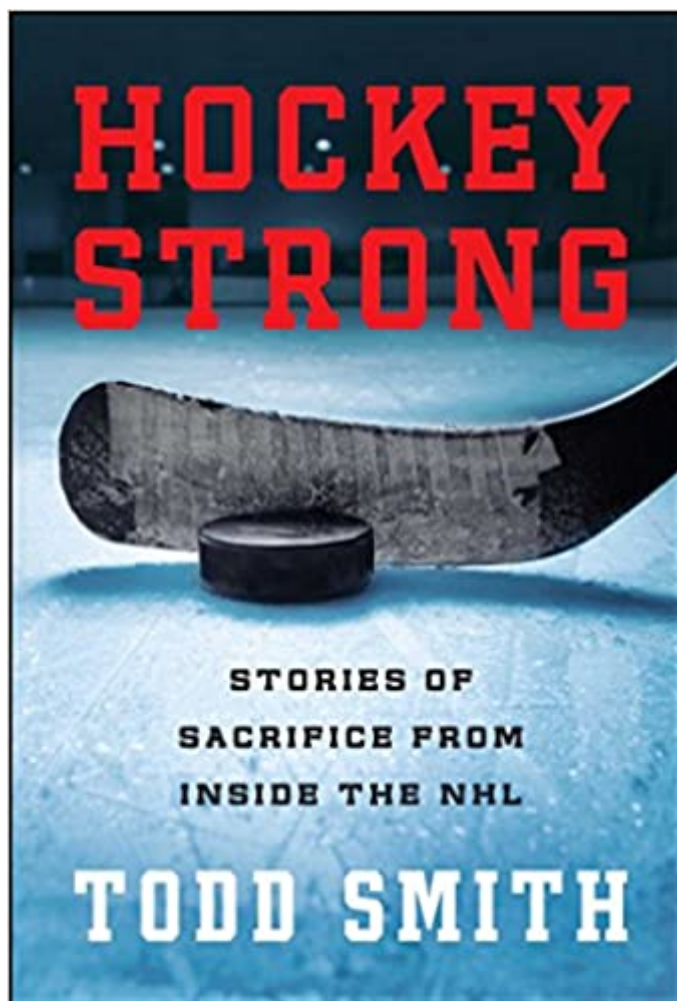


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Hockey Strong: Stories Of Sacrifice From Inside The NHL



Synopsis

This is the story of hockey, one scar at a time. For the casual enthusiast and hockey fanatic alike comes a brilliant collection of essays and photographs celebrating the grit and dedication of hockey players who regularly and willingly withstand injury and hardship to play the sport they love. Veteran hockey writer Todd Smith explores a side of the NHL that is rarely seen. Through in-depth player interviews and inside-the-locker-room reportage, *Hockey Strong* gives readers a behind-the-pads look at the playing in pain ethos that has been woven into the fabric of the game. What separates a hockey player's toughness from other athletes is the fact that being hockey strong is more than a single performance or bout or game or series. Hockey strong is a way of life. Superstars, muckers, snipers, and enforcers alike: the arduous journey of an NHL player is a story of the human body. It is the cracking left fist of the Philadelphia Flyers' Dave Brown and the battering ram right hand of the Detroit Red Wings' Joe Kocur. It is the unbreakable hockey heart of Rob McClanahan during "The Miracle on Ice" at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. It is the smashed face Kris Draper suffered during the bloody rivalry between the Colorado Avalanche and the Detroit Red Wings. Medical clearance to fight. Midgame root canals. Crushed orbital bones. Beer league determination. Legendary beat-downs. Collapsed lungs that go unreported. Unrelenting pain. Recovery and valor. Players refusing to go out because they owe it all to their brothers in uniform. Includes stories from: Shjon Podein, Dave Brown, Kris Draper, Kirk Maltby, Joe Kocur, Darren McCarty, Chris Nilan, David Clarkson, Rob McClanahan, Herb Brooks, Jack Carlson, Zach Parise, Charlie Coyle, Rick Tocchet, the Playoffs, and more!

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Customer Reviews

"Very Real. Todd Smith has created something special." (Sportsology)

Todd Smith is a contributing writer for the Minnesota Wild of the NHL Network. His hockey stories have been published in Minnesota Hockey, USA Hockey, and Let's Play Hockey. Smith studied very little at the University of Montana before becoming a Twin Cities publishing veteran and his work has appeared in The Rake Magazine, Minnesota Monthly, and Twin Cities METRO Magazine where he penned the wildly popular Spazz Dad print column and blog. Smith played high school hockey in the great state of Minnesota and his playing style was once described as, "surly and terrible."

Outstanding Read. Very well done!

Great book

A good gift for a reluctant reader.

Todd Smith brings the hockey knowledge of a second-generation lifer (maybe his grandfather was even hockey strong; I wouldn't be surprised), a great ear for quotes from the array of NHL studs he interviewed, and a sick, unbelievable trunk of stories about mashed faces, busted eye-sockets, bone fractures, and steam shovel fists! He's got it all: wonderful writing, blast-quick slapshot anecdotes, tons of action, and more than enough hockey knowledge to teach even the most die hard, 4AM rink time skater a thing or seven about the game he or she loves. Buy one for yourself and one for each your favorite hockey fans. They'll be sure to give you an awesome Xmas gift come December in return!

Every hockey player has a scar. And every scar tells a story. Todd Smith, who grew up playing hockey in Minnesota (and admits with characteristic humor that someone once described his style as "surly and terrible"), got the scar on his chin from a collision with a player twice his size. He recalls "my world going black and waking up in the locker room with firecrackers going off in my brain." That scar proved the inspiration for Smith's new book *Hockey Strong: Stories of Sacrifice from Inside the NHL*, released this month by Gallery, an imprint of Simon & Schuster. In it, he chronicles the stories

behind the scars of players ranging from the gritty *Shjon Podein*, a wild-eyed cartoon character with real-life wounds to the pretty *Zach Parise*, whose dad, J.P., a winger for the North Stars, sweet-talked security guards into letting his young sons skate at Met Center. Smith dwells not on the blow to Zach's mouth that required a mid-game root canal but of the emotional injury he suffered watching cancer consume his father during the 2014-15 season. Throughout, Smith focuses on the toughness that hockey players draw upon to come back from their injuries, to play through the pain, i. e., what makes them "hockey strong." The case studies vary from Parise healing by reflecting upon a vintage photo of his father wearing his old-school hockey gloves to Mike Rupp getting a nostril ripped off in a fight during an AHL fight, having it reattached with 29 stitches in the locker room and going back out to fight the guy again. Smith has dug deep to get these stories, aided in one case by a close, personal source: his own father, Gary Smith. Smitty, a trainer for the Flyers as well as the 1980 Olympics Miracle team, recounts the tale of Rob McClanahan's clash with Herb Brooks after the coach's famous line: "A bruise on the leg is a helluva long way from the heart." The trainer was holding a bag of ice on McClanahan's thigh at the time. I could go on, but you get the idea. *Hockey Strong* is full of stories that will appeal to hockey fans like me and you.

Hockey Strong captures the essence that is hockey, from the frozen ponds to Cup. You don't have to be a hockey nerd or expert to love this book - I only knew about half the players profiled, but thru Todd's writing, I came to know all their stories. It conveys the feeling of playing hockey - at any level - the camaraderie of the team, the dedication to the game, and the passion that pushes the best players to get back up (or come back to the ice after 'repairs'). It's an inspiring read with insight if you are a lifer but also accessible to a casual fan. Each chapter is a profile of someone who devoted their life to the game - some of whom are stars, many of whom were not, but provided the backbone of their team's spirit - playing tough all over the ice, standing up for teammates, and you can feel their love of the game thru this book. I spent over 40 years of my life not playing hockey, but kind of wishing I had. Then 5 years ago as my son reached the age of 5 and expressed an interest in this glorious sport, I picked up the game at the same time, only to fall in love with hockey and become convinced it is an incredible sport. I've been reading it to my son, and it's a good inspiration for young players. If you have someone in your life who enjoys this sport - *Hockey Strong* is a great read, a lot of fun, and will make you appreciate new details the next time you are watching a game.

Todd Smith has written an amazing book on the men behind the helmets and the sticks of the NHL. He personalizes their sacrifices on the ice and gives you a peek behind the clubhouse doors on what it takes to lace'em up and skate in the most brutal and demanding of all professional sports. Todd's natural enthusiasm for the wonders and glories of the sport translate into an excellent narrative that keeps the pages turning. Told with humor, wit and a bit of wide-eyed awe each chapter brings you closer to the realities of what it takes to play in the NHL than any other book you'll ever read. Excellent from start to finish this is a great book for mighty mites, high school players, bar league dudes and arm chair aficionados of all ages.

This engrossing, entertaining, well written book, defines the game and its players better than anything else I have read. You don't hear or read about these accounts via the news media and it gave me a greater appreciation for a game I already love. A great read!

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