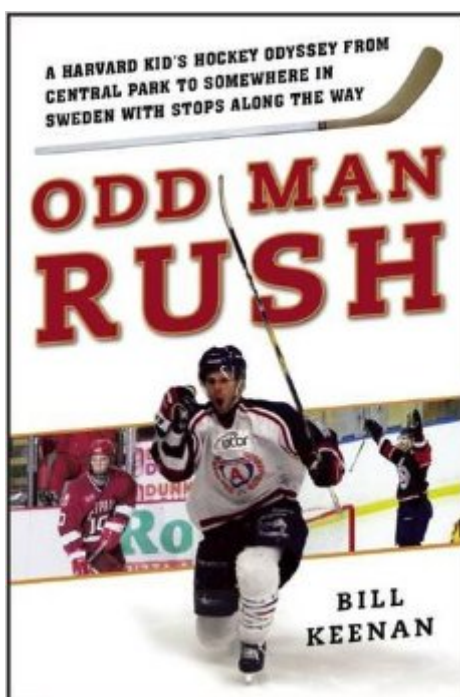


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Odd Man Rush: A Harvard Kid's Hockey Odyssey From Central Park To Somewhere In Sweden With Stops Along The Way



Synopsis

In his hilarious, gritty, and touching debut, Bill Keenan's a hockey star once on the fast-track to the NHL; tells of how he overcame multiple obstacles to find fulfillment and redemption in the strange world of European minor-league professional hockey. Keenan's hockey obsession begins as a five-year-old on Lasker Rink in New York's Central Park's love at first stride, as he calls it. He then becomes the youngest, and skinniest, player on the New York Bobcats, a Junior B hockey team. Later, after his hockey career at Harvard doesn't end as planned; with a fat NHL contract; Keenan decides to play in the minor leagues in Europe, where the glamour of professional sports is decidedly lacking. Part fish-out-of-water travelogue, part coming-of-age memoir, *Odd Man Rush* will capture the interest of not just hockey fans, but also fans of good writing. Throughout, Keenan's deep affection for the game shines through, even as he describes fans who steal players' clothes from the locker room or toss empty beer cans onto the rink after games. Abusive fans, cold showers, long bus rides; nothing diminishes his love for the sport. "Because that's the way it works with me and hockey. Even when it's horrible, it's wonderful." Skyhorse Publishing, as well as our Sports Publishing imprint, are proud to publish a broad range of books for readers interested in sports; books about baseball, pro football, college football, pro and college basketball, hockey, or soccer, we have a book about your sport or your team. Whether you are a New York Yankees fan or hail from Red Sox nation; whether you are a die-hard Green Bay Packers or Dallas Cowboys fan; whether you root for the Kentucky Wildcats, Louisville Cardinals, UCLA Bruins, or Kansas Jayhawks; whether you route for the Boston Bruins, Toronto Maple Leafs, Montreal Canadiens, or Los Angeles Kings; we have a book for you. While not every title we publish becomes a New York Times bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to publishing books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked by other publishers and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

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Customer Reviews

While Vanity Fair, which published an excerpt of this book online, is correct in describing Odd Man Rush as an uproarious memoir, it's way more than that. The book is about dreams, about pain, about the limits of desire and hard work, about the pressure of time, about timelessness. There is this wise, melancholy strain running through it; like a clock ticking. Like this, from page 172: There's a timelessness to the hockey world, something that keeps those playing pure and innocent. But the clock is always ticking. We work to score goals, stopping the clock momentarily. We harness time in the plays we make, the plays we practice over and over and over to get right. But the moments are fleeting; the memories are what we play for. Or this, later on, near the end, part of a conversation between the author and a teammate: You ever think about what would happen if you were better? [the teammate asks.] What do you mean? [the author replies] Better at hockey. Whether we like it or not, the hard work s*** only gets you so far. Bottom line is there's s*** we can't control. I just wish I were better. That exchange stopped me dead in my tracks; it's so indescribably sad and true----- about many, many things in life, not just in hockey. Truth. Which is pretty much the hallmark of this book. The author's gaze never looks away. The book is filled with conversations that are pitch-perfect and real, which is no small accomplishment; really good writers often founder there. It's a story that FLIES along, as if on skates, told in a rush (no pun intended) like someone getting a long-bottled-up story off his chest and wanting to make absolutely sure that there is nothing, not one single moment of dishonesty in the telling. I finished the book two days ago; I couldn't put it down and now I can't get it out of my mind. Which is pretty much what you want in a book, right? Sticks with you. Read it; you'll see.

This is one of the better hockey books out there. But it covers so much more than hockey. It's really a quest book. In Bill Keenan's case, instead of the grail it is a shot at high level pro hockey. It touches on the lengths we will go to pursue our dreams and does it with a great combination of humor and emotion. Keenan does not take himself too seriously while also finding the beauty in sports - be it the passion of fans, the bonds between teammates or the humor of a locker room or

bus ride. If you've ever played on a team you'll recognize some of the characters he encounters at Harvard or in Belgium, Germany or Sweden. And when you finish it you are left missing the likes of "Mother Russia," "Chara," and Dean -- and you wonder what Erika thinks of it all. It's a touching and at times hilarious story.

The book is about a dream and the hard work it takes to keep it alive. The dream is to be a pro hockey player. The author knows it is highly unlikely that he will ever play in a NHL game but is willing to do what it takes to try. The author does a fantastic job telling his story with a good balance of on ice and off ice stories. This is not War and Peace but a good light read, written with a sense of humor. The stories about his teammates are often hilariously. What I liked was he never played the "what if card". Did not dwell on how his career could have been different if the injuries at Harvard did not happen. A good first book from a budding author. Looking to find out what happened next in his life and career. Besides the stories about youth hockey on Long Island brought back memory of my youth playing at some of the same rinks. Nostalgia to me.

A few months ago I read a snippet of this book in Vanity Fair and immediately put it on my "to read" list. Having grown up playing youth hockey with NHL and college hockey dreams, I found the material right up my alley (I never lived that life, so to read it was great). I was even shocked to see some old familiar names from my time as a Squirt and Pee Wee on Long Island. Bill Keenan proves to be a sharp witted guy, who you can tell would have been a great teammate. He has a very self deprecating sense of humor that I found very funny. His stories from Laker, to Harvard, to Belgium, Sweden and beyond made for some great reading and laugh out loud laughs. I found the book to be very enjoyable to read and I hope the author keeps up with the writing.

As other reviews have read, this book is not just about hockey, but a journey. Keenan illustrates his quest from a young child through professional life. This story is more about the struggles, injuries, and personalities involved in hockey rather than the game. There are plenty of hilarious stories and explanations of "hockey" language as well as the painful times. Memorable parts are a phone call to his mother about being cut and the suddenness of being traded and having to leave his girlfriend and teammates behind. I often wondered how upsetting a sudden trade could be to your life, Keenan illustrates this well. I have no doubt this will not be his last book, it left me wanting to read more.

This book, *Odd Man Rush*, by Bill Keenan was won from Goodreads. I really liked this book, Bill tells how it is and how he started on his fantastic journey from a little rink in New York City, to the frozen north in Sweden. He meets a lot of people on the rinks and in the cities he plays in. From the beginning, young boys learn to cuss and spit, it is all part of the game of hockey. When your hockey pants go missing from the locker room, you have been traded. I learned many things about hockey from Bill, things I had never heard about. Keep writing Bill, as I will be looking to read more about your adventures through your life.

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