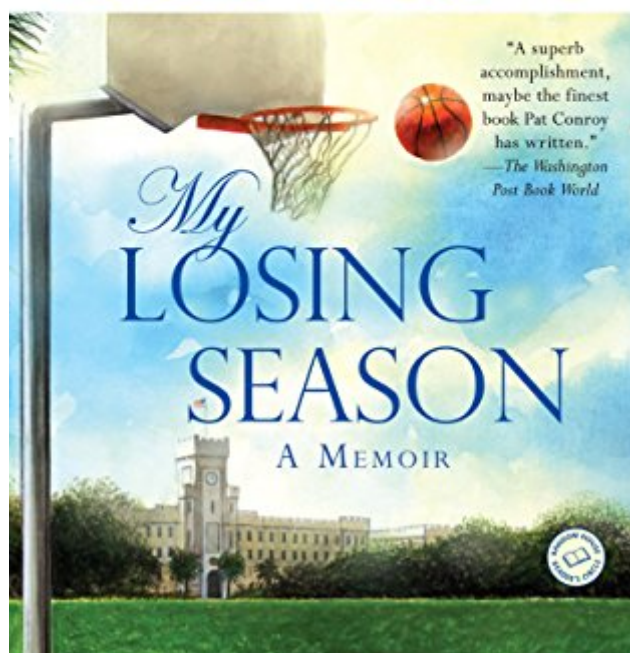


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My Losing Season

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

PAT CONROY



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • A deeply affecting coming-of-age memoir about family, love, loss, basketball—and life itself—by the beloved author of *The Prince of Tides* and *The Great Santini*. During one unforgettable season as a Citadel cadet, Pat Conroy becomes part of a basketball team that is ultimately destined to fail. And yet for a military kid who grew up on the move, the Bulldogs provide a sanctuary from the cold, abrasive father who dominates his life—and a crucible for becoming his own man. With all the drama and incandescence of his bestselling fiction, Conroy re-creates his pivotal senior year as captain of the Citadel Bulldogs. He chronicles the highs and lows of that fateful 1966–67 season, his tough disciplinarian coach, the joys of winning, and the hard-won lessons of losing. Most of all, he recounts how a group of boys came together as a team, playing a sport that would become a metaphor for a man whose spirit could never be defeated. Praise for *My Losing Season* • “A superb accomplishment, maybe the finest book Pat Conroy has written.” —*The Washington Post Book World* • “A wonderfully rich memoir that you don’t have to be a sports fan to love.” —*Houston Chronicle* • “A memoir with all the Conroy trademarks . . . Here’s ample proof that losers always tell the best stories.” —*Newsweek* • “In *My Losing Season*, Conroy opens his arms wide to embrace his difficult past and almost everyone in it.” —*New York Daily News* • “Haunting, bittersweet and as compelling as his bestselling fiction.” —*Boston Herald* From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

I love Pat Conroy. I mourn his death and wish he could have lived another fifty years, bringing us his gorgeous prose. My Losing Season, his memoir of the 1966-67 Citadel basketball team on which he played as a senior at that institution is classic Conroy. I have to admit, not knowing the game of basketball very well, I got bogged down just a bit as he described each of the games of that season. But the book is more about him and the human condition than it is about a game. Filled with Conroy's wonderfully evocative metaphors "nobody is better at them" the book proposes the idea that perhaps we learn more from our failures than our successes. As we get to know his team members and his irascible coach, we want to reach out to each. And as Conroy fills us in at the end of the book on these characters thirty years later, we share their triumphs and tribulations in life. And, of course, hovering over it all is Conroy's abusive father and long-suffering mother. We grow to understand these two, but I personally never grew to like the man, although Conroy says he came to love his dad unconditionally in the man's later years. Perhaps that acceptance, for me, is for another book, and hopefully Conroy accomplished that in The Death of Santini, the sequel to his novel The Great Santini, which featured a leading character very much like, but different somewhat, his real father Don Conroy. We shall see, as I've just ordered that book. But with Conroy's death, we are deeply cut; no one can fill his shoes, so we must be content with the body of work he left us.

Pat Conroy has a new fan in me. I played college basketball and thought I'd enjoy reading about the sport in this book. It's a great book even if it had been about a losing tiddlywink season. He eloquently describes the life lessons he learned from his losing season. This book is a classic and has inspired me to read all of Conroy's other books.

This is my first Pat Conroy book although I have seen two movies from his books, Santini and Prince of Tides. The Great Santini I enjoyed immensely. Conroy is a brilliant writer who weaves many sentences with excellent descriptions and analogies. While I grade his writing style highly, I was originally attracted to the book for the story line as I thoroughly enjoy basketball. But while this book is centered on basketball that is only the spine around which this book is developed. This is a

story of the growth of Conroy with many subplots: life at Citadel and the murderous Plebe system, his complicated family life particularly with his father, his meager love life and his early development as a writer. But, as always, character development is critical to a great book and in addition to Conroy, we see his interaction with teammates and coaches. In fact, it is a comment from one of his teammates who years later provokes the idea of this book of supposed "losers". Conroy writes without an ego and clearly he is a better player than he describes. But after 3/4 of the book, it's rewarding when Conroy visits the aged teammates to find out how their lives have developed. Particularly his coach and one role player for whom all readers will have a high degree of respect for his sacrifices. While I enjoyed the whole book, the most touching passages are of his trips to the Vietnam Wall and the story of the student team manager, Rat. **READ THIS BOOK. YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.** I read books for enjoyment or to learn. I enjoyed the story and marveled at the superb writing. I learned a great deal about Conroy and his life and influences. And I also visualized my life and whether I will have the great memories and be touched by so many wonderful teachers and friends. **ADDENDUM:** The book had kind words for Jerry West who worked at a camp with Conroy. I met West and asked had he read the book as it had kind words of him. He considers Conroy a good friend and had read the book. He also mentioned that Tom Clancy had come through the camp as well. I guess basketball and authors are a great combination.

I was a bit unsure at first if I was ready to read a non fiction work by Pat Conroy. I enjoy non fiction and have lately devoted most of my reading to it, but I wasn't sure what I was going to be getting when I read the description of "My Losing Season". After all, who cares about an unknown college basketball team that played in the sixties? I haven't read all of Mr. Conroy's books yet, not because I don't think he is one of the great writers of all time, but because I know that I'll only get to read them once for the first time. My introduction into his worlds of fiction caught me by surprise because I was well into 'The Prince of Tides' before I realized that the book wasn't a true story. I now realize after reading 'My Losing Season' that everything he writes is true, even the fiction. I would have broken down crying several times during the reading of this book, but my heart is still guarded by never sleeping sentinels whose tireless detail is to walk the stone walls that guard my interior. Mr. Conroy manages to gain an entrance, however, and at times during reading his work I feel a sense of hatred towards him. Not meanness, just anger with no where to go. So what is it about this book, this story that makes it so worth reading? The nakedness that Pat Conroy brings to the page. The truth. Simple and raw and courageous. Enduring and joyful, sad and painful. I envy his memories, his legacy, his past, not because I feel that the journey was easy or he was lucky, but because

whatever molded him into the man he became, whatever blessing or curse that was bestowed him at birth, whatever angels or demons followed his path, he has been able to live outside of the shells and caves and fortresses that most of us dwell in. Or at least he has done so enough to make a difference. While I can't recommend 'My Losing Season' enough, I do have one slight reservation, that being I don't know whether or not a first time reader will enjoy it more before or after they've read one of his previous books. But do read it, whether or not you are familiar with basketball, military colleges or the journey of broken boys trying to become men, you will turn the last page wishing there was more. I promise.

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