



Crossing the Line: The Outrageous Story of a Hockey Original

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The autobiography of one of hockey's first rebels and a beloved member of the "Big Bad Bruins," this book shares how Derek Sanderson's ferocious style helped lead the team to two Stanley Cup victories in the early 1970s. Living life in the fast lane, Sanderson grew his hair long, developed a serious drinking problem, and eventually found himself out of the league and prowling the streets for his next drink. In this autobiography, Sanderson comes clean on his life in hockey, the demons that threatened to consume him, and the strength and courage it took to fight his way back. Today a successful entrepreneur and speaker, Sanderson's incredible story is a must read for any fan of hockey.

Crossing the Line: The Outrageous Story of a Hockey Original Details

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Donny says

A must read - though at times I felt some of Derek's stories were a bit over exaggerated. I also felt myself pulling my hair out due to Derek's immaturity, stubbornness, and lack of common sense. If you are Bruins fan, please read because you will gain an inside view of life in the NHL during the 70s. The man lead an unbelievable life, but a sad one as well.

ems says

"i laughed and said, 'fuck you.' he slapped me on the back of the head. it really was a close team."

FUNNY BOOK. it is what it is. also, why is donald trump everywhere, even in books about drunk, angry, big and bad bruins from the 70s?

Peter says

On the heels of finishing the Bobby Orr autobiography Orr: My Story, it seemingly only makes sense that the Derek Sanderson autobiography Crossing the Line: The Outrageous Story of a Hockey Original should have been the next read. Well, I did get to reading the book, but not before reading two books before then. It should be no surprise that Sanderson's book has more details than what Orr provided in his book, as Sanderson was the outspoken, fast living yin to Bobby Orr's soft-spoken yang. Where Sanderson takes you in the book is what happened when he allowed a reputation of his own building to spiral out of control, and he lets it all out here. From drugs to living as a homeless man in Central Park for a short time to squandering a fortune, he goes to every corner of his life to provide the reader with a view of life from someone who has pretty much seen it all. Towards the end of the book, he also provides some life lessons and how he has used them to propel him into ventures such as public speaking and money management for future clients (the latter, undoubtedly something that he takes pride in, as he himself did not do great when he was playing in the NHL). The writing style, particularly some of the short antecdotes he provides, is somewhat disjointed, as it goes into one thing and then suddenly shifts to another part. Of course, perfect writing style isn't something one would expect of a self-described "third line center."

Crossing the Line is a definite must read for any hockey fan, and is a highly recommended that works best in tandem with Orr's autobiography.

Marc Leroux says

How do you go from being the highest paid athlete in the world to sleeping on the street? Derek Sanderson, who, in his prime, was one of the best centers in hockey, did just that. In this tell-all, hide-nothing autobiography, Derek candidly tells of his rise to fame, the lifestyle that eventually destroyed him and then

his recovery. I was fortunate enough to have seen Derek play, on what was arguably the best Bruin team ever, and while he was known for his "leave nothing on the table" playing style, and his flamboyant off-ice life style, I wasn't aware of some of the other significant contributions that he made to the game. He played a key role in resetting expectations for player salaries, and for breaking the indentured servitude model that the NHL had operated under for years, and the stories of how these changes came about are both entertaining and engaging. There are stories of his battles with opponents such as John Ferguson and Eddie Giacomin, teammates such as Phil Esposito and Bobby Orr (and I agree with Sanderson, Orr is the greatest person to play the game) and coaches like Harry Sinden. The stories aren't just what happened on the ice, but how Orr and Esposito tried to help him end his downward spiral into the world of drugs and alcohol.

Even as someone who grew up in Montreal, hating the Bruins, this was a great read. Anyone who has an interest in hockey should consider this a "must-read"

Andy says

I grew up a fan of Booby Orr and the Big Bad Bruins and looked forward to reading this book. Although I tried I could not compel myself to finish this book. The writing was disorganized and less than riveting. Derek Sanderson the hockey player and celebrity appeared to have few redeeming qualities and while I understand that he had changed over time, and the course of the book, I could not bear to finish a book that celebrated this grossly overpaid athlete whose life and actions were not those of a leader or role model but instead rather quite repulsive.

Scott says

Excellent book full of great stories. At times you felt like you were at the game with him. Some stories jumped in time a little but it was still a great read.

Catherine says

Meticulously researched and interesting book about one of my favourite hockey players.

Rick says

This is the second hockey memoir I've read this year, after Bobby Orr's. As much as I greatly preferred Orr as a player and person, Sanderson's memoir stands head and shoulders above Bobby's. Where Bobby's essential goodness and humility shone through, making the account rather boring, Sanderson manages to capture the craziness of his years in the 70s without endorsing his lifestyle or overly moralizing about it. Sanderson recounts his early years, his rapid rise to the Bruins, the glory years with the Big Bad Bs, his disastrous flirtation with the WHL, and his spiral into alcoholism and drug addiction. Along the way he offers both a primer on the hockey of his era and numerous entertaining anecdotes about players, coaches, and more (all the stuff absent from Bobby's memoir). For instance, he tells us that Bobby himself instituted a two-drink rule for the Bs after every game - the entire team went out for two drinks, whether beer, coffee, water, etc - thus helping to solidify the notorious camaraderie of the Bs circa 1968-1972. Fascinating stuff,

and completely absent from Orr's account. Sanderson has internalized the 12-step process, and thus does not shy from describing (but not really celebrating) his excesses - these, too, read as a fascinating account of insecurity and impulsiveness, and are as fine a cautionary tale for athletes as anything I've read. If one wanted to be critical, I suppose one could point to the surprising specificity of Sanderson's memory of conversations (using direct speech, even) from earlier in his life; given his substance issues and the more general truism that most of us cannot accurately recall specific conversations from a week ago (let alone 30 years), one has to take these less as verbatim accounts and more as rough depictions of the time and place. Still, for those interested in hockey in the 70s, Turk's memoir is required reading.

Mark Nenadov says

In a few years Derek Sanderson went from being the highest paid athlete in the world to homeless in Central Park. Perhaps he is best known for setting up Bobby Orr's Stanley Cup winning goal in the early 1970s. This autobiography documents his rise to fame with the "Big Bad Bruins", his fall, and his recovery. It's an engaging read about a man that hit rock bottom and seems to have sincerely changed.

bamlinen says

If Derek Sanderson doesn't epitomize an NHLer from the 1970's - nobody does. He was born to play the game in that era. Rough, unforgiving and often unfair. He worked for everything he gained and then basically threw it all away. Numerous demons grabbed a hold of him and it nearly cost him his life.

If you ever wanted to read a roller coaster ride of a story, this is the one to get.

Sanderson gained a strong work ethic from his parents. His father really impressed on him to work hard - harder than everyone else. His teammates with Boston continued that drive and no doubt, guys like Bobby Orr and Phil Esposito didn't hurt either.

But there were many other names that influenced Sanderson's career both on and off the ice. Owners, coaches, fringe players. Derek knew to keep his eyes and ears open and continuously learn.

Sanderson played in an era when player salaries were just a fraction of what they are today. But to Derek, it was more about playing for the Bruins and getting paid what he thought was fair. But the stars aligned and he was given the almost unthinkable opportunity to not only become the highest paid player in pro hockey....but in all of professional sports. He could thank the upstart WHA for that.

Or maybe not. The road that Sanderson decided to take led him down a path of destruction. After reading the book, it's pretty amazing that he made it through to the other side.

It's a fairly well written book. Engaging at times, but a little choppy in others. He hits a few too many subjects and I think it would have been a better book if he narrowed the focus at times and just elaborated more.

There are some great stories from his playing days (and his pro career takes up a good chunk of the text) but his post-career tellings felt a little rushed - like he was trying to wrap things up quick.

This is a must for any Bruins fan, 70's hockey fan or anyone who like to read about the sensational side of hockey.

Tony Sannicandro says

Years ago I read Sanderson's "I got to be me" the story of his life with the Boston Bruins. Now comes the sequel and in the style of the 21st century we get the whole story warts and all. Turk should be praised for everything he has accomplished in his life. After hitting the bottom again and again he cleaned his act up and became the person all his fans hoped he would become. Thank you Turk for writing this book!

Lyle Freimark says

Started off slow but picked up steam. Very interesting life, very well written. Must read for any hockey or sports fan? Can't wait till the movie comes out.

Tommy says

I read the book Crossing The Line by Derek Sanders. Derek is a professional Boston Bruins hockey player. In the book it talks about how Derek becomes such an iconic player, and how he becomes so called "famous" and how he crosses the line hence the name. When he had all this fame and love from the city of Boston he started to have some problems. He was going out to nightclubs, he had a drug and alcohol problem. Many things were going downhill for him. He tells us what happened and how all these events eventually destroyed/cut short his hockey career. He shares this book to have other young players learn from his mistakes and to not be like him. Overall it shows a very mature side of Mr. Sanders. He writes this book with the best intentions for others to learn from. I think all male teenage hockey players can learn a lot from this book.

Harpercollins Canada says

Crossing the Line, by Derek Sanderson is an eye-opening story of the life of one of hockey's greatest players. At the high point of his life, Derek was playing for the Boston Bruins, he was the highest paid athlete in the world and he was a winger for Bobby Orr. In fact, he assisted that famous goal by Bobby Orr where Orr scored and then went flying through the air. But the high was not to last as he plummeted so low he ended up sleeping on a park bench. This is a story about Derek's rise to fame, his fall into blackness and his struggle to pull himself back onto his feet. Today, Derek is a financial adviser for young athletes to help keep them from making the same mistakes that he did.

An excellent read!

Ann says

I was completely surprised by this book. Sanderson and Kevin Shea have put together a telling of Sanderson's life that readers will find riveting regardless of whether or not they are hockey fans. The highs and lows of his life were so extreme that they are the stuff of legend. There are of course the stories of Derek's rise to fame and his party lifestyle, along with wonderful anecdotes about playing with his good friends Bobby Orr and Phil Esposito, but for me the best parts of the book came out in the retelling of Derek's relationship with his father, who was the most significant influence in his life. From the world's highest paid athlete, partying with celebrities at Studio 54 to broke and sleeping in Central Park, this book proves that sometimes the most entertaining stories are not thought up, but are entirely true.
