

The Rosies Are Ready for Some Football



August means back to school, the first touch of a chill in the morning air, and football, of course! This year, three of the Rosie Award nominees are about or related to football in very special and different ways. Geoff Herbach's novel *Stupid Fast* is set in the exciting and bewildering world of high school football, where Felton Reinstein has gone from being a bullied failure of a stand-up comedian to a seriously fast, seriously *gigantic* football player in his sophomore year. There's a decent amount of football action (including off-season training) and a bit of romance, but Herbach's strong point is how he balances a story about a neglectful mother with Felton's often hilarious struggles to control his newly grown-up body and the popularity it brings. Fans of *Carl Deuker* or Paul Volponi's sports novels will enjoy this one.

You don't have to be a football fan to have heard of *Michael Oher*, of the Baltimore Ravens. You've probably heard of him from the *movie* or *book version* of *The Blind Side*, or his adopted family's version of his story, *In a Heartbeat*. Oher finally tells his version, including what came before the Tuohy family took him in. From the ghettos of Memphis to the NFL, Oher's story of overcoming poverty, parental neglect, and a broken foster care system to achieve his dreams is inspiring but realistic. Football fans will be especially interested in his discussion of learning playbooks after years of playing street football.

People like Michael Oher got into football to escape destructive surroundings. Other people, like Josh Bleill ("rhymes with Kyle") come to it only after intense physical and mental trauma. A lifelong fan of the Indianapolis Colts, Bleill left his native Greenfield, Indiana home for the Marines, and less than a month later lost both legs (and two close friends) to an IED in Iraq. *One Step at a Time* is his story of his long struggle with physical and mental recovery, and how he has been able to translate this struggle into his job as a community spokesman for the Colts. Fans of *Dancing with the Stars* season 13 winner J. R. Martinez and his story *Full of Heart* will find this book similarly inspiring. Whether you like football or not, these three books tell compelling stories of overcoming great odds to make the most of bad situations. Check them out!

Posted by Chris H. on August 15, 2013

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