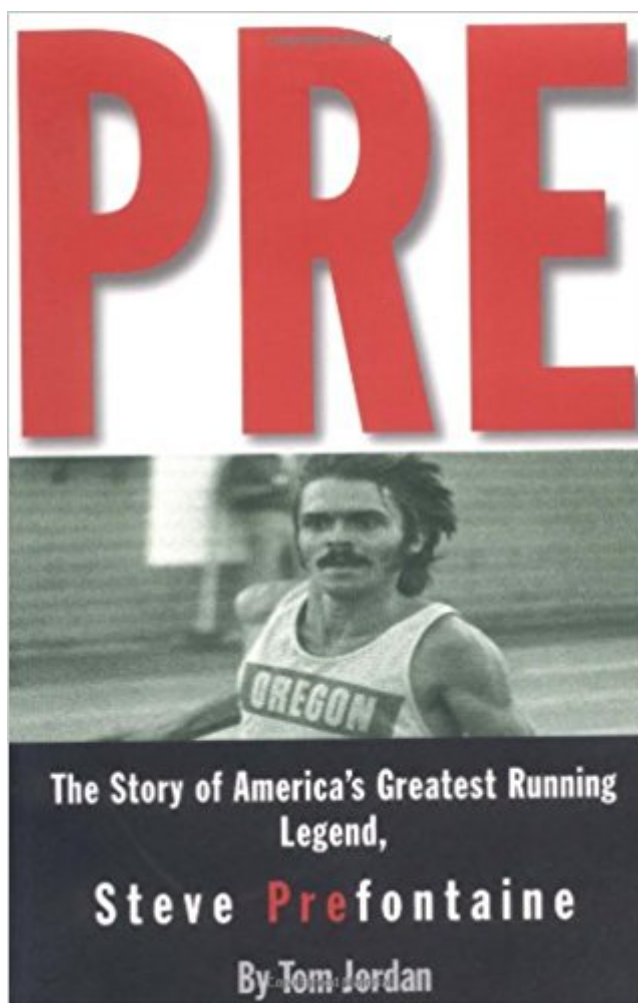


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Pre: The Story Of America's Greatest Running Legend, Steve Prefontaine



Synopsis

The story of America's greatest running legend. For five years, no American runner could beat him at any distance over a mile. But at the age of 24, with his best years still ahead, long-distance runner Steve Prefontaine finally lost. Driving alone at night after a party, Prefontaine crashed his sports car, putting a tragic, shocking end to the life and career of one of the most influential, accomplished runners of our time. More than 20 years later, Pre continues to influence the running world. From his humble origins in Coos Bay, Oregon, Pre became the first person to win four NCAA titles in one event. Year after year, he was virtually unbeatable. Instead of becoming one of the new breed of professional track athletes, Pre chose to stay amateur and fight for the adequate funding he felt American amateur athletes deserved. A man of incredible desire and energy, Pre trained relentlessly. In his drive to be the best, he spurred others to do their best. As one racer said, "He ran every race as if it were his last." But Pre not only touched runners; his exciting technique as well as his maverick lifestyle made him a favorite of the fans. A race with Prefontaine in it was automatically an event. His brief but brilliant life - documented by author Tom Jordan - is the tale of a true American hero. This is his story. "Some people create with words or with music or with a brush and paints. I like to make something beautiful when I run. I like to make people stop and say, 'I've never seen anyone run like that before.' It's more than just a race, it's style. It's doing something better than anyone else. It's being creative." --Steve Prefontaine

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Written in 1977, this biography was evidently resurrected because of a recent TV special and two planned motion pictures about the Oregon long-distance runner, whose life was cut short in 1975 when he crashed his sports car at age 24. The book gives details of Prefontaine's efforts on the track?where he set many national records, some even while in college?and demonstrates his dedication to running, but it tells readers little about his personal life, perhaps because, as Jordan points out in the introduction, "His pace was so frenetic... that his deep friendships outside of family and love relationships were few." The two major problems Pre encountered as an athlete were his inability to do as well in Europe as at home and his annoyance with the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and its demand that amateur athletes accept no formal support, although, the author notes, many meets gave under-the-table payments to top box-office draws. Jordan, who is on the staff of Track & Field News, captures his subject's charisma, but his book seems incomplete. There are six sidebars about Prefontaine by noted runners including Alberto Salazar, Mary Slaney and Frank Shorter. Photos. (Apr.) FYI: The film Prefontaine is playing at theaters now. Disney will release a film on the runner later this year. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

University of Oregon track star Prefontaine finished fourth in the [5000 meter] race at the 1972 Munich Olympics. Beyond that, he set numerous American records. But it was his personality, not his records, that set him apart. Where his opponents were dry and colorless, Pre was brash and cocky. His tragic death in a 1975 one-car accident established him as the James Dean of distance running, and the release of two 1997 motion pictures about him secures this status. Jordan's updated edition of a 1977 biography is acceptable as sports bios go, but there are too many stride-by-stride race accounts. Still, Jordan does create a vivid sense of Prefontaine's driven personality. Peppered throughout are revealing comments from rivals, teammates, and coaches, including legendary Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman. On balance, this is an intelligent glimpse of an athlete who is destined to be more well known today than he was in his lifetime. Expect demand.

Wes Lukowsky

I think this book does deserve a top ranking because it does give us good insight to Pre's life and is inspiring though still a basic overview. With that said, it does seem largely to be based on newspaper and magazine articles and interviews and as someone said, seems to scratch the surface about Prefontaine. However, in doing that, we still get the basic facts of his life, hometown, achievements, a bit on his training habits and his personality. Perhaps there is the need for a more grand examination of this runner but living tragically a short life, this is still a fair summary. Perhaps

more about his trip to the Olympics and disagreements with the AAU could have been written about but I'm sure, there was a lot more to come from him. Eventually, I've got to see the movies.

I had heard of Steve Prefontaine but do not really remember him. He will Frank Shorter helped to fuel the running boom. Pre was an intense competitor that drew huge crowds. This book tells the story of his races and of the work many did not know that he did with kids and in prisons. This is an easy read. I finished it in about half of day of airplane travel. Chris Wodke Author: Running for My Life-Winning for CMT

Big fan of Prefontaine, therefor enjoyed the book - discussing his short career as a runner.

Fantastic book about a legend of the sport!

Spectacular book. I have been vaguely aware of the Pre legacy for a number of years but being from a different era it was great to see how he captivated the sport in such a short period of time. Very, very good read for anyone unfamiliar with this great athlete.

Loved, loved, loved this book!!! Well written book about one of the most mentally tough athletes ever. Great Read!!!

This one goes into some detail about Pre as a person, another example of how people we hold up as icons are still people.

A great read, especially for runners. Pre was quite the competitor and driven to succeed. He didn't have very many close friends because no one could keep up with him!

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