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Hand-Me-Down Dream (Essay): Father, Son, and the Burden of Basketball

George Dohrmann

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In this eBook exclusive essay, Pulitzer Prize–winning sports journalist George Dohrmann follows a father and son separated by prison bars—but bonded by their pursuit of basketball glory.

The dream of playing big-time basketball never came true for Bruce Nelson, so he passed it on to his son Roberto. His every waking moment as a father was devoted to securing Roberto a Division I scholarship. Oftentimes he worried that his son's lack of competitive fire might put that dream in jeopardy—when in fact it was Bruce's own actions that would do so. When Bruce is forced to monitor Roberto's progress from behind penitentiary walls, his influence recedes—and so too does Roberto's commitment to the aspirations they once shared. In a story that combines deep insight into family relationships with the deft storytelling that distinguished his award-winning *Play Their Hearts Out,* George Dohrmann follows Roberto as he addresses his life's most difficult decisions in the absence of his best friend and most constant companion. In doing so, Dohrmann sheds new light on the larger story of basketball dreams and the pressures they place on young athletes.

Includes an excerpt from George Dohrmann's *Play Their Hearts Out,* winner of the PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sportswriting and the Award for Excellence in the Coverage of Youth Sports.

Praise for *Play Their Hearts Out*

"Often heartbreaking, always riveting."—*The New York Times Book Review*

"Tremendous."—*The Plain Dealer*

"Indispensable."—*The Wall Street Journal*

"A tour de force of reporting, filled with deft storytelling and vivid character studies."—*The Washington Post*

"One of the finest sports books of all time."—*Harper's Magazine*

"Amazing stuff . . . the *Friday Night Lights* of youth basketball."—Leigh Montville, author of *The Big Bam*

"A landmark achievement in basketball journalism."—*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST SPORTS BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE *LOS ANGELES TIMES* • *THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR* • *KIRKUS REVIEWS*

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