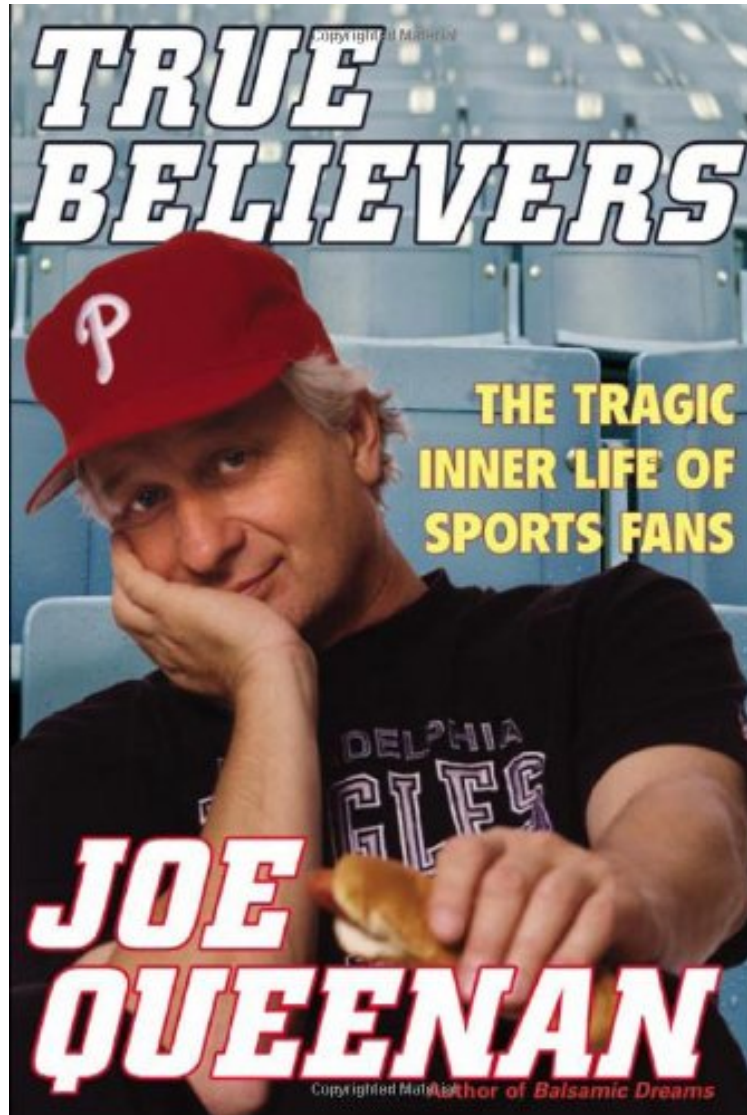


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True Believers: The Tragic Inner Life of Sports Fans

Joe Queenan

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Joe Queenan : True Believers: The Tragic Inner Life of Sports Fans before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised True Believers: The Tragic Inner Life of Sports Fans:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Actually a Fairly Mild CritiqueBy Stephen M. KerwickSeveral years ago I listened to the CD abridgment of this book and generally thought it was worth-while, if not necessarily one of Queenan's best efforts. On further reflection I wonder if this wasn't the result of an overly aggressive producer cutting the original effort down to fit two CD's or cassettes and omitting some of the best local flair. Like the author, I grew up a mightily frustrated Philadelphia sports fan and I was a bit puzzled to find his treatment of some of the local team

management and personnel decisions to be decidedly mild, particularly for a man with Queenan's demonstrated sharp and potent pen. In short, I was looking for serious criticism to push the defamation envelope aimed at people and teams who caused me pain in years past, but the author provided a more mature and thoughtful product, no doubt to his credit. One point on which Queenan hits the bulls eye is the contrast of true believers with the loathsome nature of "front running" fans who gravitate to the regularly successful plutocratic sports teams in distant cities who engage in the perpetual effort to destroy their respective sports (Lakers and MFY's). Of course that point shouldn't require much more argument than does criticism of priests misbehaving with altar boys, but it does bear constant repetition to emphasize to these self-unaware types just how repellant their attitudes are to the remainder of the world. In any event, I've reached this page in anticipation of Queenan's impending autobiographical book and decided to pick up an inexpensive remainder copy of True Believers to see if I missed anything critical by not reading the full version originally. In doing so, I realize that I'm engaging in just the sort of masochistic behavior that prompted the book in the first place but, like its subject sports fans, the attraction of an open flame to a moth is irresistible. If I'm correct in my guess, I'll be back here in a few weeks to update 4 stars to 5.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book! Would love an update to hear Queenan's ...By JDMGreat book! Would love an update to hear Queenan's thoughts on things since the Red Sox won a couple of series, but for the most part the themes of the books hold up even 10+ years later. Would recommend for any sports fan, or the family member of a sports fan who you think is nuts. This book will help you understand why we are the way we are with a lot of humor!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Funny and insightful at the same time - great combinationBy CustomerI bought this book, even though I read a library copy first, so I could have it and loan it to my sports obsessed step son. It wasn't quite what I had expected from the subtitle, which I thought promised more of a scholarly insight. Well written, funny and his observations are mostly dead on except of course when he is rooting for those yucky Philadelphia teams.

Bestselling author Queenan explores the world of sports fans in an attempt to understand the inexplicable: What does anyone get out of it? For Yankee, Cowboy, and Laker fans the answer is fairly clear: the return on investment is relatively high. But why do people root so passionately for tragically inept teams like the Boston Red Sox, the Chicago Cubs, and the Philadelphia Phillies? Why do people organize their emotional lives around lackluster franchises such as the Cleveland Cavaliers, the San Diego Padres, and the Phoenix Suns, none of whom have ever won a single championship in their entire history? Is it pure tribalism? An attempt to maintain contact with one's vanished childhood? In True Believers, humorist and lifelong Philly fan Joe Queenan answers these and many other questions, shedding light on—and reveling in—the culture and psychology of his countless fellow fans. Making pilgrimages to such cradles of competition as Notre Dame Stadium, Fenway, and Wrigley Field, Queenan delves into every aspect of fandom in such illuminating chapters as Fans Who Love Too Much (men, like the author, who actually resort to psychotherapy to deal with their unhealthy addiction), Fans Who Run in Front (which meticulously delineates the differences between Retroactive, Municipal, and Vicarious Frontrunners), and Fans Who Misbehave (those who spill beer on women, moon other fans, or throw half-eaten sandwiches at innocent bystanders simply because they look like the current coach of the New York Jets). True Believers is a hilarious but also heartfelt look into the world of those fans who realize that it is, in fact, more than just a game.

.com "To me, the Phillies and Eagles are exactly like nicotine," writes Joe Queenan in his painful and deeply funny book True Believers: The Tragic Inner Life of Sports Fans, "a preposterously noxious semi-hallucinogenic substance capable of giving great pleasure for brief periods of time, but that will ultimately destroy your health." Targets of Queenan's blowtorch mockery in previous books have included Hollywood, chain restaurants, and baby boomers. But here, he shines the spotlight on himself in an extended examination on what it means to join in the unique self-flagellation that is sports fandom. That flagellation is made more painful when, as in Queenan's case, the fan has sacrificed their time, emotional well-being, and regard among family members to following teams that often suck real bad. But True Believers is less a work of psychological research than a ruminative and passionate explanation of the rules of conduct by which the author believes fans should live. These same rules, of course, are discussed all the time by fans on bleacher seats, bar stools, and living room couches around the world as they desperately hope that this will finally be the year the Cubs or Cardinals or Clippers finally get it together. But rarely have the rules been codified in one bound volume. Queenan shines when attacking the dreaded "bandwagon" fan and when describing his decision not to stop the young son of a family friend from ruining his life by rooting for the Mets. And he's poignant and refreshingly void of cynicism in relating the last days of his father and how they overlapped with a pivotal Eagles-Falcons game. This is a lively and entertaining read that should appeal to any sports fan except those incomprehensible jerks that root for the Lakers and Yankees. --John MoeFrom Publishers WeeklyQueenan's latest should be required reading not just for the folks of the sardonic subtitle but also for their wives, girlfriends and sports-phobic pals. The humorist spotlights something that's as peculiar as it is pedestrian: the schlub who roots for sorry teams. Why do some of us back losers, Queenan (Balsamic Dreams) asks, and why defend this foolishness so passionately? The recovering Philadelphia fan (of all the city's teams) would know. He groups admirers into categories-"Fans Who Love Too

Much," "Fans Who Misbehave," etc.-and grounds his quips in droll situations such as his visit to a therapist who has the nerve to say the fate of the rain forest is graver than the fate of the 76ers. Queenan doesn't limit his premise to one club or sport, either; he covers everything from the Boston Red Sox to the "cataleptic" Wizards in Washington. Everywhere, stubborn followers like him hope for a turnaround in the standings. His enthusiasts remember times, usually before they were born, when "we" pulled out some miracle win. Queenan tallies the time he has spent watching sports and figures those years were not truly wasted: "It is my belief," he says, "that without sports, the average man would have no emotional life whatsoever." In this hilarious and strangely erudite book, Queenan doesn't overwrite his subject-for a diehard fan knows what to do when the buzzer sounds: go home. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Booklist*Starred * What exactly does it mean to be that special kind of sports fan who roots for teams that perpetually disappoint--Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox, Cleveland Cavaliers, New Orleans Saints? Is it masochism? Self-loathing? Childhood abuse? Chemical imbalance? According to Queenan, a contributing editor at GQ, it can be a combination of any number of personality disorders. He recounts his own troubled childhood rooting for the Phillies and the permanent damage suffered when they blew the 1964. He doesn't forget Philly's mostly woeful NFL franchise, the Eagles. They drove him to decide on a second NFL team for which to root, the Baltimore Colts. They broke his heart, too. He discusses the collective psyche of fans who paint their faces, throw hotdogs at opponents, or call sports talk shows to whine about the most disappointing White Sox moments of the last 12 years. But within the sarcasm and the self-criticism, Queenan reveals a universal truth: sports fans are hope junkies. Every season, every game, could be the start of the big turnaround in which the Cubs don't fade in August, the Saints turn the corner, and the Cavaliers . . . well, hope can only carry you so far. Great reading for fans who want a few insights into their personal demon and a few laughs, too. Wes LukowskyCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved