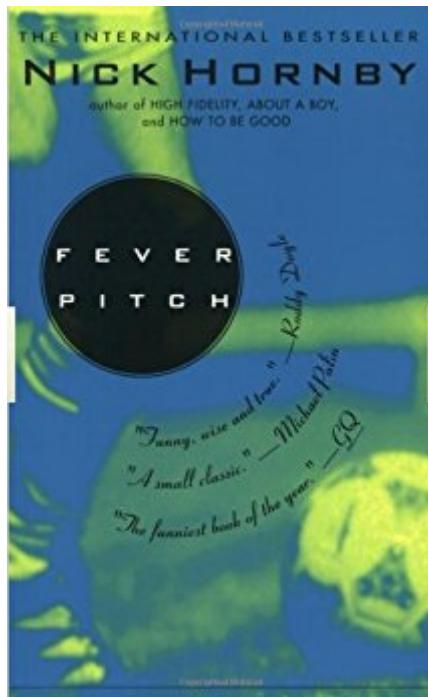


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Fever Pitch



Synopsis

A brilliant memoir from the beloved, bestselling author of *Funny Girl*, *High Fidelity* and *About A Boy*. In America, it is soccer. But in Great Britain, it is the real football. No pads, no prayers, no prisoners. And that's before the players even take the field. Nick Hornby has been a football fan since the moment he was conceived. Call it predestiny. Or call it preschool. *Fever Pitch* is his tribute to a lifelong obsession. Part autobiography, part comedy, part incisive analysis of insanity, Hornby's award-winning memoir captures the fever pitch of fandom "its agony and ecstasy, its community, its defining role in thousands of young men's coming-of-age stories. *Fever Pitch* is one for the home team. But above all, it is one for everyone who knows what it really means to have a losing season. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've been meaning to write a review of this book for a long time, but since Nick Hornby reawakened in me many of my childhood sports fan obsessions when I read it for the first time in 1999, I've been too busy. Not only did "Fever Pitch" remind me how irrationally and how much I loved my own hometown team (the heartbreaking Boston Red Sox) but he turned me into a fan of English football and his own Arsenal Gunners to the point where I follow them daily on ESPN's soccernet, LISTEN

(!?) to them on internet radio broadcasts and have even gone to two games in London over the past two years. It's sick really, and I suppose it's not the kind of thing Hornby would have wanted when he wrote this quintessential memoir of growing up a soccer fan in England, but I've enjoyed it "Fever Pitch" is an obsessive's tale as much as it is a fan's story, and so should appeal to the same wide audience that enjoys his excellent novels (It was my love for "High Fidelity" that sent me straight to this book). It is a memoir of surprising depth considering how it is organized only by the dates of soccer matches between 1968 and 1991, and it makes perfect sense that Hornby, or any true fan, should see the rest of his life (parents' divorce, his own education, romantic and career trouble) primarily as it relates to the team he spends so much time, money and psychic energy on. The irony, for me, was finding out after I read "Fever Pitch" for the first time that Arsenal was one of the top teams of the last decade in England, so Hornby at least gets to feel the joy that we Red Sox fans are still waiting for. Sure, we're ecstatic the Pats won the Super Bowl, but our lives will change forever when Boston brings home the World Series. But after "Fever Pitch," I'll remember to laugh like the rest of the world laughs when American sports leagues crown their title-holders "world" champions.

This is without a doubt the best book on football (soccer) that I have ever read. It is also the best book dealing with sports that I have ever read. It describes like no other book I have read what it means to be a fan. Although this book follows the life of an Arsenal supporter, anyone can read it, because Hornby's experiences are no different than those of any committed, "obsessed" football fan. I am a Leeds supporter, and much of what Hornby said described what I feel, so perfectly. I especially liked the part when he went on about wanting to switch allegiances if he could, but found out that he couldn't because he was too emotionally tied to Arsenal. No matter how poorly they played, or how frustrated they made him feel, he still supported the club. I've felt the same way about Leeds on many an occasion. A great book about life, not just about football.

Thanks to the once in every four year buzz I get when the World Cup is taking place I thought that it was an appropriate time to begin reading the only Hornby book that I hadn't yet cracked which incidentally is his autobiography and a loving testament to the game of football. With those factors in mind, I figured I couldn't go wrong with this one but sadly, for the first time, I was a bit let down by one of Hornby's books. My main problem with this book stems from the fact that I missed out on approx. 30% of the context because I didn't know the people (players and coaches), places and teams that he spends a great deal of time espousing on. This book is written with the assumption

that the reader is steeped in all the lore, historical trivia and nuance of British football and for those with limited knowledge, well I suppose they'll find themselves grasping at times trying to catch up with Hornby's detailed play-by-play enactments of memorable goals and on field blunders. Another thing - this is Hornby's first book and it shows. For those readers accustomed to his flowing, easy to digest prose in future works ('High Fidelity,' 'About a Boy,' 'How to be Good') you might be a bit surprised at how clunky his words form here. Yes, there are some very Hornby-esque passages and moments but for the most part it can be choppy reading at times but is interesting in the framework of mind knowing how his future works will evolve into crystalline works of literary brilliance. On the positive note, this book will certainly strike a chord for every hardcore sports fanatic out there. Hornby lovingly touches on the idiosyncrasies that every true 'fan' experiences from: Superstitious ritual, disdain for the casual and/or bandwagon fan, the psyche of those who faithfully follow bad teams, etc. Also, you'll find the occasional gem on the beauty of Football/Soccer as a pure sport that makes reading through this 247 page book ultimately worthwhile.

In this book is brought to life the passion felt by every true english football (soccer for Americans)fan. I can relate to Hornsby being an avid supporter of second division team Oldham Athletic. Five years ago we were in the premiership and beating Man Utd; one of our local rivals, one nil at Wembley in the F.A Cup semi-final, last year we barely avoided relegation. I am part of the 5,000 faithful who turn up every week in the usual rain, hopeful that the good days will return (If they do I hope the 20,000 Man Utd glory hunters don't return also). Although being a Gunner, Hornsby's days of pain are pretty much over, people around the world should take the opportunity to see how much a part of english lives football really is. Sticking with your team through the lowest of the lows, and the feeling you get from the highs. You could say its only a game, but to the english its a way of life, we have an innate love. This is conveyed in Hornsby's book, and after reading it, you can begin to understand just how gutted and depressed every english person alive felt after Euro '96 and World Cup '98. Come on America, you may love your sports, but no-one will love a sport more than the english love football; born and bred from our land.

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