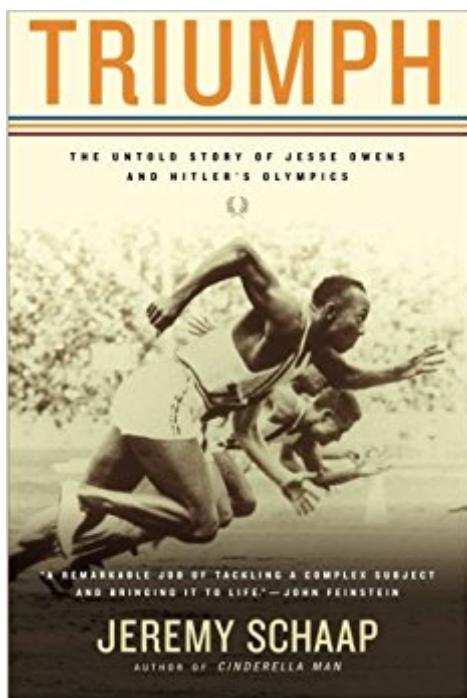


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Triumph: The Untold Story Of Jesse Owens And Hitler's Olympics



Synopsis

At the 1936 Olympics, against a backdrop of swastikas and goose-stepping storm troopers, an African-American son of sharecroppers won a staggering four gold medals and single-handedly demonstrated that Hitler's myth of Aryan supremacy was a lie. The story of Jesse Owens at the Berlin games is that of an athletic performance that transcends sports. It is also the intimate and complex tale of one remarkable man's courage. Drawing on unprecedented access to the Owens family, previously unpublished interviews, and exhaustive archival research, Jeremy Schaap transports us to Germany and tells the dramatic tale of Owens and his fellow athletes at the contest dubbed the Nazi Olympics. With his incisive reporting and rich storytelling, Schaap reveals what really happened over those tense, exhilarating weeks in a nuanced and riveting work of sports history.

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Customer Reviews

Written as though the film treatment were already completed, Schaap's chronicle of Jesse Owens's journey to and glorious triumph at the 1936 Berlin Olympics is snappy and dramatic, with an eye for the rousing climax, through curiously slight on follow-through. Starting with Owens as the well-feted ex-athlete in the 1950s, Schaap (an ESPN anchor and author of *Cinderella Man*) flashes back to Owens's childhood in 1920s Cleveland, where junior high coach Charles Riley spotted his astounding physique and near limitless potential for track and field. Owens seems so perfectly made for running and jumping that the following years of ever-increasing athletic and popular success are less exciting than preordained. By the time the "Ebony Antelope" (as one of many adoring

newspapermen had anointed him) was ready for Berlin, his success was practically guaranteed. The real drama of Schaap's book, which surprisingly skimps on Owens the person, comes in the politically fractious runup to Berlin (for the ceremony-obsessed Hitler, "a fascist fantasy come true"). While the story has been told many times, Schaap makes good use of his prodigious research and access to the Owens family, even digging up the fact that Owens's oft-repeated claim he was snubbed by Hitler and the Berlin crowd was very likely untrue. (Feb.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

"Michael Kramer's no-nonsense delivery greatly enhances the production." ---AudioFile --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

The accomplishments of Jesse Owens in the 1936 Summer Olympics is still revered and celebrated now, eighty years later. Not just for the athletic achievement of earning four gold medals, but also for dispelling the myth of Adolf Hitler's notion of Aryan superiority is this feat remembered. In this excellent book by Jeremy Schapp, the reader will learn more about what made a humble black man from Ohio turn into the fastest man on Earth. There are many aspects about Owen's story that Schapp writes about beyond the wins on the track. From the coaching of Larry Snyder at Ohio State to the story about how Owens became one of the members of the 4 x 100-yard relay team to the alleged "snub" by Hitler after Owens won his first medal, there are many different subplots that are recalled in great detail. The story of the "snub" is very interesting in that the myth is dispelled by Owens himself by recalling that Hitler waved at him after his first medal. It was only later during the lecture circuit did the story of the snub become well known. Not everything written is about Owens, either. Schapp wrote very good pieces about filmmaker Leni Reifenstahl, the American boycott of the games that almost happened and the controversy about leaving the two American Jewish runners off of the relay team in which Owens replaced one of them and won his fourth medal. Avery Brundage is also prominently portrayed in the book. These and other aspects of the 1936 Olympics make the book complete and an excellent source of information on this topic. The only thing that could have made this better would have been a little more coverage of life after the Olympics for Owens as the book does not make it clear what really became of Owens after that historic event. But if the reader wants to learn about the Jesse Owens story of how he became a person who singlehandedly dispelled a dictator's vision of domination through the simple acts

of running and jumping, then this is the book to read.

This is the true stories about the great Jessie Owen. with direct quotes from him about his Olympic career. Interesting Owen contrary to the popularstatement that Hitler did not shake his hand. Owen explains the situation accurately, and stated that the one that snubbed him was Roosevelt who did not invite him to the White House, nor did he congratulate him, He said Roosevelt invited the other White Olympians to the white house. The book also describes the time leading to the Berlin Olympics , At that time many organisations did not want US to participate due to the Nazi suppressive regime. Owen also describes how he ended up competing for his 4 th Gold medal where he was not supposed to be..Very interesting read and factual about the great Jessie Owen.

A very readable book for both high school/young adults as well as the adult reader. Highly recommend to put on a high school classroom reading list as a book that not only discusses the topic of the Olympics, history prior to American involvement in WWII and a Jesse Owens biography, it is enlightening and entertaining as it brings all these topics together for a teen who might be into sports, but not into completing a reading assignment. As one who knows little of sports, I found it full of information regarding sports play and history and the teens who read it received a great lesson on the social history of the Olympics, WWII and life in Germany - as well as the expected read regarding fight of racial prejudice and civil rights- but what was particularly nice is that this topic is not the point of the book although it can not be excluded. Instead, it is a book about a great man and an interesting time in history from an angle that few bother to notice.

I couldn't wait to be done with this book. The endless descriptions of ultimately inconsequential races left me bored, while at the same time the book glosses over the fact that Owens almost lost his amateur status by having an apparently "no show job" with the Ohio Legislature. It devotes one whole sentence to Owens' claim that Hitler didn't snub him at the Olympics, but that FDR did. It devotes one sentence to the fact that Owens, after becoming a national hero, campaigned against FDR's reelection. In short, while most reviewers loved this book, I did not, and I can't recommend it.

This book was very well written and showed many of the challenges we face daily in our lives, but it is amazing that someone saw his talent, gave up many hours to help him develop it to be the amazing athlete that Jesse become. I feel credit must be given to his parents and a loving wife who basically gave up hours, then years while his abilities were being developed.I love the way he

desired to have schooling and care for his small family. So many sacrifices were made in his life and then you think of the mental anguish of the prejudice against his race, this was a time when people did not respect a person for their talents, abilities and kindness. There were others in our society who were disregarded because of birth defects who did not have a fair chance in life. Jesse Owens and his coach were heroes for being able to overcome and give it all they had to develop the talents and opportunities for him to find a place on the Olympic team for the USA. Then to arrive and find the social beliefs of Hitler were even worse, but he endured and gave his all. I was touched by the friendship he developed with the Luz Long which endured for years after the Olympics. This book is well worth reading because of the basic values it teaches, that many of us have seen in our own lives in a different manor.

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