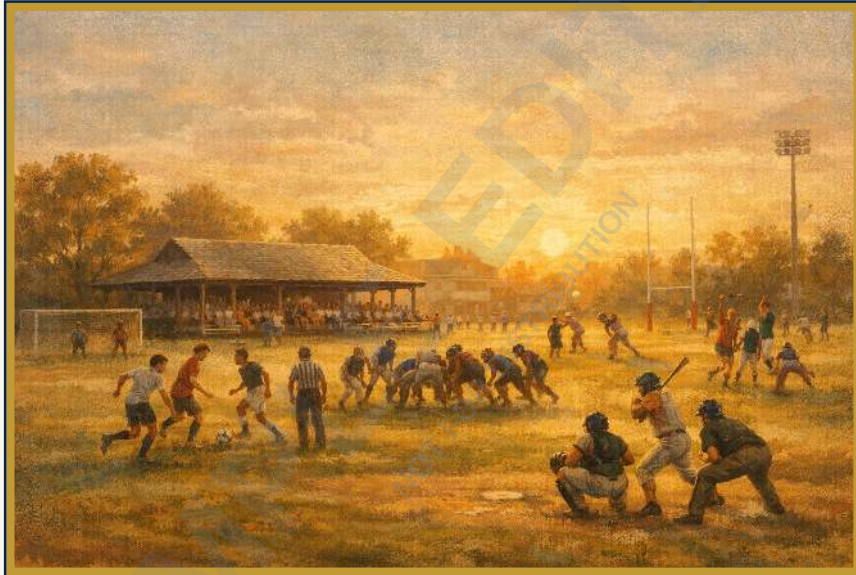


OFFICIAL EVENT EDITION

The Annual Sports Awards

St Aubrey's College



The Wisdom of Sport — The Game of Life and the Life of the Game

PRESENTED BY SPORTSMART4LIFE

A word from the organisers



St Aubrey's College

A word from the organisers

Dear Sample Reader,

This copy is yours. Your name is on the cover, and it is inside on the pages too, because it was made for you and for nobody else. No two copies of this book are the same.

We wanted to give you something that outlasts a fixture list. Kit wears out. Medals go in a drawer. But whatever your code, the lessons turn out to be the same ones, and that is worth writing down somewhere you will find it again.

What follows are the real voices of this sport — players, coaches and writers, most of them talking about the parts nobody puts on a highlight reel. There is a section on pressure, and what the people who handle it best actually do differently. One on trust, and why a group that trusts each other beats a group that is merely talented. One on losing, which is the section we would ask you to read twice, because everyone in this sport has lost and everyone worth knowing came back. There is a section on joy, which is the reason any of us started. One on mastery, and the unglamorous patience it asks for. One on rivalry, and the respect that runs underneath it. And one on belonging — on being part of something whether or not you are the one on the field.

You do not have to read it in order. Keep it in the kit bag. Open it the night before a hard one. Let it fall open at whichever page finds you, and if a line is worth keeping, keep it.

The game has taught you things already — about nerve, about other people, about getting up. These pages are simply the same lessons in other people's words, gathered in one place so they are there when you need them.

Thank you for everything you give to this. It is noticed, and it matters more than the results ever say.

— **The Committee, St Aubrey's College**

Foreword

Every sport ever invented is a dialect of the same language. The equipment changes, the venues change, the scoring changes — but wherever humans compete and wherever humans gather to watch, the games say the same things: hold your nerve, trust your people, get up again, protect your joy, do the unseen work, honour your rival, belong to something. This collection is written in that shared language, for everyone who loves the games.

The voices gathered here come from across the whole world of sport — champions and coaches, corners and commentators, the great watchers and writers of every code — arranged around seven themes that belong as much to life as to any game. Each chapter opens with an image and an idea, then hands the floor to the voices themselves: every game's wisdom, speaking directly to yours.

Read it the way you watch the sport you love: sometimes for the drama, sometimes for the craft, and sometimes for one moment of heart you will remember for years.

Ways to Walk with This Book

A collection like this is not meant to be read once and shelved. It is meant to be lived with — kept close, opened often, and put to work. Seven ways to begin:

- **The daily voice**
open anywhere each morning and take one voice with you into the day.
- **The reflection pause**
choose the theme your week is testing, read its essay slowly, and write one honest line of your own in response.
- **Match-day ritual**
before the big broadcast, read the theme the fixture will examine — rivalry before the derby, pressure before the final.
- **The team talk**
captains, coaches, teachers, parents: one voice a week is enough to open a changing room, a classroom or a dinner table.
- **The hard-week medicine**
when life tackles you, the defeat chapter is waiting. It was written for exactly that week.
- **The gift of a voice**
photograph the quote a friend needs today and send it with their name on the message.
- **The long read**
one theme per Sunday evening — a handful of weeks, properly kept.

However you use it, let it stay within reach of wherever you watch.

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THEME 1 OF 7

Joy & Love of the Game

Before anything was a career or a contest, it was play — and it still is.



Every sport in the world began the same way: somebody, somewhere, was playing — and could not stop.

Joy & Love of the Game — in the game, in life

Ask the greats of any sport where it began and nobody answers with a stadium. It is a driveway, a back street, a garage door, a stretch of water, a patch of grass — improvised equipment, invented rules, no referee, and one more game before dark that somehow lasted an hour. Joy is the first language of every code, and everything the games later become is built on that original delight or it is built on nothing. You can hear the fluency return whenever a professional, in any sport, does something that has no tactical justification at all — the trick attempted purely for the cheek of it, the celebration that looks exactly like a child's — and the crowd's answering roar is always the loudest of the day, because tens of thousands of people are suddenly remembering their own driveway. The voices in this chapter, drawn from every game, guard this truth jealously: the ones who last are the ones who protect the feeling. Through slumps, contracts, injuries and the long grind of seasons, they keep one corner of their sport that remains pure play — and they will all tell you it is not a luxury but the fuel line itself. The law transfers to every life without translation. Duty is a fine engine and a terrible fuel; the stamina for your hardest seasons comes from the play you refuse to surrender. So identify your version of the driveway game — the guitar, the garden, the kitchen dance, the Sunday water — and defend it like the professionals do. Do it badly. Do it laughing. Do it after dark. The day it stops being play, you have not grown up; you have only mislaid the point, and the point is recoverable.

“Whenever I was in the field as a player and the score was 111, I would do a little jump but no one really knew I was doing it except one or two friends... It did, I did my little jump and there was a titter in the crowd.”

— David Shepherd

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"It's just a game. It's fun, you want to win, but it's not everything."

— Tadej Pogačar

"There are no absolutes in golf. Golf is such an individual game, and no two people swing alike."

— Kathy Whitworth

"Dress for the second mile, not the first."

— Coaching maxim

"I firmly believe that any man's finest hour — his greatest fulfillment to all he holds dear — is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle — victorious."

— Vince Lombardi

"Golf is the most fun you can have with your clothes on."

— Chi Chi Rodriguez

"We've got a freaker! Not very shapely, and it's masculine. And I would think it's seen the last of its cricket for the day."

— John Arlott

"I've been telling you guys already, this is the 'Blessed' era."

— Max Holloway

"If you want to win something, run 100 meters. If you want to experience something, run a marathon."

— Emil Zatopek

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Basketball is not the main thing in my life. It’s something that I’m good at.”

— Nikola Jokić

“If you have a body, you are an athlete.”

— Bill Bowerman

“I grew up with the same dream that most boys in Canada have — to play in the NHL. This is a tremendous way for it to end.”

— Bobby Orr

“You are what you think you are, in golf and in life.”

— Raymond Floyd

“Simply, simply lovely.”

— Max Verstappen

“A 12-minute mile is the same distance as a 6-minute mile.”

— Running proverb

“The scorpion kick was a play of luxury. It was spectacular. It was marvellous to the eyes of the world.”

— Rene Higuita

“My first gold medal, at my first Olympics, is kind of a surprise to me. I never thought I would be in this position, but I’m so blessed and honoured to be on the medal stand.”

— Penny Oleksiak

Joy & Love of the Game

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“I don't believe it! I don't believe it! I do not believe it!”

— Russ Hodges

“Aus dem Hintergrund müsste Rahn schießen — Rahn schießt! Tor! Tor! Tor! Tor! ... Halten Sie mich für verrückt! (Rahn should shoot from deep — Rahn shoots! Goal! Goal! Goal! Goal! ... Call me mad!)”

— Herbert Zimmermann

“If you are going to be remembered for something, it's great to be remembered for something like that — something you dreamed of doing since you first picked up a bat.”

— Joe Carter

“Well, if I'm not the best basketball player, I'm certainly the most underpaid.”

— Cheryl Miller

“In any running event, you are absolutely alone. Nobody can help you.”

— John Landy

“The only way of really finding out a man's character is to play golf with him.”

— Henry Longhurst

“In leftist football we don't play solely to win, but to improve, to feel joy, to experience a celebration, to grow as human beings.”

— César Luis Menotti

“I loved every single minute on the pitch. Everything concerning rugby, even the tiresome training sessions, gave me an absolute pleasure.”

— Mamuka Gorgodze

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

More from Joy & Love of the Game



Why anyone starts.

“If someone had said to me that all this time later I'd be at Lord's, winning a World Cup final, I would have laughed them away -- you never think that sort of thing happens.”

— Anya Shrubsole

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

The Annual Sports Awards · Joy & Love of the Game

A few more from Joy & Love of the Game



The part nobody has to be told to love.

“First of all, I don't see this as a comeback. That would imply that I failed, or that I didn't quite get there. I got there. This is a whole different thing. I just find this a challenge. And based on the reaction from people so far, they're rooting for me. I've become a sort of symbol for couch potatoes everywhere. It's the middle-age syndrome, I guess.”

— Mark Spitz

“The way I see it, you have to view running time not as extra or wasted time, but as important, productive contemplation time.”

— Fred Lebow

“It was not more about winning in Paris. It was just more about winning with all my people around, to be able to share this moment.”

— Yannick Noah

This copy belongs to: Sample Reader

The Annual Sports Awards · Joy & Love of the Game

THEME 2 OF 7

Pressure & Nerve

The moment every game funnels into — and how the brave, in every sport, answer it.



Every sport keeps the same appointment: one moment, one person, and the only voice that matters is the quiet one inside.

Pressure & Nerve — in the game, in life

Every sport on earth, whatever its ball or blade or board, eventually funnels into the same narrow place: a single moment that cannot be delegated, taken in front of witnesses, with the clock running. The shapes differ — a serve, a putt, a penalty, a final dart, a last-second shot — but the examination is identical, which is why the voices in this chapter, gathered from across all the games, agree with one another so uncannily. Watch closely how the great ones of any code behave when their moment arrives, and you will see the same three moves. They slow down: the walk becomes deliberate, the breath audible, the ritual exact, because a routine rehearsed ten thousand times can carry a shaking human being through the loudest minute of their life. They commit: nobody ever produced their best while negotiating an escape from the consequences, and half-hearted attempts fail at a rate that makes bravery the safer bet. And they volunteer again: every champion in every sport owns a catalogue of public failures at precisely these moments, and their genius was returning the following week with their hand up. Whatever game you love will keep handing these moments to the people you watch — and life will keep handing them to you. The interview, the diagnosis, the conversation rehearsed in the car: these are your pressure moments, and the wisdom of every game applies unchanged. Build the routine before you need it. Slow your walk when the world speeds up. Choose your line while your head is clear, refuse to renegotiate with your doubt mid-stride — and if you miss, put your hand up for the next one. Nerve, in every sport and every life, is not the absence of fear. It is a practice that holds when fear arrives.

“Seeing the doctor standing tensely over four-foot putts, I reflected that if he held his scalpel with as much apprehension and self-doubt as his putter, I’d never want to be on his operating table.”

— W. Timothy Gallwey

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“My upbringing gave me a strong will, a mental aggressiveness in what I wanted to achieve.”

— Paul Tergat

“Running gives me confidence.”

— Steve Prefontaine

“Nothing can prepare you for a crash at 150 miles an hour.”

— Sir Jackie Stewart

“Ryan's the only guy who puts fear in me. Not because he could get me out, but because he could kill me. You just hoped to mix in a walk so you could have a good night and go 0-for-3.”

— Reggie Jackson

“No matter what happens, keep on hitting the ball.”

— Harry Vardon

“If you don't think too good, then don't think too much.”

— Lee Trevino

“I don't have the stereotypical tall and lean runner's physique. In fact, I sometimes think people look at me and wonder how I've become an elite runner.”

— Joan Benoit Samuelson

“I felt that if I didn't go out there and perform in that game, as a starter, I thought my career might have been over.”

— Jim Plunkett

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"It's no joke playing-up in a match, I can tell you — quite another thing from your private school games."

— Thomas Hughes

"Love yourself, for who and what you are; protect your dream and develop your talent to the fullest extent."

— Joan Benoit Samuelson

"It's just a swim race. You swam the length of a pool. What you did isn't life or death."

— Rowdy Gaines

"Staying in the present is the key to any golfer's game: once you start thinking about a shot you just messed up or what you have to do on the next nine to catch somebody, you're lost."

— Paul Azinger

"Worrying gets you nowhere. If you turn up worrying about how you're going to perform, you've already lost. Train hard, turn up, run your best and the rest will take care of itself."

— Usain Bolt

"You don't run against a bloody stopwatch, do you understand? A runner runs against himself, against the best that's in him."

— John L. Parker Jr.

"The big idea, the essential one, is to hold the club at address with easy security rather than grim, tightening intensity."

— Tommy Armour

"Everybody is nervous, it's not just me, everybody feels stressed. The main thing is to control your emotions in that time."

— Mohamed Salah

Pressure & Nerve

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Eighteen years of this. In the town. Out of the town. I really get tired of all these trips.”

— Maurice ‘Rocket’ Richard

“The problem is, we knew we could live a short life and the people driving at the time knew what they were getting into.”

— Niki Lauda

“Golf is a game of inches. The most important are the six inches between your ears.”

— Arnold Palmer

“I don't think I'm the best rider out there, I just try to do my best, be the best I can.”

— Tadej Pogačar

“We're gonna win the game. I guarantee it.”

— Joe Namath

“Everyone thinks women should be thrilled when we get crumbs, and I want women to have the cake, the icing, and the cherry on top, too.”

— Billie Jean King

“You've won it once. Now you'll have to go out there and win it again.”

— Alf Ramsey

“When you concede a second goal, you have to think about changing something. And if you concede a third? Well, then you definitely have to change, and that was very clear.”

— Rafael Benítez

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

More from Pressure & Nerve



The moment before it starts.

“The great American game should be an unrelenting war of nerves.”

— Ty Cobb

A few more from Pressure & Nerve



Nerve is not the absence of fear.

"That's just a mental part of it, to sacrifice your body to get in front of that puck to pay that price."

— Mattias Ekholm

"I don't feel pressure that much. I feel more excited."

— Shohei Ohtani

"In order to win, you must play your best golf when you need it most, and play your sloppy stuff when you can afford it. I shall not attempt to explain how you achieve this happy timing."

— Bobby Jones

THEME 3 OF 7

Teamwork & Trust

Nobody, in any game, gets to be great alone.



Behind every name on a scoreboard stands a crowd of people who will never appear on it.

Teamwork & Trust — in the game, in life

The scoreboard is the great liar of sport: it prints one name, one team, one number, and hides the crowd of people who made the number possible. The voices in this chapter come from every corner of the sporting world, and on this subject they speak as one. The champion boxer names the corner. The driver names the mechanics. The striker names the pass, the runner names the pacemaker, the batter names the partner at the other end. Even the loneliest sports turn out, on inspection, to be team games wearing a disguise — someone drove to every early practice, someone held the pads, someone paid for the first proper equipment, someone believed early and said so. Trust in a team has precise mechanics that every code discovers independently. It is doing your own job completely so that nobody must do it for you. It is the unglamorous assist — the screen, the lead-out, the block, the covering run — performed at full commitment for zero applause. It is reliability chosen over brilliance, because the people who make others better are rarely the most spectacular and always the most present. And it is generosity with credit, the oldest law of every dressing room: point at the ones who lifted you. Your own life runs on the same physics, whatever your game is. A family, a ward, a classroom, a small business — each is a team whose assists go unrecorded. Make yours anyway. Show for the people running with you, cover the ground your teammate abandoned without announcing it, and when your name happens to be the one the scoreboard prints, do what the greats of every sport do at the microphone: turn, and name your corner.

“We cricketers feel that the time has come for an expression of our views. We fully support the South African Cricket Association's application to invite non-whites to tour Australia, if they are good enough. We further subscribe to the view that merit be the only criterion on the cricket field.”

— Barry Richards, Mike Procter, Graeme Pollock and fellow players

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“We have never been as excited about netball in our long-term partnership, because it feels incredibly collaborative and aligned.”

— Helen Falkus

“You cannot play with Riquelme without playing for Riquelme.”

— Jorge Valdano

“It is essential to understand that battles are primarily won in the hearts of men.”

— Vince Lombardi

“In return, it is the responsibility of coaches, captains and players to respect the authority of the match officials.”

— World Rugby Playing Charter

“He had those leadership qualities and a certain presence about him. He was the ultimate leader.”

— Patrick Sharp

“He was captain, now I’m captain, and I’m proud to lead this national team.”

— Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang

“We had this unbreakable bond. It could get violent at times, but we’d be having dinner two minutes later.”

— Bob Bryan

“Any chance can swing a game, and the willingness of every guy to get in lanes and make big blocks, guys are willing to do it.”

— Shea Theodore

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“The idea is that you are helping your team get across the line, and the only thing you can perhaps think of at this point in time is what more I could have done when the margin is so small.”

— Kane Williamson

“It is not about you, but it is all about the players.”

— Dorette Badenhorst

“I lived with that team and admired that team and believe that it's the best team at its best that there ever was. Because of the combinations, they could beat you every way.”

— Bob Ryan

“Those guys are just tying their boots up and going to war every night for me and with me. I wouldn't have won 64 games without them.”

— Shai Gilgeous-Alexander

“It's been a journey. If you look around the players that got the nod here there's been so much personal development, so for us although the game is hugely important it was so much more than that.”

— Laura Langman

“I got so much more from you guys, from my teammates, than they can explain that they got from me.”

— Tim Duncan

“Clear eyes, full hearts, can't lose.”

— Peter Berg

“There's nothing extraordinary here, just a humble farmer from Wexford.”

— Tadhg Furlong

Teamwork & Trust

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“I hope we can have more outstanding players to lead Chinese women's football back to the top.”

— Sun Wen

“It does not make sense to be a legend and not give back.”

— Nwankwo Kanu

“I wasn't for the halo some years ago, but I think it's the greatest thing we've done for Formula 1, and without it I wouldn't be able to speak to you today.”

— Romain Grosjean

“From the outside, people see the razzmatazz, the drivers, the technology. But actually, the main experience of working in a team as an engineer is none of that.”

— James Allison

“My job is to welcome our viewers and tell them what they need to know going in: where we are, who the players are, what's at stake, key storylines and so on.”

— Bob Varsha

“This is my charge to everyone: we have to be better. We have to love more, hate less. We've got to listen more and talk less.”

— Megan Rapinoe

“You took care of me as though you were taking care of your little brother. Without you, I know today would not have been possible.”

— Emmitt Smith

“It's something that we need to take very seriously and, like the rest of the world is doing, make a stand.”

— Lungi Ngidi

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

More from Teamwork & Trust



Nobody does this alone.

“I wanted my players to feel strong and the opponents to feel weak. Our pressing was psychological as much as physical, our pressing was always collective.”

— Arrigo Sacchi

A few more from Teamwork & Trust



Trust, built in the ordinary weeks.

“Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

— Vince Lombardi

“Francois, thank you very much for what you have done for our country.”

— Nelson Mandela

“I always tried to think about being a leader, no matter where I was at.”

— Ricky Ponting

THEME 4 OF 7

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Every sport schedules losing — and teaches, better than anything else in life, what to do next.



In every game ever played, the result ends the day — and the response writes the career.

Defeat & Bouncing Back — in the game, in life

Sport is the only theatre that schedules heartbreak in advance and sells tickets to it. Someone must lose today; over a season, everyone will; across a career, even the greatest of any code will lose more finals, more races, more match points than the highlight reels admit. That arithmetic is not sport's flaw — it is the syllabus. The voices gathered here, from every game humans have invented, describe the same curriculum with different accents. First, defeat is allowed to hurt: the quiet bus, the long walk, the towel over the head. Pretending is just losing with extra steps. Second, the tape is watched — honestly, briefly, in the morning — because a loss is information wearing an unpleasant coat, and somewhere in it are the two or three things that were genuinely yours to fix. Third, the folder is closed. The lesson is kept and the shame is binned, because only one of them is useful, and the fixture list, mercifully, always offers a next week. What separates the enduring names in every sport is not that they fell less often; it is that their response to falling became so reliable it turned into their identity. Opponents feared beating them because of what reliably came back. Life will run your version of this syllabus without asking: the application declined, the venture folded, the plan in pieces on the kitchen table. Do it the way every game teaches. Feel it fully and briefly. Review it honestly. Fix what was yours, forgive what was not, and — the only step that is truly compulsory — put yourself back on the team sheet for next week.

“We're pretty gutted right now, but I'm so incredibly proud of this team. To have reached this stage and not gone through to the final is painful because I know more than anyone how hard they have worked to get here and how badly they wanted it.”

— Dane van Niekerk

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Not even my family is aware that I've spent a lot of my life battling what I can only describe as a crippling depression.”

— Ian Thorpe

“Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional.”

— Haruki Murakami

“When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.”

— Viktor E. Frankl

“You can actually suffer a little bit more going slowly than when you're going really fast. A faster marathon might even be easier than a slow one, in terms of what it takes out of you mentally.”

— Frank Shorter

“Failure is the key to success; each mistake teaches us something.”

— Morihei Ueshiba

“A lot of coaching is about results, and if you don't get the right results you're going to get criticism. But if all things are going well, then you can enjoy yourself.”

— Warren Gatland

“A bad attitude is worse than a bad swing.”

— Nancy Lopez

“I don't believe in surrendering. This job was given to me when I didn't really expect it and I'm not a person that believes in surrendering. I'm giving it my best shot and that's what it's all about.”

— MS Dhoni

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"I can only control what I can do."

— Tiger Woods

"I've failed over and over and over again in my life and that is why I succeed."

— Michael Jordan

"Hit it hard, go find it and hit it hard again."

— Arnold Palmer

"You've just got to put yourself there; that's all you can do. You put yourself there enough times, you'll win."

— Tiger Woods

"After a while I quit listening to folks telling me what I can't do. All that does is motivate me more to do it, because I know there's a bunch of people in this country that are told the same thing, and it's broken a lot of people."

— Dusty Baker

"It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up."

— Vince Lombardi

"Every time I lost, as a captain it was important for me to never give up."

— Sergio Parisse

"I've never been good at listening to people. They always seem to tell me what I can't do."

— Jessica Long

Defeat & Bouncing Back

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“If I knew then what I know now, the ultimate decision would have been for me to call it quits earlier.”

— Keith Primeau

“Racing teaches us to challenge ourselves. It teaches us to push beyond where we thought we could go. It helps us to find out what we are made of.”

— PattiSue Plumer

“He was thinking: There is nothing like the Marathon. Just the figures alone mean something: 26 miles, 385 yards.”

— John L. Parker, Jr.

“All the pain I had, it was not worth it.”

— Marco van Basten

“I want to live my life without pain.”

— Juan Martín del Potro

“Certainly a tough race. I think we delivered. You can't get much better than that. Tremendous race, a lot of fun.”

— Katie Ledecky

“What is clear is that today I have to choose: to live as a 33-year-old person who is trying to not be in pain, or to keep living as a professional athlete.”

— Juan Martín del Potro

“My body is unable to give me back what I had hoped for on my return to training.”

— Sam Warburton

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

More from Defeat & Bouncing Back



The walk back.

“It's an opportunity to grow, develop, and become stronger.”

— Toto Wolff

A few more from Defeat & Bouncing Back



And then you come again.

"You don't have the game you played last year or last week. You only have today's game. It may be far from your best, but that's all you've got. Harden your heart and make the best of it."

— Walter Hagen

"Everyone is going through something that we can't see."

— Kevin Love

"In the moment, our team was losing and I wasn't happy. I remember huddling our team and said we had to pick it up. We picked up our defense and my teammate stole me the ball and I was heading down the court and just dunked it in first out of anger that we were down."

— Lisa Leslie

THEME 5 OF 7

Mastery & Practice

Ten thousand unseen repetitions — the one law every sport obeys.



The crowd of every sport counts only the visible attempt; the empty venue counted the ten thousand that bought it.

Mastery & Practice — in the game, in life

Stand far enough back from all the world's games and their differences dissolve into a single law: what the crowd calls talent is the last repetition of a sequence that began in childhood and never stopped. The effortless serve, the pure strike, the impossible catch, the perfect nine-darter calm — each was assembled somewhere unglamorous, one boring repetition at a time, long after the session officially ended and long before anyone was filming. The masters of every code serve the same apprenticeship and report the same discoveries. The craft is honest: the ball, the clock, the board, the water — none of them knows your name, your school or your followers, and none of them flatters. They respond to attention, repetition and honestly-confronted error, and to nothing else, which is precisely their mercy. The basics are the summit in disguise: under pressure, in the late stages, every fancy thing evaporates and what remains is whoever drilled the fundamentals deepest. And boredom is the toll gate: everyone pays it or stays outside, because the ten thousandth repetition feels nothing like the highlight it will one day produce. The voices gathered here from every sport say this so consistently it amounts to a law of nature. It is also the most portable wisdom sport owns. Nearly everything worth doing in your life is a craft pretending to be a gift — the language, the trade, the instrument, the patient art of being good to people under pressure. Choose yours. Find your empty venue and book your unglamorous mornings. Keep a private count of your repetitions, because the crowd only counts the visible ones — and when someone finally calls you a natural, smile. It is the name people give to work they did not witness.

“I think one commonality between kicking a football and putting yourself into a piece of music is you have to have an attention to detail. And also you have to find a balance between finding that attention to detail and being fluid with the situation.”

— Justin Tucker

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“You only hit a straight ball by accident. The ball is going to move right or left every time you hit it, so you had better make it go one way or the other.”

— Ben Hogan

“I actually suffered less at Roubaix. In Flanders there are always more people who can win. At Roubaix, if you do your thing and you're good at it, you end up in the final eight guys.”

— Tom Boonen

“We think a housewife can tell you who's going to be bad. So, we wanted to find all those guys who are in the middle.”

— Gil Brandt

“I approached practices the same way I approached games. You can't turn it on and off like a faucet. I couldn't dog it during practice and then, when I needed that extra push late in the game, expect it to be there.”

— Michael Jordan

“Keep your stick on the ice.”

— Howie Meeker

“Control your tempo. A steady, well-paced swing is often more effective than a rushed one.”

— Tom Kite

“The essence of good form is simplicity.”

— Bobby Jones

“There are no shortcuts to good golf. The better players realize this.”

— Babe Didrikson Zaharias

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“I was shooting pucks, 300, 400 pucks a day, at one point.”

— Zdeno Chara

“The law of nature is, do the thing, and you shall have the power: but they who do not the thing have not the power.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

“There were other players who were more talented, but there was no one could out-prepare me and because of that I have no regrets.”

— Peyton Manning

“Don't try to be a second Jean Beliveau. Be the first Guy Lafleur. Take a number and make it your own.”

— Jean Beliveau

“Ninety percent of putts that are short don't go in.”

— Yogi Berra

“Unlike a lot of sports, you can get faster in swimming as you get older. Studies show that. My body is built for this sport. Plus, I'm only shooting for one event this time, not seven. It will be so much less wear and tear.”

— Mark Spitz

“It's like riding a bicycle around your living room.”

— Nelson Piquet

“There's a lot to be said for LSD — long, slow distance, in this case.”

— Joe Henderson

Mastery & Practice

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"It takes six years to make a golfer: three to learn the game, then another three to unlearn all you have learned in the first three years."

— Walter Hagen

"There's a rhythm to how a play unfolds in the NBA. There's a certain song to it, and the good players move with the song."

— Jason Kidd

"Run tall."

— Coaching maxim

"When you bowled to him there weren't enough fielders; when you wrote about him there weren't enough words."

— R. C. Robertson-Glasgow

"Boxing can seriously damage your health, but teaches self-discipline and gets you fit. Smoking, drinking and drugs just damage your health."

— Brendan Ingle

"Complacency is a continuous struggle that we all have to fight."

— Jack Nicklaus

"The sculpture encapsulates being able to have a go -- to be courageous, to take on those challenges and break convention."

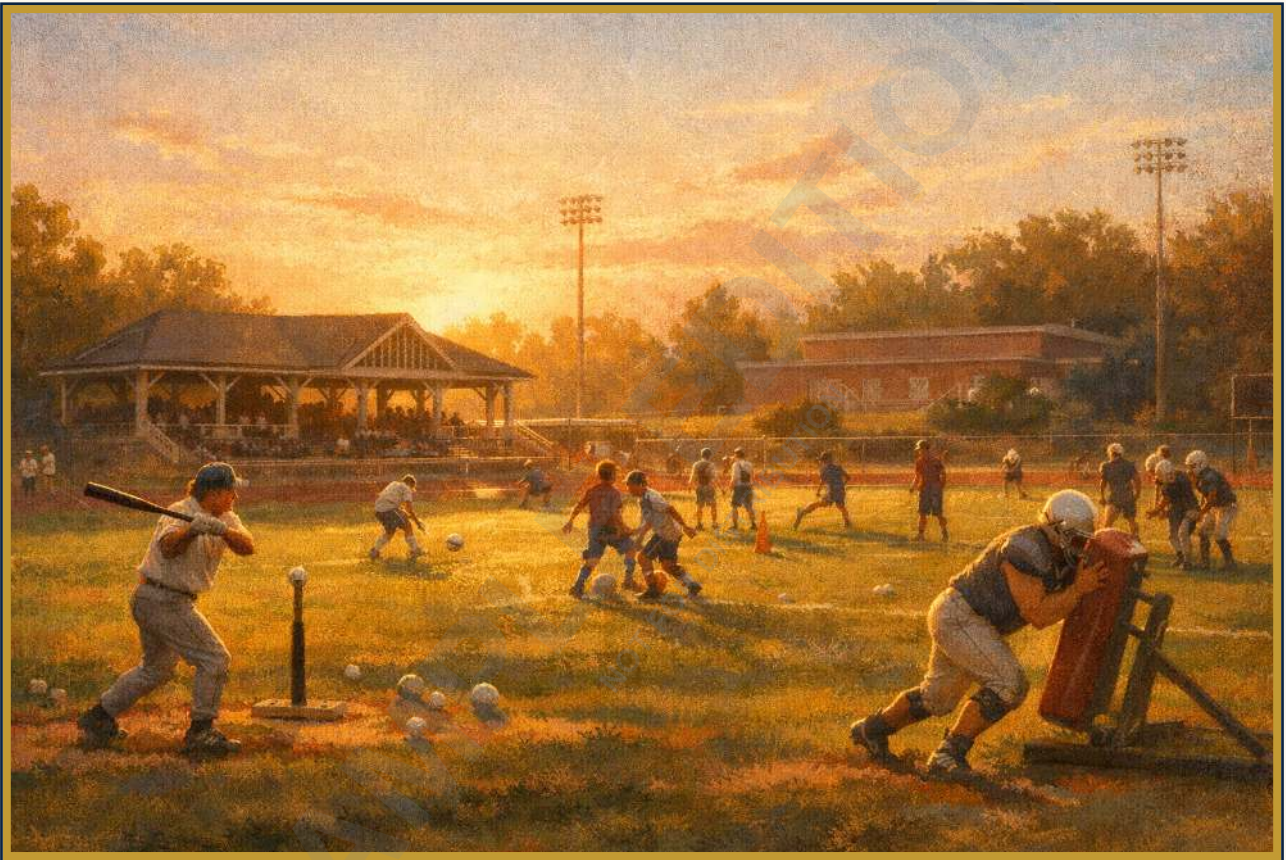
— Belinda Clark

"Hills are the only beneficial type of resistance training for the runner."

— Arthur Lydiard

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

More from Mastery & Practice



The thousandth repetition.

"I can't get better as a player if I don't get better as a person."

— Tiger Woods

A few more from Mastery & Practice



Hard-won, quietly.

“Waddle on, friends.”

— John Bingham

“Eating whole, plant-based food taught me that simple, real fuel is what carries a body the longest distances.”

— Scott Jurek

“The good rising fastball is the best pitch in baseball.”

— Tom Seaver

THEME 6 OF 7

Rivalry & Respect

The opponent who makes you better — and the handshake every true sport ends with.



In every game, the opponent is the examination — and the handshake is the graduation.

Rivalry & Respect — in the game, in life

Every sport that matters has its great pairs: the two names spoken together forever, the clubs whose meetings mark the calendar, the eras defined not by one champion but by the collision of two. This is no accident. Rivals do for us what friends cannot: they locate our exact edges and lean on them, season after season, until the edges move. The honest greats of every code admit it, usually years later and usually smiling — they trained harder, thought deeper and reached further because one particular someone existed and would not go away. The record books credit individuals; the truth credits the pair. And every genuine sport arrives, by its own route, at the same closing ceremony: the handshake, the embrace, the swapped jersey, the touched gloves, the shared drink afterwards. This is not softness appended to the contest — it is the contest's meaning. The fight is fierce because the respect is real, and the respect is real because the fight was fierce; the opponent is the only person on earth who fully understands what the day just cost. Contempt is cheap everywhere; respect must be earned in the arena, in every arena. Life will supply your rivals whether you request them or not — the colleague whose work makes yours look ordinary, the peer whose progress needles you at midnight. The games, all of them, teach the one correct use of such people. Envy studies a rival's trophies; wisdom studies their training. Want harder because they exist. Play fairer because they are watching. Refuse the modern habit of needing your opponent to be evil — and when the whistle goes, whatever your arena's whistle is, look them in the eye and mean the handshake.

“Our rivalry taught us to work together. It teaches that, yes, you're competing against somebody, but also you've got to work together. We worked together to support the sport.”

— Chris Evert

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“You'd just say, 'Good series,' that's the bottom line. You didn't say much.”

— Jean Ratelle

“First and foremost, you must believe in yourself. You must always pursue quality and have integrity, perseverance and, of course, the desire to succeed.”

— Greg Norman

“What are they gonna say now?”

— Stephen Curry

“Golf is a humbling sport; it teaches you both the agony of defeat and the thrill of victory within the span of a few swings.”

— Annika Sörenstam

“There is only one way to play the game. You might as well praise a man for not robbing a bank.”

— Bobby Jones

“There's definitely a ton of respect there. In a lot of ways, we can relate to what we've gone through over the course of our careers.”

— Sidney Crosby

“Four more years, boys, four more years.”

— George Gregan

“Racism aims to diminish the humanity of a person, period. It's not about a game, it's about your life.”

— Willie O'Ree

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“To be the best in the world, you have to beat them all anyway.”

— Ronda Rousey

“When did I think I could beat him? About 10 minutes ago. I kept saying, 'I think I can. I think I can.' But it wasn't until it was over that I knew I could.”

— Rulon Gardner

“Arrive at the net with the puck and in ill humor.”

— Fred Shero

“We didn't gift them a goal, we gave it back. The most difficult thing is not to distinguish between right or wrong, but to accept the consequences of doing what corresponds.”

— Marcelo Bielsa

“If you call on God to improve the results of a shot while it is still in motion, you are using an outside agency and subject to appropriate penalties under the rules of golf.”

— Henry Longhurst

“The film is 80% right when showing what happened that year.”

— Niki Lauda

“Golf is a compromise between what your ego wants you to do, what experience tells you to do, and what your nerves let you do.”

— Bruce Crampton

“I think there's a lot of respect among us with our jobs. Too much respect for the job he does to throw punches while he's on the ground.”

— Shawn Thornton

Rivalry & Respect

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

"It is the biggest thing you can pull off in your sporting career. So I'm over the moon."

— Arianne Titmus

"I don't know what he's talking about. But like I said, if he needs to find fuel in something I said, then so be it."

— Tim Duncan

"True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less."

— Rick Warren

"I never kick my ball in the rough or improve my lie in a sand trap. For that I have a caddy."

— Bob Hope

"I'm just a grown caddie still studying golf."

— Harvey Penick

"Owning our story and loving ourselves through that process is the bravest thing that we'll ever do."

— Brené Brown

"You don't want to be, for want of a better expression, jumping up and down while you're doing it. Your opponent played hard, and you respect that."

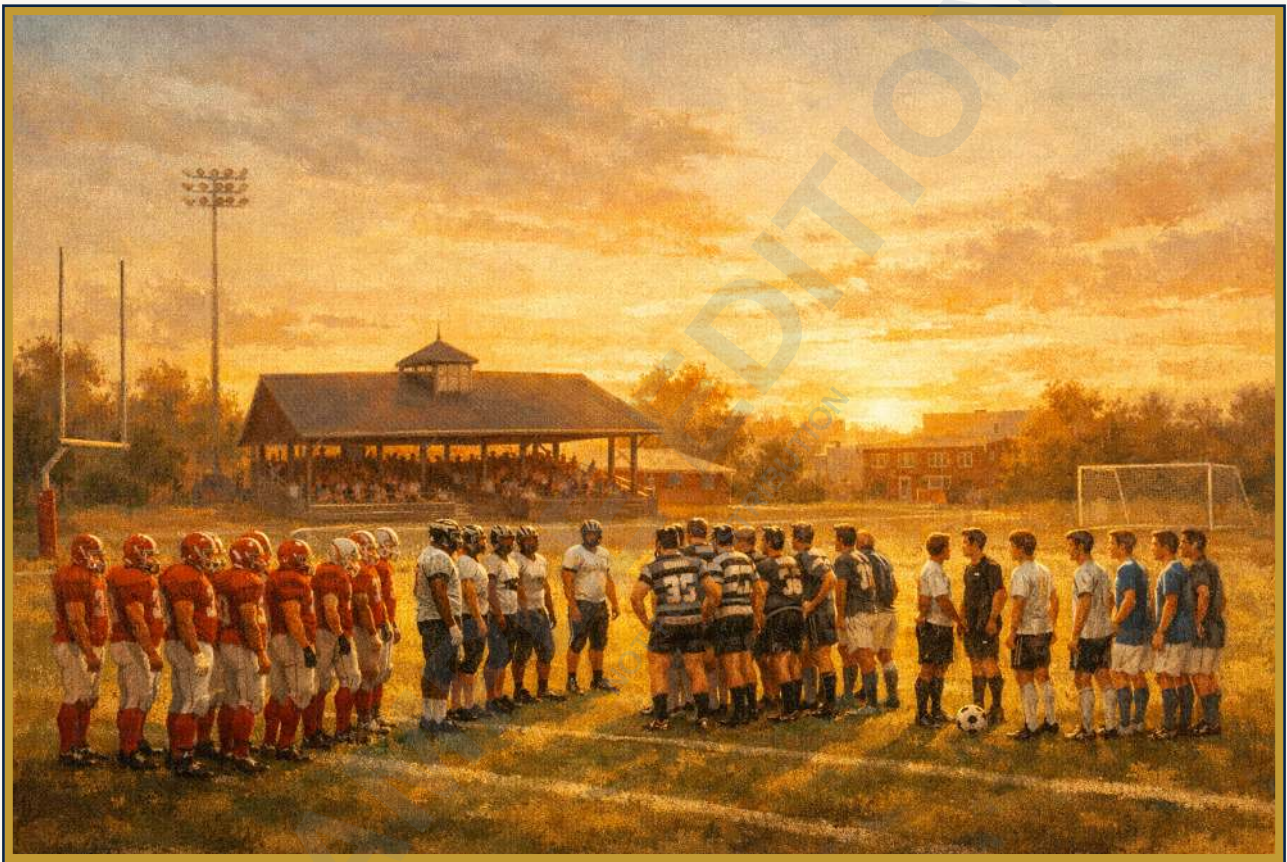
— Dave Keon

"It was a great fight tonight, worthy of the best of trilogies."

— Tyson Fury

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

More from Rivalry & Respect

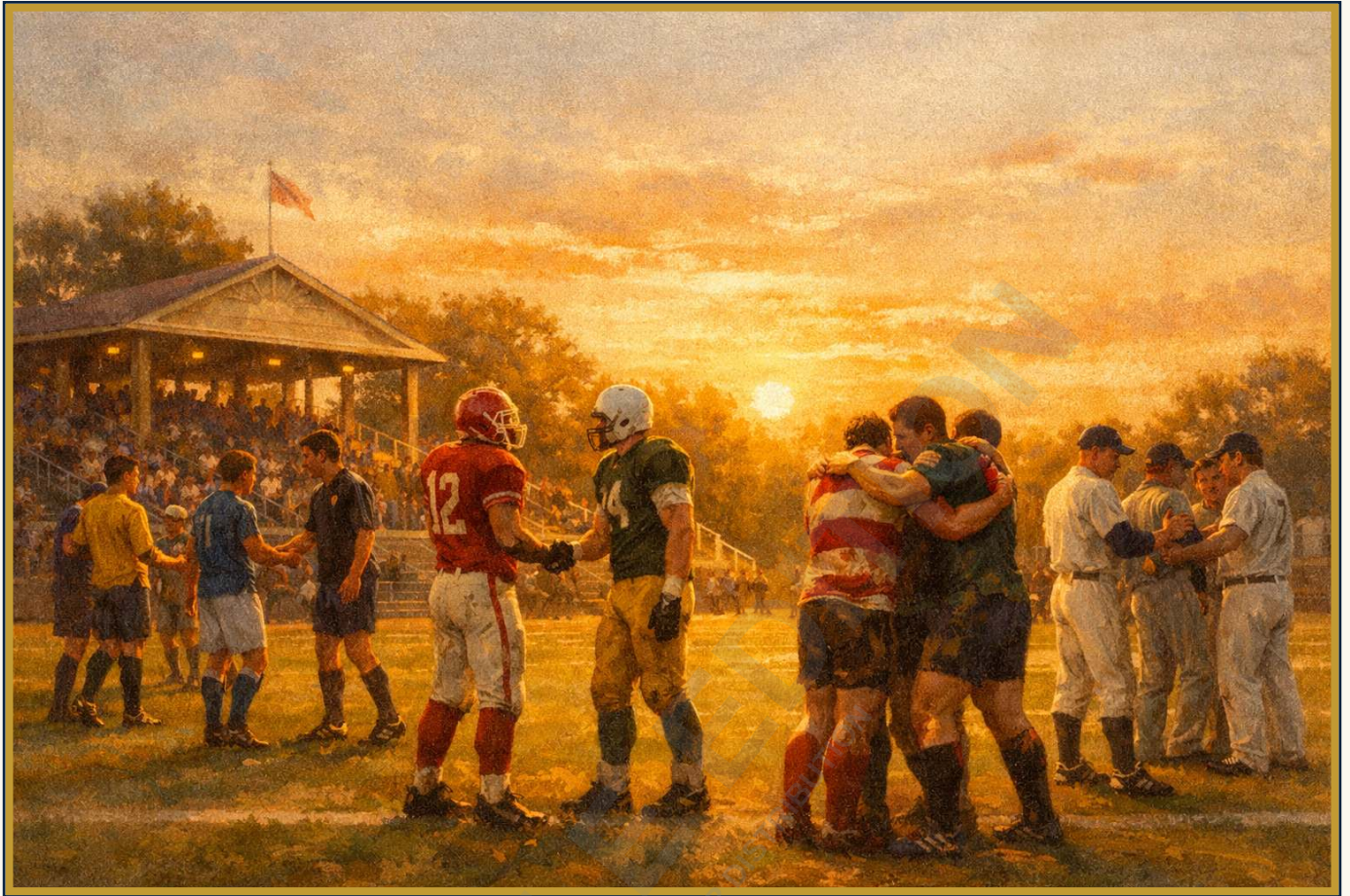


Opponents, not enemies.

“Ali, Frazier and Foreman, we were one guy. A part of me slipped away, the greatest piece.”

— George Foreman

A few more from Rivalry & Respect



Respect, earned the hard way.

“He is a freak, and the sooner he goes away the better.”

— Will Carling

“In golf, customs of etiquette and decorum are just as important as rules governing play.”

— Bobby Jones

“Respect for the rival, respect for Italy.”

— Iker Casillas

THEME 7 OF 7

Watching & Belonging

Why we gather, in every code and every country — and why we stay.



Nobody, in any sport, remembers the score of their first match — everybody remembers whose hand they were holding.

Watching & Belonging — in the game, in life

Strip any sport of its watchers and what remains is only physics — a ball moving, a clock running, a distance covered. It becomes joy, grief, memory and meaning through the oldest agreement in the world: strangers deciding, for no defensible reason, to care together. The voices in this chapter come from every game, and they know where the real match is played. It is played in the grandstand where three generations sit in the same seats; on the roadside where families wait hours for ten seconds of colour; in the kitchen where the radio murmurs the score all summer; in the small hall where everyone knows every competitor's mother.

Watching, done properly, is not the passive half of sport — it is the half that gives the game its meaning, and it teaches a masterclass the modern world has nearly forgotten. Turning up in the rain for a side that keeps losing is called loyalty. Passing devotion down like an heirloom is called family. Singing loudest when your people are behind is called hope, and the long quiet walk out together afterwards is called community. No algorithm assembled these crowds and no result can disband them; in an age engineered to keep us efficiently apart, the terraces of every sport still dispense the old medicine. So take sport's most generous lesson and apply it wide. Find your terraces — the club, the choir, the parkrun, the congregation, the Saturday hall — and remember the supporters' secret, proven in every code on earth: you do not feel your way into belonging. You join, you keep turning up, and the feeling follows.

“Everybody always talks about the pressure of playing at Wimbledon, how tough it is, but it's not the people watching. They make it so much easier to play. The support's been incredible.”

— Andy Murray

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“They were trying to wear me down. But I just thought, I'll wear you down before you get to me. I was never going to give in.”

— Anne Williams

“Basketball is just a platform in order for me to inspire people, and I realize that.”

— Kevin Durant

“Nobody circles the wagons like the Buffalo Bills!”

— Chris Berman

“The marathon is charismatic. It has everything. It has drama. It has competition. It has camaraderie. It has heroism.”

— Fred Lebow

“As for church, we found there the tranquillity of God: there we forgot school and dreamed about the next hockey game.”

— Roch Carrier

“Cricket — a game which the English, not being a spiritual people, have invented in order to give themselves some conception of eternity.”

— Lord Mancroft

“We do not lack imagination, nor have we had sad and barren lives; it is just that real life is paler, duller, and contains less potential for unexpected delirium.”

— Nick Hornby

“It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.”

— Nelson Mandela

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“Did I entertain?”

— Brian Lara

“The only way to have a friend is to be one.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

“It makes me happy that the public sees me not only as a successful rider but also as a showman.”

— Peter Sagan

“It was probably the loudest I’ve ever heard any stadium, ever.”

— Sean Payton

“Old time hockey. Like Eddie Shore.”

— The Hanson Brothers (screenplay by Nancy Dowd)

“I have a deep connection and love for any team that wears the black jersey, and particularly the Black Ferns and the All Blacks.”

— Sir Wayne Smith

“The glorious uncertainty of cricket.”

— Anonymous

“What is a club? It's not the buildings or the directors. It's the noise, the passion, the feeling of belonging, the pride in your city.”

— Bobby Robson

Watching & Belonging

Sit with the voice that speaks to you today.

“You can spend millions on the best players and invest in one of the world's top coaches, but the one thing you can never buy is fans.”

— Jamie Carragher

“It's a culture. It's a religion in Fiji.”

— Bobby Naicker

“It was like traveling with 12 rock stars. That's all I can compare it to.”

— Chuck Daly

“If you can see, you can be it.”

— Jamie Chadwick

“This club has been my life. I'd go out and sweep the street and be proud to do it for Liverpool FC if they asked me to.”

— Bob Paisley

“Great is the victory, but the friendship of all is greater.”

— Emil Zátopek

“I'm going to be an RCBian for life. Every single person in the RCB set-up has become family to me.”

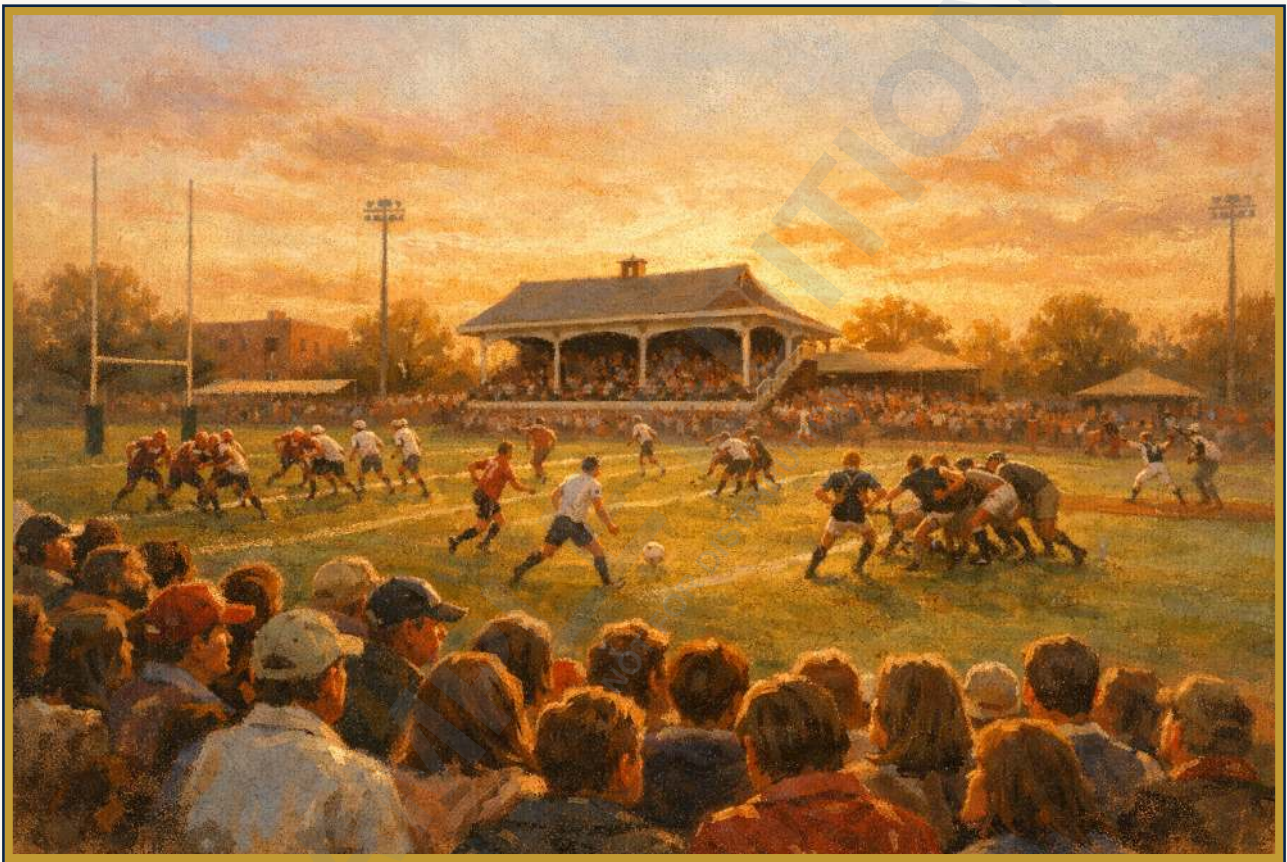
— AB de Villiers

“Years have gone by and I've finally learned to accept myself for who I am: a beggar for good soccer. In the stadiums I plead: 'A pretty move, for the love of God.'”

— Eduardo Galeano

THE ANNUAL SPORTS AWARDS

More from Watching & Belonging



Belonging, in the stands.

“I’ve given this team my youth, my prime and my experience.”

— Virat Kohli

A few more from Watching & Belonging



The people who turn up.

“Everybody pulls for David, nobody roots for Goliath.”

— Wilt Chamberlain

“I love playing here in the Garden. The atmosphere, the media, the fans — I love how they dog us out. It's a great rivalry.”

— Reggie Miller

“There is nothing as steadfast as a fan's love for his team. Players shuffle like cards. Stadiums change names yearly. Uniforms change colors like Times Square billboards. But fans stay true game after game, year after year, generation after generation.”

— Rick Reilly

About The Annual Sports Awards

St Aubrey's College is a demonstration client, invented to show how a branded edition looks and reads. In a real edition this page carries your own history, your own words, and the details your people would want to keep.

Website: sportsmart4life.co.za

After the final whistle



Until the next one.

Between the Whistles

The final whistle, wherever it blows, is only ever half true. Somewhere a game is already starting — equipment dragged out at sunset, rules invented on the spot, a child asking for one more go before dark. May the voices of all the games walk with you between the whistles of your own life.

SportSmart4Life is the intelligent spectator's toolkit — learn the games you love, watch them smarter, and let the wisdom of sport walk into your life. Explore the sports, SpectatorIQ and the Voices of the Game at sportsmart4life.co.za.

Go Deeper with SportSmart

This collection began as a way of watching. If the voices in these pages made you want to watch with sharper eyes — and let more of the game walk into your life — here is where the journey continues.

- **Watch Smarter — your sport's Spectator Module**

pick any of our sports and learn to read it properly — the laws, the plots, the craft — eight tools per sport, match by match.

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- **SportSmart4Life Membership**

the intelligent spectator's home — modules across 80+ sports, one member dashboard, and wisdom tools that turn watching into wellbeing.

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- **SpectatorIQ — the Quiz Show**

test your sports brain in our quiz show — ladders, live rounds and power-ups across every sport we cover.

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- **Voices of the Game**

the living library behind this book - thousands of verified voices to explore, sport by sport and theme by theme.

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Every quotation in this collection is real, verified and honestly attributed — that is the Voices of the Game promise.