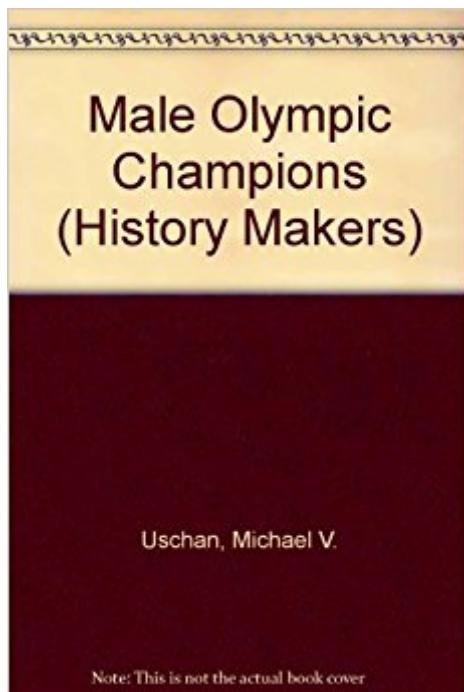


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Male Olympic Champions (History Makers)



Synopsis

From Jim Thorpe, who in 1912 was hailed as the "world's greatest athlete", to Eric Heiden, who swept five speedskating events at the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, Olympic athletes have provided some of the greatest moments in sports' history.

Book Information

Age Range: 12 and up

Lexile Measure: 1220L (What's this?)

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9-This collective biography profiles seven men who achieved Olympic success: track stars Jim Thorpe and Jesse Owens, long-distance runner Paavo Nurmi, skier Jean-Claude Killy, swimmer Mark Spitz, weight-lifter Vasily Alexeyev, and skater Eric Heiden. Following a brief history of the Olympic movement, the book devotes one chapter to each of these gold medalists. Each entry covers the individual's birth, youth, how he got started in his sport, his athletic career, and Olympic performances, followed by a generally abbreviated passage on his post-Olympic life and accomplishments. The readable text does not gloss over negative aspects, covering Thorpe's marital and drinking problems, Nurmi's surliness toward his competition, and Alexeyev's poor training habits. Uschan does a good job of explaining the techniques of the sports, when appropriate. Good-quality, black-and-white photos enhance the text. This book should be useful in most collections, particularly for its information on Nurmi, Killy, and Alexeyev, which is less readily available than material on the American athletes.Jeffrey A. French, Euclid Public Library, OH

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Uschan celebrates seven athletes in a collective biography that looks beyond the record books to the spirit, drama, and tragedy of the Olympic Games. In a general introduction, Uschan quickly lays out the path of Olympic history, from its Greek origins to the recent Salt Lake City scandal. The author then explores the achievements of Jim Thorpe, Paavo Nurmi, Jesse Owens, and four others, digging beneath the surface to reveal not only their moments in the spotlight but their personalities and post-Olympic careers. Readers learn about the cockiness that alienated Mark Spitz from his 1972 teammates, Jean-Claude Killy's under-the-table salary, and Owens' struggle to benefit from his Olympic success in an era before celebrity endorsements. The text is well documented, making it at once a solid resource and a model for report writers. A chronology, a bibliography, and a reading list are appended. Randy Meyer

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