

Disqualified: Eddie Hart, Munich 1972, and the Voices of the Most Tragic Olympics

Eddie Hart

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Hart's insider's perspective conveys the frustrations of athletes whose lives were changed by the tragic 1972 Olympic games.

College track coach Eddie Hart spent his career molding the lives of young athletes while also coping with his disqualification from running the 100-meter dash at the tragic 1972 Munich Olympics. Journalist David Newhouse skillfully expresses Hart's voice and emotions in *Disqualified*, an absorbing, fast-paced narrative.

The book is a satisfying, nonchronological combination of Hart's insider's perspective on the 1972 Olympics and stories of his childhood and development as a world-class runner. The 1972 Olympics will always remain notorious for the murder of eleven Israeli athletes by Arab terrorists, an event that traumatized Hart to the extent that he couldn't speak in detail about the murders for more than forty years, until this book.

The book offers a fascinating account of Olympic officials' inconsistent treatment of the United States in the 1972 games, notably with events like a gold-medal men's basketball game which the Soviets are said to have won because three additional seconds were put back on the clock.

Even the year's highlight for the United States—Mark Spitz's seven gold medals—was tarnished when Spitz was whisked out of Germany because he was Jewish. Hart's you-were-there perspective conveys the frustrations of athletes whose lives were changed by those Olympic games. Hart himself earned a gold medal at the games as a member of the United States's 400-meter relay team.

Captivating tales of Hart growing up poor in a large, loving family in California reveal him to be a devoted son, an excellent athlete, and a diligent but mediocre student. Hart humbly attributes his successes to his track coaches and to his loving but strict parents. Included are revealing discussions of Hart's battles with depression and with dyslexia, a condition he didn't know he had until he graduated from the rigorous programs at the University of California-Berkeley.

The book deserves a more upbeat title, one that focuses on Hart's many accomplishments as a coach, parent, role model, and runner. Still, this inspiring autobiography will be in demand at public libraries, especially with young adults.

KARL HELICHER (September/October 2017)

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