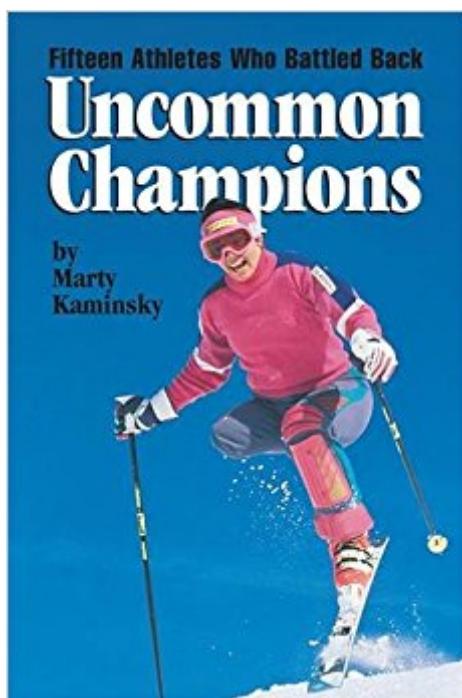


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# Uncommon Champions: Fifteen Athletes Who Battled Back



## **Synopsis**

These fifteen motivating stories prove that integrity and honor are not entirely missing from the playing fields. Readers will share the excitement as blind mountain climber Erik Weihenmayer scales the heights of Mount McKinley; as sprinter Gail Devers returns from a life-threatening illness to defend her Olympic title . . . and more. Despite facing incredible adversity, each of these stars found the heart and stamina to persevere.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Grade 6-9-A collection of 15 short essays on athletes who have overcome various physical, mental, and socioeconomic difficulties to excel in their chosen sports. While some situations are more familiar and contemporary (runner Gail Devers's battle with Graves disease and professional soccer player Michelle Akers's Epstein-Barr virus), most will be unknown to young readers. These include Ruben Gonzalez's rise from an impoverished childhood in gang-ridden Spanish Harlem to racquetball champion and 1980's basketball star John Lucas's battle with drugs. The more obscure entries bring forward many brave stories that deserve to be told. Unfortunately, the many weaknesses of this book outweigh its strengths. Factual errors include identifying the ruins at Machu Picchu as Mayan rather than Incan, and referring to Akers as "Mustafa" instead of the correct Lion King reference of "Mufasa." The writing shifts between sappy and simplistic; there are fictionalized conversations; and only about half of the entries rate a single photograph. Worse, there is no bibliography or any indication of sources. Andrew Medlar, Chicago Public Library, IL Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Gr. 5-8. Kaminsky profiles 15 athletes who have dealt with adversity (either physical or mental) and fought back. The subjects, a mix of male and female athletes, represent a variety of sports (from mountain climbing to soccer to baseball), and a wide range of misfortunes (from blindness to chronic fatigue syndrome to drug addiction). A full-page, black-and-white photo is included for most subjects, a few of whom are still well known today (Michelle Akers, Chris Zorich, Zina Garrison). Some of the choices seem surprising (for instance, cyclist Greg LeMond instead of Lance Armstrong), but overall the coverage is fair. Chapters are short, and the writing style is straightforward, which should appeal to reluctant readers. Kaminsky also describes the early life and sports careers of the individuals as well as the difficulties they had to confront. An inviting choice for browsers. Kay WeismanCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is nicely written and has an excellent selection of different athletes who's challenges in life really humble you. My son read this book as a part of a summer reading requirement and enjoyed it thouroughly. The "I can do" attitudes of these individuals is truly inspiring. Great book!

Uncommon Champions tells the stories of star athletes who have successfully grappled with eating disorders, drug addiction, cancer, racism, learning disabilities and more. I think it's important for young people to read about role models who have suffered and come out the other side, especially ones who seem as golden and invincible as top athletes. This book provides hope and inspiration. There is a shortage of role models for our youth among today's elite athletes but the fifteen stories here are proof that integrity and honor are not entirely missing from the playing fields. These are people whose fighting spirit young adults will want to emulate.

I bought this book for my grandchildren, but I enjoyed reading it myself. These are stories about remarkable and resiliant athletes.

Uncommon Champions is an engaging book that involves the reader in the lives of these champions who have struggled through adversity. These people exemplify success as shown not just through medals, but also in the satisfaction and pride in their lives. Each one succeeds not just for their own sense of achievement, but also in order to be able to give to others both inspiration and help in their personal quests. As a teacher I see this book as a wonderful tool to help students who

are struggling with their own particular adversities to hold on to hope that they too will one day become uncommon champions.

As a parent of a child who has endured extreme physical difficulties, it was wonderful to read these inspiring stories. They are written in a prose that is accessible to all readers, and convey the underlying spirit of people who have also overcome life's extreme challenges. Kids with disabilities, and those without them, will be exhilarated and moved when reading about the lives and experiences of these athletes. Many thanks to Mr. Kaminsky for producing this wonderful collection of true stories...

Marty Kaminsky paints a vivid picture of individuals who are true champions. These are the most inspirational stories I have read. The message, never let yourself be limited, is one everyone should believe in. The book is very well written - but then again, we've come to expect that from Mr. Kaminsky. I recommend this for all young sports fans.

This book is inspirational for young and old, athlete and non-athlete. Each chapter is a lesson in dedication and determination that is truely uncommon in today's world of multimillion dollar salaries and end zone celebrations. The real victories are found in the athletes themselves.

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