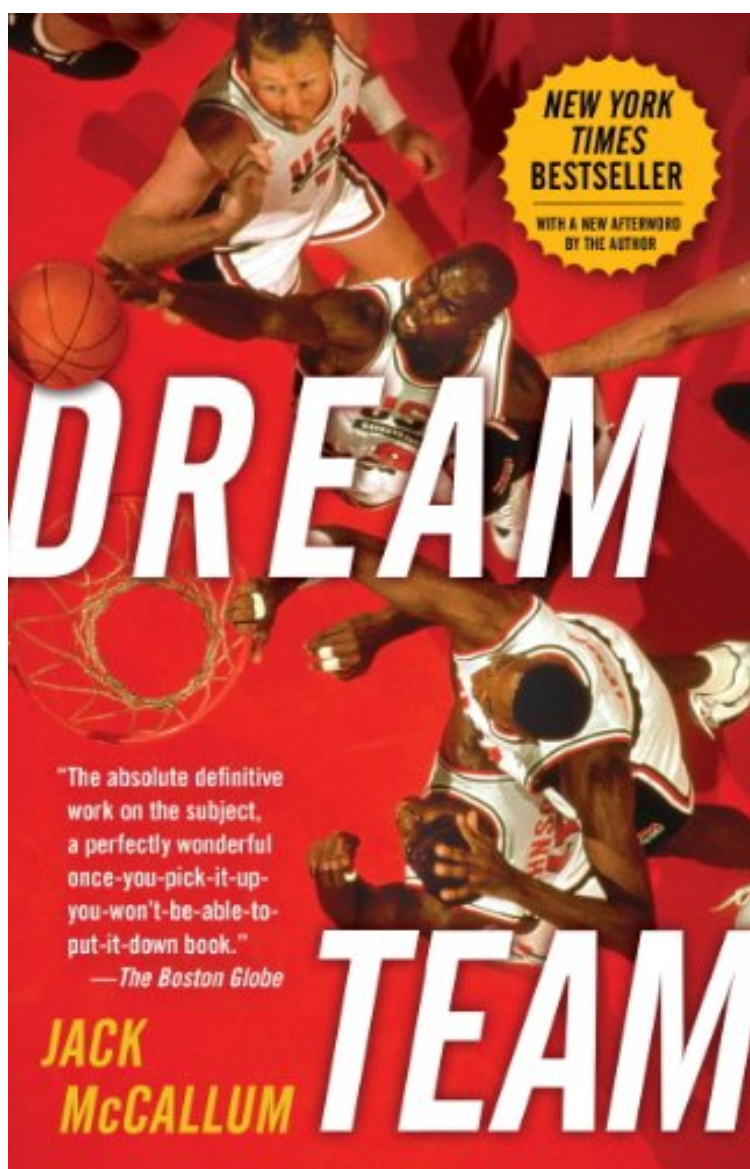


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Dream Team: How Michael, Magic, Larry, Charles, and the Greatest Team of All Time Conquered the World and Changed the Game of Basketball Forever



Par Jack McCallum

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Par Jack McCallum : Dream Team: How Michael, Magic, Larry, Charles, and the Greatest Team of All Time Conquered the World and Changed the Game of Basketball Forever before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dream Team: How Michael, Magic, Larry, Charles, and the Greatest Team of All Time Conquered the World and Changed the Game of Basketball Forever:

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurNEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Acclaimed sports journalist Jack McCallum

delivers the untold story of the greatest team ever assembled: the 1992 U.S. Olympic Mens Basketball Team. As a writer for Sports Illustrated, McCallum enjoyed a courtside seat for the most exciting basketball spectacle on earth, covering the Dream Team from its inception to the gold medal ceremony in Barcelona. Drawing on fresh interviews with the players, McCallum provides the definitive account of the Dream Team phenomenon. He offers a behind-the-scenes look at the controversial selection process. He takes us inside the teams Olympic suites for late-night card games and bull sessions where superstars like Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, and Larry Bird debated the finer points of basketball. And he narrates a riveting account of the legendary intrasquad scrimmage that pitted the Dream Teamers against one another in what may have been the greatest pickup game in history. In the twenty years since the Dream Team first captivated the world, its mystique has only grown. Dream Team vividly re-creates the moment when a once-in-a-millennium group of athletes came together and changed the future of sportsone perfectly executed fast break at a time. With a new Afterword by the author. The absolute definitive work on the subject, a perfectly wonderful once-you-pick-it-up-you-wont-be-able-to-put-it-down book.

The Boston Globe An Olympic hoops dream. Newsday What makes this volume a must-read for nostalgic hoopsters are the robust portraits of the outsize personalities of the participants, all of whom were remarkably open with McCallum, both then and now. Booklist (starred review) Extrait

CHAPTER 1 THE INSPECTOR OF MEAT

Pros in the Olympics? It Was His Idea, and Dont Let Anyone Tell You Different

He first came to the United States in January 1974, dispatched by his boss to study up on American basketball. He didnt speak the language, didnt know the customs, and settled into the basketball hotbed of Billings, Montana, because thats where he could secure free lodging with a Yugoslavian family. This stranger in a strange land was named Boris Stankovic. He was six months from his forty-ninth birthday and he had come on behalf of FIBA. At the time not more than a dozen Americans knew what it stood for (Federation Internationale de Basketball), where it was headquartered (at the time in an apartment in Munich, later in Geneva), and what the hell it did (governed amateur basketball in all parts of the world except the United States). You cannot know basketball if you do not know basketball in the United States, Stankovic was told by R. William Jones, who as secretary-general ran FIBA with a bow tie, a lit cigar, and a dictators fist. So Stankovic came and was instantly seduced by the college games he saw live

UCLAs redheaded phenomenon, Bill Walton, was his favorite player and the NBA games he saw on television. For much of his early adult life, Stankovic had been a meat inspector in Belgrade. My job was to look over the meat and cheese and, as you do here, put a stamp on it, said Stankovic when I interviewed him in Istanbul in the summer of 2010. He is retired now but comes to many events as the minence grise of international basketball. Stankovic had earned a degree in veterinary medicine in 1945 from the University of Belgrade. It was natural in our country that veterinarians looked after the meat and cheese, because it has to do with animals, no?

The type of meat Stankovic most liked to inspect, though, was the cured leather on a basketball. Even as he was arising at five in the morning to take up his meat stamp and lace up his white apron, basketball is what moved his spirit. He was an earthbound, fundamentally sound low-post forward who played thirty-six games for the Yugoslavian national team. One of his proudest moments was playing for his country in the first world championship organized by FIBA, which took place in Argentina in 1950. We finished ninth, says Stankovic, chuckling, and there were nine teams. One of his enduring regrets was that he never participated in the Olympics as a player. The Yugoslavs were a tall, tough, and lean people, hardened by wars civil and foreign. In the Balkan area of Yugoslavia where Stankovic was born, the people measure eras not by war and peace but by war and non-war. When Boris was nineteen, he and his father, Vassilje, a lawyer who fought for Serbian nationalism, were imprisoned by an invading Russian army. After two months Boris was released, but Vassilje was executed by firing squad and buried in a common grave; even today, Stankovic does not know where. Stankovic was put on a blacklist that later kept him from becoming a medical doctor, his desired profession, and forced him to veterinary school, his way of staying in the field of medicine. Like most of his countrymen from that generation, he identified with the Serbian rebels who had squirmed under foreign rule for five centuries. They lived in groups and learned to cooperate, to work with each other, Stankovic said. We grew up with that in our blood. We Serbians have never had much success in the individual sports, but our team sports are very, very strong. We have a proficiency in and an aptitude for sports that require a lot of teamwork.

Stankovics knowledge of the game and overall intelligence virtually anyone who talks about him invariably mentions his brains enabled him to rise steadily as a coach and executive. By the time he was thirty he was the most important nonplayer in Yugoslavian basketball, even as he continued to inspect meat, and had already become active in FIBA. In 1966 Oransoda Cant, a team in the Italian professional league,

came calling in search of a coach, and Stankovic left his homeland. I went for the money, says Stankovic. Italy was the richest league. He was reviled by many Italians as an outsider but later grew to be loved, as winners usually are, when his team captured the championship in 1968. That's when R. William Jones beckoned him back. Jones had seen the future of FIBA, and its name was Boris Stankovic. Jones, who died in 1981, months after suffering a stroke during a dinner at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, was the kind of man for whom the term grudging admiration seems to have been invented. Born in Rome to a British father and French mother, he had earned a degree from Springfield College, where Dr. James Naismith hung up his first peach basket. Jones was a very international guy (Stankovic's words), a combination that made him an undeniable basketball visionary. But he was also the classic amateur-sport pasha, imperious and intractable. For basketball people in the United States, Jones left his enduring imprimatur by allowing the Soviets three chances to win the gold medal against the U.S. team on September 9, 1972, at the star-crossed Olympic Games in Munich. Stankovic was a long way from being an established leader when he first came to the United States on that intelligence-gathering trip in 1974. He was just an outsider trying to learn the nuances of American basketball while also trying to learn how to order a hamburger. He was granted a papal audience with John Wooden. We talked basketball, so it was easy to communicate, he says, but mostly he was left on his own, to watch, listen, and compare. And what happened was that a basketball junkie was transfixed by the American players, college and pro. It just seemed to be a different game, says Stankovic, smiling at the memory. Faster but also fundamentally sound. You watched a guy like Bill Walton for one minute and you could see that his level was so much higher than anyone we had in Europe. FIBA's rules at the time banned professionals from playing under the FIBA banner, and the rules of FIBA were the rules of Olympic basketball. So it was, so it had always been, and so, everyone thought, it would always be. The hypocrisy, of course, was that de facto professionals were playing anyway, since international basketball teams always comprised their country's top players, even if they were officially listed as soldiers or policemen. With the lone exception of Stankovic, there was no push to include American pros in the Olympics, since the supremacy of even American collegians was considered self-evident, the anomaly of 1972 notwithstanding. Plus, it was simply part of our sporting ethos that the Olympics were for our college players. The NBA and the Olympics were planets rotating in different solar systems. But the Inspector of Meat, an outsider, didn't see it that way. As he watched the pro stars of the 1970s on TV among them Oscar Robertson and Jerry West, plus his two favorites, Walt Frazier and Pete Maravich, it began to gnaw at him that America's best players would never participate in the Olympic Games. The hypocrisy was what got to me, said Stankovic. And there was a practical side. My concern was trying to make the game of basketball strong, to grow it, and yet there was this separation. It became impossible for me to tolerate. There might've been a self-serving side, too. Stankovic saw himself as the messiah of hoops, the person to lift the game above King Futbol. And he was irritated by the fact that his organization, the We-Have-the-Final-Say Court of All Appeals for world basketball, came with an asterisk because it wasn't even a blip on the NBA's radar screen. Whatever the variety of reasons, Stankovic came back to Munich and told Jones that dropping the amateurs-only clause, thus clearing the way for America's best players to compete in the Olympics, should be a FIBA goal, a truly anarchic idea, given the sociopolitical sports climate. The times might've been a-changing, but not in the International Olympic Committee (IOC), where Avery Brundage, a loathsome individual, a clear number one on the list of tin-pot despots who have run sports over the centuries, held fast to the concept of shamateurism. Stankovic isn't sure what Jones really thought of his idea, but his boss's instruction was crystal clear. He said, Don't bother, remembers Stankovic. Or, as you say in America, Don't go there. And for the next decade and a half, no one except Boris Stankovic went there. Like many influential men and women throughout history, the Inspector of Meat is overlooked. He has never met Magic Johnson or Larry Bird, and the only time he has crossed paths with Michael Jordan was in the 1984 Olympics, in the pre-Dream Team days. But whatever revisionist history might eventually be written, remember this: the Dream Team resulted from the vision of Boris Stankovic. It was not a secret plot hatched by David Stern to grow the game, one of the commissioner's favorite phrases. It was not the result of a crusade by the NBA's marketing demons to sell \$200 Authentics in Europe, even though that was an eventuality. It was not frustration built up by the increasing reality that inroads were being made on the United States claim of basketball supremacy. The idea germinated in the mind of the Inspector of Meat from Belgrade.

Chapter 2 The Chosen One Sneaker Porn Is Born

It was some rare ti...Revue de presse The absolute definitive work on the subject, a perfectly wonderful once-you-pick-it-up-you-wont-be-able-to-put-it-down book. The Boston Globe An Olympic hoops dream. Newsday What makes this volume a must-read for nostalgic hoopsters are the robust portraits of the

outsized personalities of the participants, all of whom were remarkably open with McCallum, both then and now. Booklist (starred review) One of the best basketball books you'll ever read. The New York Post A great read for basketball junkies. Los Angeles Times [A] stellar retrospective. The New York Times The Dream Team was one of a kind, and so is this fascinating account of the best basketball team of all time. Jack McCallum, the consummate basketball insider, lures you into the back rooms, living rooms, and locker rooms of this volatile group of superstars with revealing, colorful anecdotes that will make you laugh, cheer, and gasp. This is a terrific read by an all-star journalist. Jackie MacMullan, New York Times bestselling co-author of *When the Game Was Ours* Perfect book, perfect subject, perfect writer. Dream Team is one of the best sports books I have ever read a riveting inside look at a once-in-a-lifetime squad at a once-in-a-lifetime moment in time. Jack McCallum has pieced together a masterpiece. Jeff Pearlman, New York Times bestselling author of *Sweetness and Boys Will Be Boys* Jack McCallum is one of my favorite writers on the NBA. If Jack writes it, even if I know the story, I want to read it. He reflects the best of his longtime residence in the glory days of *Sports Illustrated*: You can see the event, but you still want to know what the reporter has to say about it. Dream Team is a wonderful look back at what will live on not only as one of the NBA's great times but as a summary of its golden era. Jack beautifully blends what happened then with where-are-they-now? anecdotes, taking you behind the locker-room door with the greatest names of their era. This is such a wonderful read, you can't help but smiling. Sam Smith, New York Times bestselling author of *The Jordan Rules*