



## Invincible: Inside Arsenal's Unbeaten 2003-2004 Season

*Amy Lawrence , Arsène Wenger (foreword)*

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**Invincible: Inside Arsenal's Unbeaten 2003-2004 Season** Amy Lawrence , Arsène Wenger (foreword)  
In 2003-04, Arsenal overcame every conceivable challenge to complete a 38-game league without a single loss. It was a feat unequalled in modern football. But for Arsene Wenger's 'Invincibles', a team including legends Thierry Henry, Patrick Vieira and Dennis Bergkamp, it was a challenge that went far beyond sport. Based on exclusive players interviews, this definitive book relives the pivotal games and moments, and allows the Invincibles to tell their own story. It takes readers inside the locker room, to reveal the teamwork, the psychology and the struggle behind one of the greatest teams in history.

## Invincible: Inside Arsenal's Unbeaten 2003-2004 Season Details

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### **Cristina says**

MIA RECENSIONE: <http://afoxamongthebooks.blogspot.it/...>

La letteratura sull'Arsenal è vasta, si è scritto praticamente di tutto, ma testo fondamentale resta sempre e comunque Fever Pitch (Febbre a '90) di Nick Hornby (da cui hanno tratto anche un bel film con Colin Firth), tuttavia fermandosi ai primissimi anni novanta non si fa nessuna menzione alla rinascita del club sotto la guida di Arsène Wenger, manager francese che ormai guida la squadra da quasi vent'anni, e soprattutto alla meravigliosa stagione 2003-04 in cui il club è riuscito a vincere il campionato senza perdere nessuna delle trentotto partite. A colmare il gap, sebbene analizzando la vicenda da un punto di vista più sportivo che personale come accade nel romanzo di Hornby, ci ha pensato Amy Lawrence, giornalista sportiva che scrive per diversi quotidiani inglesi, che con il suo libro rende omaggio ad una grande squadra composta da grandi campioni e contemporaneamente analizza nel dettaglio come si è concretizzato questo grande successo.

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### **Chee Shen says**

A must read for Arsenal fan to know in depth the insight of Invincible season. Reading this book is like walking through the incredible season as a part of the team. You not only get to know them on the pitches, but on the training grounds, in the dressing rooms, as well as during the dinner bonding sessions. That is not a squad but a family! And I am part of them when I read through the book.

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### **Darrell Woods says**

Already over ten years ago... Crumbs! This is an easy to read sprint through the Invincibles season where Amy Lawrence has managed to get first hand input from most of those involved. It does have a whiff of a bygone age, foreshadowing the onrush of "new money" that started in May 2003 with Abramovich and sadly moved the goalposts probably forever. Memories that stand out are mixed - being in line with Wayne Bridge's shot and knowing it was heading in with no time left to knock us out of the CL; being furious with Lehman for losing it at Spurs in injury time at the very moment of triumph, through to inevitably Van Nistelrooy's penalty, the second half against Liverpool and the perfection of that last afternoon in the sunshine against Leicester. As a fan who was there for some of this live there's not much new here ( a few of the Wenger tales are particularly insightful though). There is that pang of disappointment and regret - that a unique team this good didn't win more and were all gone far too soon after. The real judge of the book really needs to be non-Arsenal fans. For us the height of that summit emphasises how far below that we have been in the decade since... But just maybe this year.....

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### **Jeremiah Demster says**

Lawrence's reverence for the subject matter is obvious, but in the context of this remarkable achievement it's

a totally appropriate tone for this book. This is not a game by game break down, but rather a look at the relationships, personalities, philosophies, and talents that made it possible. She does highlight some key games and their importance to the eventual whole, but as a way of giving them perspective rather than simply capturing or reporting. Excellently written and a fascinating read.

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### **Kartik says**

Thoroughly insightful and goes much beyond what happened on the 49 glorious match days. Full of anecdotes, interviews and news excerpts bringing out the emotional highs and lows the players and the manager underwent to make this happen. From the romanticism associated with Highbury to the rational move to the Emirates, Amy Lawrence has brought it all out really well. At times, highly reverential of Wenger and Arsenal, but that's expected of course!

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### **Shatterlings says**

This was my guilty pleasure read for the Read Harder challenge. I loved this, it's about my favourite team and some of my favourite players. Reading it I think Amy Lawrence feels the same.

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### **Motez Bishara says**

Fun and quick read for a fan, but was missing any voices from opponents. Would have been good to hear Van Neistelroy or Roy Kean's take on the invincibles 10 years later.

Nearly all the main Gunners from the squad were interviewed (many said overlapping words of praise and cohesion ... "we're still a family" etc) ex Ashley Cole who refused to participate.

what is cole's issue with arsenal? more should have been explored.

all in all a decent read, and a nice complementary treat in the season ticket holder gift parcel (how I came across it).

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### **Pritesh Patil says**

Brilliant book and a must read for each and every Gooner to see the depth of Wenger's work for the club. But more importantly, it gives a good insight into the Invincible year, how it came into being, the relationship that those players still have with the club, despite now being thousands of miles away, and the groundwork laid down by the tag team of David Dein and Arsene Wenger to bring about what was a title challenge and a Championship for the ages.

Played 38, won 26, drawn 12, lost exactly none.

Invincible. We were Invincible.

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## **Anthony Rodriguez says**

Tremendous insight into a spectacular team that cannot be replicated. Their hunger for nothing but the best from each other is incredible. The only down side of this book is that it makes current iterations of Arsenal so much more unpalatable.

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## **Stephen King says**

Looking through the reviews, I add my name to the list of Arsenal fans who have warmly welcomed this account of the invincible season. Winning the league at White Hart Lane, the beautiful balance of defence, midfield and attack crafted by Wenger, before the creation of Chelsea (est. 2003) and Man City came and spoiled it all

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## **Jpaflas says**

Amy is a life long Arsenal fan (attending matches since the 70's with her fam) and a writer for the Observer and London's Guardian among others. Her style is clear and she is well informed. This story of Arsenal's unbeaten 2003-04 season is A great read for any Arsenal or football fan.

Played 38 - Won 26 - Drawn 12 - Lost exactly... none!

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## **James says**

Despite being a Villa fan, I have read a lot about Arsenal and their recent greats, so do have a little emotional pull to the club. This was not just a book about The Invincibles, but an impressive collection of thoughts from most of the players in the famous side of 2003-4. Perhaps more suited for Arsenal fans than for a generic football fan due to its completely uncritical stance (assuming the 'Membership edition' I picked up only has a different cover), it has some rather simplistic comments about some of the wider issues, which is a shame for a serious journalist in Amy Lawrence.

The main strengths of this book are its structure and depth of first-hand accounts. Rather than list the games, Lawrence seems to have gathered as many interviews as possible on the subject, and fitted them into the book in the most appropriate way. First, a background to the side, followed by key points in the season and then the title run-in. Although written by a fan, the story itself is told through the Invincibles themselves, and only Ashley Cole and Henry are lacking in terms of major contributions. This lends credibility to the claims this was a close-knit side, as the story isn't driven by one or two players, even if most of the praise appears to be for their teammates' ability and strength and not their personalities. However the appreciation for the team's style and identity really comes through, and fits with the idea this was a special side, and not just a successful one.

The unbeaten element doesn't tell the whole story though, as this team lost in the FA Cup semi-final to Man Utd and in the Champions League to Chelsea, and as the team dropped points on 12 occasions in the league, three titles winners have scored more points in a season. Naturally, the book was going to focus on the

league, but it is also about a great team, and the losses against Man Utd and Chelsea are largely excused and used in terms of motivation for the league, while an FA Cup tie against Portsmouth is presented as proof of how good the team is, which seems inconsistent. There is little in the way of critical analysis of why a team that was so good still ended up losing to English opposition at crunch times, although Wenger's mention of losing a bit of 'mental strength' in the last chapter hinted at why whilst inadvertently providing a comic touch.

More insight was gained from other figures at the club, from Pat Rice at Wenger's side to David Dein at board level and Nick Hornby and Alan Davies from the terraces, and Lawrence's use of her contacts book definitely added some nice touches, especially the sense that this Arsenal side was uniquely powerful. The decline afterwards is presented as inevitable due to the new stadium and new money in the Premier League, but again this absolves Wenger of criticism. Manchester United and Liverpool have both won the Champions League since 2004, and neither have had an oligarch funding their silverware. Conversely, Arsenal benefited from being one of the top teams when the Premier League started and there was an influx of money to English football, which has enabled them to outspend clubs other than United since 1990.

Provided you were following football in 2004, you will probably like this book as a piece of nostalgia for such an aesthetically pleasing side. Without her ties to Arsenal, the book would probably be lacking in emotion, however there is no doubt Lawrence is a fan, and *Invincible* is just too fawning in tone to be brilliant.

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### **John says**

This must have been a real labour of love for Amy Lawrence, journalist and like me a fan of the mighty Arsenal. I found it a joy to read - brilliantly written and compelling reading. Everyone behind the 2003/4 success contributes to the story. As well as bringing back happy memories I learnt so much from this. A tear jerker in the happiest of senses, which I didn't want to end.

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### **Kevin Conlon says**

This book is really only suited for Arsenal fans. It doesn't follow a chronological sequence through the season in question, and unless you have a good understanding of how that season went you could feel like you're missing out on parts of the story. For an Arsenal fan, it's an excellent retelling of the unbeaten season through the eyes of those involved, and delves into the Arsenal story both before and after 03/04 to give a more rounded view of the club and its position in football. At times a little too reverential to Arsenal and Arsene Wenger in particular, but still a thoroughly enjoyable read

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### **Toby says**

I'm biased because I'm predisposed towards the subject matter but I can't help but feel that Amy Lawrence has crafted a wonderfully engrossing account of a legendary, record breaking year in English football and the attributes required to bring it to fruition.

Team building being such a buzz concept in the business world I'm sure the insight these world class athletes provide through their interviews with Lawrence could be invaluable to those wanting to put together motivational power point presentations at \$250 per head.

It's wonderful to know that this is MY team, that MY recent memories are the envy of the world of sports fans, that MY connection wasn't all one way traffic and all of that makes this a special read for Arsenal fans but I feel like this story can exist as an example of all that can be GREAT and MAGICAL about sporting events and Lawrence has done it justice.

She throws you right in to the middle of a tense moment, the time it seemed most likely that the previously unimaginable feat of going an entire football league season undefeated would fail to materialise, a controversial event full of personalities who hate to lose, especially to each other, and she lets the key players tell the story in their own words. It's gripping stuff and these candid reflections are what the book is all about.

Invincible is filled with recollections that have the ability to cause uncontrollable laughter and the heart to race in excitement, and it is a celebration of something remarkable so why shouldn't it?

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