Book Featuring or About the Olympics

*Fast Girls: A novel of the 1936 Women’s Olympic Team* by Elise Hooper

In the 1928 Olympics, Chicago’s Betty Robinson competes as a member of the first-ever women’s delegation in track and field. She returns home feted as America’s Golden Girl until a nearly-fatal airplane crash threatens to end everything. Outside of Boston, Louise Stokes, one of the few black girls in her town, sees competing as an opportunity to overcome the limitations placed on her. Eager to prove that she has what it takes to be a champion, she risks everything to join the Olympic team. From Missouri, Helen Stephens is considered an outcast by her schoolmates, but she dreams of escaping the hardships of her farm life through athletic success. These three athletes will defy society’s expectations of what women can achieve. As tensions bring the United States and Europe closer to the brink of war, Betty, Louise, and Helen fight for the chance to compete as the fastest women in the world amidst the pomp and pageantry of the Nazi-sponsored 1936 Olympics in Berlin.

*The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown

Out of the depths of the Depression comes an irresistible story about beating the odds and finding hope in the most desperate of times—the improbable, intimate account of how nine working-class boys from the American West showed the world at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin what true grit really meant. With a team composed of the sons of loggers, shipyard workers, and farmers, the University of Washington’s eight-oar crew team was never expected to defeat the elite teams of the East Coast and Great Britain, yet they did, going on to shock the world by defeating the German team rowing for Adolf Hitler. The emotional heart of the tale lies with Joe Rantz, a teenager without family or prospects, who rows not only to regain his shattered self-regard but also to find a real place for himself in the world.

*Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand

On a May afternoon in 1943, an Army Air Forces bomber crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, leaving only a spray of debris and a slick of oil, gasoline, and blood. Then, on the ocean surface, a face appeared. It was that of a young lieutenant, Louis Zamperini, the plane’s bombardier, who was struggling to a life raft and pulling himself aboard. So began one of the most extraordinary odysseys of the Second World War. In boyhood, Louis had been a cunning and incorrigible delinquent. As a teenager, he had channeled his defiance into running, discovering a prodigious talent that had carried him to the Berlin Olympics and within sight of the four-minute mile. But when war had come, the athlete had become an airman, embarking on a journey that led to his doomed flight, a tiny raft, and a drift into the unknown.
Just Don't Fall by Josh Sundquist

When he was ten years old Josh Sundquist had his leg amputated to treat bone cancer. But this is not a sad story; on the contrary, this memoir is a story of resilience, heart, and most importantly: humor. Young Josh had a lot of adapting to do after he lost his leg. He had to learn how to walk again. He had to accept that he wouldn't be able to try out for the travel soccer team. He knew his life would never be the same again. But when he sees a poster in the hospital elevator advertising skiing classes, he realized all might not be lost. Equal parts heartbreaking and hilarious, Just Don't Fall is Josh's story of surviving cancer with 50/50 odds, learning to be a professional skier, and making his way to being a bestselling writer and motivational speaker. Inspirational and moving, Josh's story is one that can be appreciated by readers of all ages.

For the Glory by Duncan Hamilton

Famously, Liddell would not run on Sunday because of his strict observance of the Christian sabbath, and so he did not compete in his signature event, the 100 meters, at the 1924 Paris Olympics. His choice not to run was ridiculed by the British Olympic committee, his fellow athletes, and most of the world press. Yet Liddell triumphed in a new event, winning the 400 meters in Paris. After winning gold, he dedicated himself to missionary work. He traveled to China to work in a local school and as a missionary. He married and had children there. With war on the horizon, Liddell put Florence, his pregnant wife, and children on a boat to Canada, while he stayed behind. He and thousands of others were interned at a Japanese work camp. Once imprisoned, Liddell did what he was born to do, practice his faith and his sport. He became the moral center of an unbearable world.

The Games by James Patterson

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil knows how to throw a party. So it's a natural choice to host the biggest spectacles in sports: the World Cup and the Olympics. To ensure that the games go off without a hitch, the organizers turn to Jack Morgan, head of the world's greatest international security and consulting firm. But when events are this exclusive, someone's bound to get left off the guest list. Two years after the crisis nearly spilled from the soccer field to the stands, Jack is back in Rio for the Olympics. But when his most prominent clients begin to disappear, and bodies mysteriously start to litter the streets, Jack is drawn deep into the heart of a ruthless underworld populated by disaffected residents trying to crash the world's biggest party. With the world watching in horror, Jack must sprint to the finish line to defuse a threat that could decimate Rio and turn the games into a deadly spectacle. . . all before the games begin.

Head Over Heels by Hannah Orenstein

The past seven years have been hard on Avery Abrams: After training her entire life to make the Olympic gymnastics team, a disastrous performance ended her athletic career for good. Her best friend and teammate, Jasmine, went on to become an Olympic champion, then committed the ultimate betrayal by marrying their emotionally abusive coach, Dimitri. Now, reeling from a breakup with her football star boyfriend, Avery returns to her Massachusetts hometown, where new coach Ryan asks her to help him train a promising young gymnast with Olympic aspirations. Despite her hesitations Avery agrees. Back in the gym, she’s surprised to find sparks flying with Ryan. But when a shocking scandal in the gymnastics world breaks, it has shattering effects not only for the sport but also for Avery and her old friend Jasmine.
Winning Balance by Shawn Johnson, Bio Johnson Shawn

Libby, Hoopla

Twenty-year-old American gymnast Shawn Johnson is a four-time Olympic gold and silver medalist. Already a popular role model to all ages, in 2009 she captured the national spotlight again when she won the widely popular Dancing with the Stars. Yet Shawn is no stranger to hard work and adversity. Her loss of the major gymnastics prize everyone expected her to win in Beijing was the loss of a dream she’d worked for since childhood. Later, she suffered a potentially career-ending injury in a skiing accident that forced her life to a halt and made her rethink what was really important. Could she find the right kind of success in life—the kind that doesn’t involve medals or trophies, but peace, love, and lasting joy? An amazing true journey of how Shawn who won an Olympic gold medal on the balance beam became even more balanced.

Simone Biles by Kekla Magoon

KIDS BIO SPORTS GYMNASTIC Biles

Simone Biles was raised by her grandparents and had to overcome many hardships as a child. After trying gymnastics for the first time on a field trip from elementary school, Simone continued with the sport, working hard and reaching professional levels. She persisted in the field and went on to become the most decorated US gymnast of all time. Through it all, she inspired kids everywhere to follow their dreams.

9 Lives by 35: An Olympic Gymnast's Inspiring Story of Reinvention by Mary Sander

Bio Sanders Mary, Libby, Hoopla

Mary Sanders was handed an Olympic dream by her father from the moment she was born. Determined to follow in his footsteps, the young gymnast struggled through training setbacks, financial hardships, and personal rivalries, under a cloud of grief, to compete in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. But that achievement was only the beginning for a woman determined to reinvent herself and consistently raise her own standards for success. In this revealing memoir, Mary recounts her journey from Olympian to Cirque du Soleil acrobat to entertainment executive working for Shark Tank’s Robert Herjavec while balancing life at home with two children. Through it all, no matter what obstacles are thrown in her path, Mary pushes forward, leaning on her faith, her family, and her enduring optimism to support her in each of her nine lives so far.