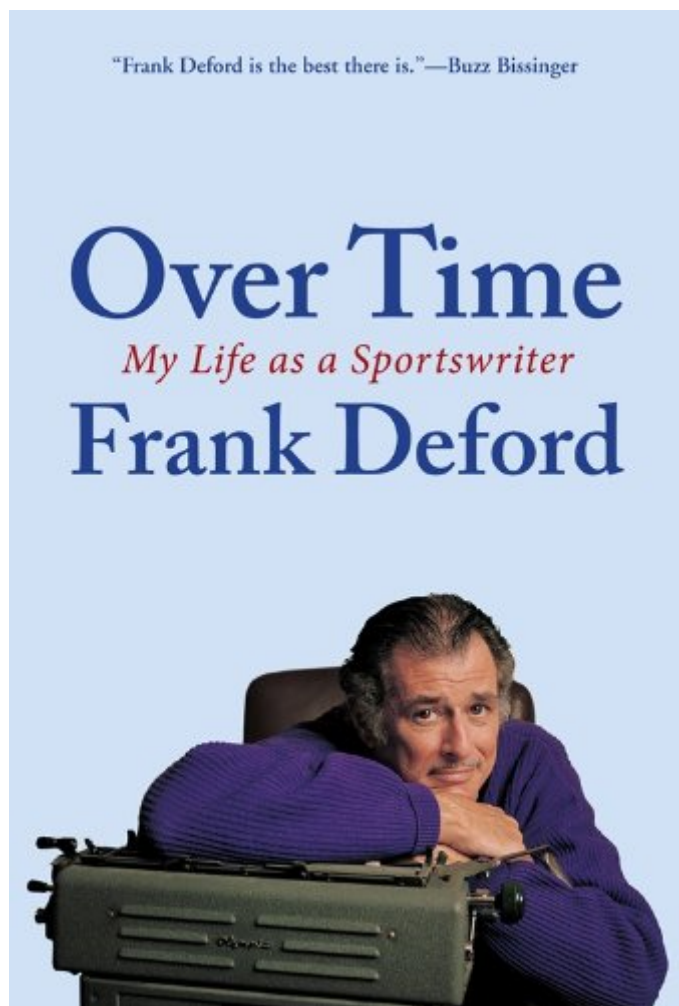


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# Over Time: My Life As A Sportswriter



## Synopsis

Over Time: My Life as a Sportswriter is as unconventional and wide-ranging as Frank Deford's remarkable career, in which he has chronicled the heroes and the characters of just about every sport in nearly every medium. Deford joined Sports Illustrated in 1962, fresh, and fresh out of Princeton. In 1990, he was Editor-in-Chief of The National Sports Daily, one of the most ambitious and ill-fated projects in the history of American print journalism. But then, he endured: writing ten novels, winning an Emmy (not to mention being a fabled Lite Beer All-Star), and last week he read something like his fourteen-hundredth commentary on NPR's Morning Edition. From the Mad Men-like days of SI in the '60s, and the 'bush years of the early NBA, to Deford's visit to apartheid South Africa with Arthur Ashe, and his friend's brave and tragic death, Over Time is packed with intriguing people and stories. Interwoven through his personal history, Deford lovingly traces the entire arc of American sportswriting from the lurid early days of the Police Gazette, through Grantland Rice and Red Smith and on up to ESPN. This is a wonderful, inspired book; equal parts funny and touching; a treasure for sports fans. Just like Frank Deford. Praise for Over Time: Equal doses of self-deprecating humor and anecdotal history of American sports journalism are the essence of Frank Deford's entertaining new memoir. Chicago Tribune: Deford is the Holy Grail. He's simply one of the greatest sportswriters of all time. ... [Over Time] has a little bit of everything -- great stories about interviewing everyone from Richard Nixon to Jerry Jones. Deford played with the Harlem Globetrotters, introduced the world to Bill Bradley, really disliked Rodney Dangerfield, edited the only national sports daily in our history (The National), and has great takes on the history and characters of Sports Illustrated in its formative years. . . . Deford's the best. Peter King, SI.com: He sketches insightful remembrances of stars like Wilt Chamberlain and Billie Jean King and lavishes affection and admiration on Sports Illustrated colleagues Andre Laguerre, Dan Jenkins, and the 'tortured' writer Mark Kram; [Deford is] sports writing's Sinatra. San Francisco Chronicle: Endearing... Over Time imparts a sense of a life well lived and fully enjoyed. New York Times: "The mixture of homage to sportswriters who came before him, such as Grantland Rice; sometimes wistful vignettes of sports figures like Arthur Ashe; and his own personal reflections on the evolution of sports journalism combine to offer a cultural perspective that transcends a mere job." Publishers Weekly (Top 10 in Sports): "Deford's cred is incredible, his accolades deserved... He does not pull a punch when it comes to boxing or even to the tastes-great, less-filling Miller Lite commercials he once made...

[Deford] has long been the genuine article." &#151;Los Angeles Times&#147;A cool ride through Deford's career.&#151;Minneapolis Star-Tribune&#147;Frank Deford is the best there is. His memoir Over Time is beautiful, funny, poignant and poetic.&#151;Buzz Bissinger, author of Friday Night Lights and Father's Day&#147;A wonderful book. Over Time is both a treasure and a treasury.&#151;Sally Jenkins, Washington Post columnist and New York Times bestselling author of It's Not About the Bike&#147;Frank Deford is the best sportswriter I've ever read. If there's a Mount Rushmore of sportswriting, Deford is up there, purple ties and all.&#151;Tony Kornheiser

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is an entertaining and insightful memoir of the author's half century long journey through the world of sports. As a writer for "Sports Illustrated", the editor of an ill-fated national sports newspaper, as a novelist and as a commentator on NPR, Deford covered sports ranging from the NBA to bear wrestling to roller derby and his comments and antidotes make for an enjoyable read. Although many of his stories are poignant or humorous, Deford is not afraid to be candid when

candor is called for. He confesses that he was extremely lucky to be born in the late 1930s which placed him in the generation that hit between the wars in Korea and Vietnam and put him on the job market just before the tsunami of baby boomers glutted the market. He also pulls no punches in his assessment of celebrities like Rodney Dangerfield who was one of Deford's teammates on the famous Miller lite beer TV commercials. On the other hand, Deford's admiration for tennis star Arthur Ashe shines through in what is perhaps the most memorable section of the book. Along the way, Deford weaves in the history of sports writing as a profession, his own family's riches to rags story, the world of the NBA in the early 1960s, the glories of being a tennis writer and even lets the reader in on a really funny tale about what happened on a long night of drinking with Dallas Cowboys' owner Jerry Jones. In more serious moments, he poses thoughtful, if unanswerable questions, like why do we always think that the greatest all-time performers in sports are current stars while in other fields like music and literature the "greatest" are always the masters of the past. As someone who has written about sports history (HOOP CRAZY: COLLEGE BASKETBALL IN THE 1950S), I found Deford's book to be a thinking man's sports memoir filled with good writing, delightful stories and self-effacing humor.

I can understand any of the attacks on this book - the ruminations of a wealthy, white, privileged sportswriter, lots of name dropping, etc. But the truth is that I quite liked it, enjoying the stories of the early days of Sports Illustrated, sports journalism, random stories about memorable people, and similar stories. Not life-altering or brilliant, but very competent, very interesting, and quite fun essays that I gobbled right up.

Frank Deford states at the outset of this book that it is a memoir of his career as a sportswriter, so if the reader is looking for a tell-all examination of his life, this isn't it. What it is, however, is a combination of his own take on the history of sportswriting mixed with a series of stories (some longer than others) that entertainingly describe how he got into the business and some of his adventures and friendships earned along the way. If you grew up waiting for the Andre Laguerre-era Sports Illustrated to land in your mailbox every Thursday, or if you are a fan of Deford's weekly NPR commentaries, you'll enjoy this book, because he devotes generous space to both topics. The clichés can occasionally be cringe-worthy, but are more a reflection of a style that was popular in the generation in which Deford came of age. And along the way, he sheds a different light on some of the athletic figures he has covered (in particular, Arthur Ashe). A good companion book to this one is Michael MacCambridge's *The Franchise: A History of Sports Illustrated Magazine*, which rounds

out the picture that is painted here of the author and his long-term employer.

I only knew Frank Deford through his weekly comments on NPR. Always pictured him as a be speckled scrappy little guy. Who da that he is 6'6". So he's a scrappy tall guy. Had no idea that as late as the early 60's when he graduated from Princeton to Being the kid at the almost fledgling Sports Illustrated that baseball was really the only game in town and all the other sports were bush. And he seems to have been there at all of the roll out of the great ones who immortalized sports with his irascible scrappy commentary.

I've always been a Frank Deford fan. From years of SI articles, to his time on HBO Real Sports, just love his style and how he captures his subjects off the field. Really interesting and funny (at times) read from one of the all time greats

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