Pop by Gordon Korman [1]

[2]A book about football in the summer? Sure! Pro teams are already running organized team activities, and high schools & colleges will be training hard while most of us are sipping lemonade. Gordon Korman's *Pop* [3] is the perfect summer football book. Marcus is the new kid in upstate New York's Kennesaw, a former star quarterback at this old Kansas high school.
His hopes of starting for the Hudson Valley Raiders are crushed when he shows up at tryouts, as the team is coming off a perfect season and doesn't want to mess with its chemistry, and already has an amazing quarterback in Troy Popovich. Marcus turns to training by himself in a park, and meets a strange mid-50s man named Charlie who acts like a teenager and tackles like a Mack truck. While this helps Marcus learn to take hits and eventually earns him a place on the team as a linebacker, it makes him an enemy of Troy, who turns out to be Charlie's son and is fiercely protective of his child-like father. Throw in some romance and a lot of accurate, heart-pumping football action, and you have sweet summer read.
Pop is a great blend of action, humor, and fascinating characters, and explores the more serious theme of sports injuries and the effect they can have in life after football [4]. The way Marcus and Charlie interact is particularly touching and funny as they pull pranks on the small-town locals, and is fairly unique to young adult fiction. Korman has written a number of other books for teens, including the *Son of the Mob* [5] books about a teen whose father is a powerful Mafia boss, *Jake, Reinvented* [6], another football-themed novel, and *The Juvie Three* [7], which, like *Pop*, was nominated for the Rosie Award [8]. Check it out, and join us for one of this summer's Reading the Rosies [9] book programs!
Posted by Chris H. on May 25, 2012

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