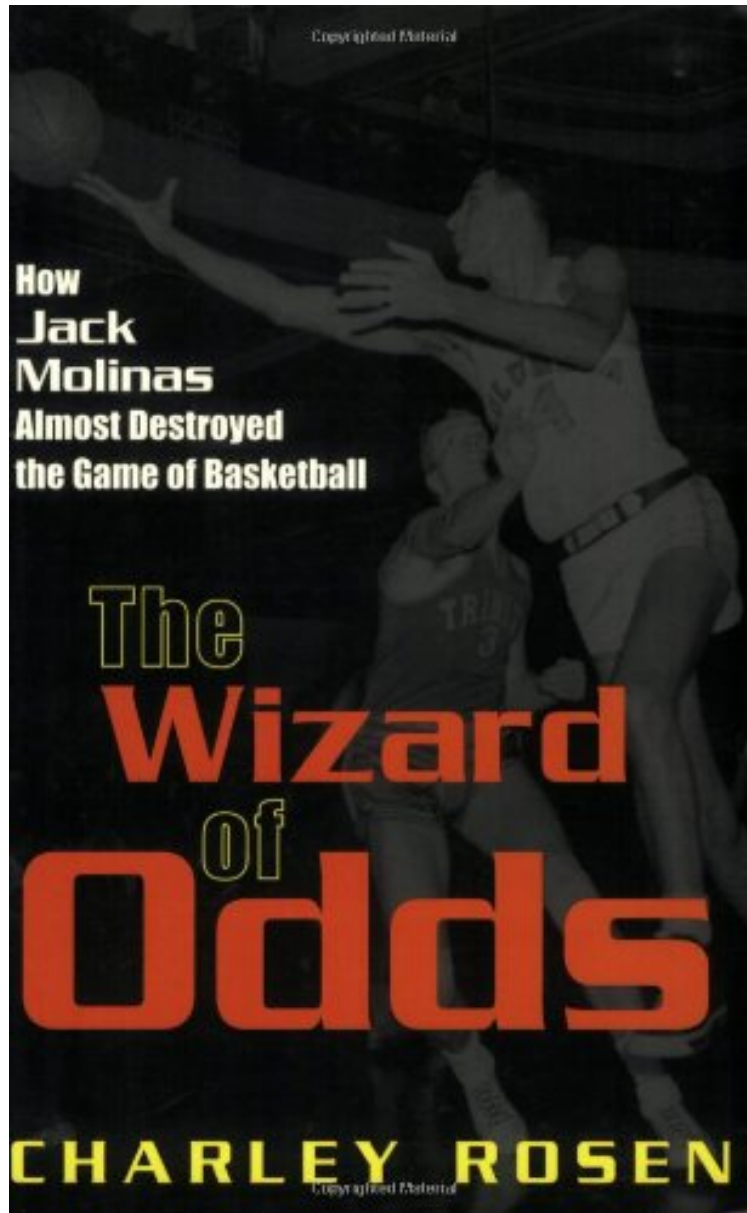


(Free read ebook) The Wizard of Odds: How Jack Molinas Almost Destroyed the Game of Basketball

The Wizard of Odds: How Jack Molinas Almost Destroyed the Game of Basketball

Charley Rosen

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Charley Rosen : The Wizard of Odds: How Jack Molinas Almost Destroyed the Game of Basketball before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Wizard of Odds: How Jack Molinas Almost Destroyed the Game of Basketball:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Interesting story, great main character
By Jim Lester
Talk about a non-fiction book that reads like a novel. THE WIZARD OF ODDS has all the elements of a first rate piece of fiction--comedy, tragedy, a story arch, the triumph of justice and most of all a fascinating main character. Jack Molinas had it all. He was tall, rock-star handsome and possessed a genius I.Q. And he had the basketball skills to make it to the NBA. Yet, as Charley Rosen's tale unfolds, Molinas had a tragic flaw that eventually cost him his job with the Fort Wayne Pistons, placed him at the highest level of scuzzy gamblers who corrupted college basketball in the early 1960s, earned him a prison stretch and eventually cost him his life. Rosen's story unfolds on several levels but at its heart, THE WIZARD OF ODDS is about how the American subculture of gambling corrupted one of our nation's favorite sports. The author's narrative style is highly readable with a minimum of moralistic preaching. Rosen lets Molinas' story speak for itself. I would highly recommend THE WIZARD OF ODDS to anyone interested in the history of college basketball or anyone who would just like to read about one of the most intriguing figures in sports or any other field.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Tragic Hero in many ways
By Michael K. Morris
Interesting background of post war - 1960 growing up as a "city kid" in New York. Lots and lots of characters vividly portrayed by Rosen. The author does tend to excuse Molinas' self-centered, corrupt behavior because he was a very bright guy who graduated from Stuyvesant, Columbia and Brooklyn Law school (in his spare time!).

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great story about basketball's most Runyonesque character
By Bruce Baskin
Sometimes you wonder if he was a real person or a figure straight out of a Damon Runyon story. Jack Molinas was as gifted as he was flawed, with a brilliant mind and outstanding physical abilities undermined by a brilliantly corrupt and outstandingly amoral soul. His effect on college basketball was ruinous and it took him one year to get drummed out of the NBA in the latter stages of a "Rookie of the Year" worthy season, sending him into a lifetime of scheming, prison stints, broken promises and ultimately an early violent death that you could see coming. There are reviewers here questioning the veracity of Rosen's story and while I'm in no position to confirm or challenge them, I have to recognize them. A twisted character like Molinas, to whom truth was but a vapor, would be harder to pin down than nailing jello to a wall so I would advise readers that the truth will never be known. Having said that, Charley tells a great tale and maintains a guarded respect for his subject, resulting in a great bio for perhaps the most shadowy figure in basketball history. I do wish Charley would've gone into more detail on which other NBA players accused of shaving points or worse were quietly pushed out of the league after Molinas' exit, but a libel suit could really dampen those royalties so I understand. I feel pretty sure of a couple of players and suspect two or three more, but (like Molinas himself) who really knows? I gave this four stars because I'm not convinced the content is 100% accurate, which you want in a bio, but I don't blame the author and the book is worth getting just for the sheer story interpolating talent, intrigue and betrayal: Perfect material for one of those Eighties nighttime soaps like "Dynasty" or "Falcon Crest," but with Runyon writing the screenplay.

In *The Wizard of Odds*, renowned and best-selling basketball writer Charley Rosen brings us for the first time the full life story of Jack Molinas, one of the greatest basketball players of his era, a man whose gambling addiction and hubris caused his ultimate demise. Drawing on numerous, previously unavailable first-person accounts, including Jack Molinas' own journal and trial transcripts, Rosen presents the true saga of a man who perhaps better than anyone around him understood the weaknesses of the system in which he lived so much so that he convinced himself that he could manipulate that system to his advantage with total impunity, in a life's journey that took him from NBA play to the Mafia and the pornographic film industry, and to an ultimate tragic destiny.

From *Library Journal*
Jack Molinas was a star college and professional basketball player in the 1950s who was expelled from the National Basketball Association in his rookie year for betting on games. He had been manipulating point spreads since his college days at Columbia, and after his expulsion from the NBA he attained his law degree and became a major wheel in the mob-influenced college basketball point fixing scandals of 1961. Eventually sentenced to 15 years in prison for his role as a fixer, he served five before being paroled, forging a new career in pornography, and finally being gunned down under mysterious circumstances. Prolific basketball writer Rosen quotes extensively from lengthy interviews Milton Gross conducted with Molinas in the 1960s for a never-published biography. Because of Molinas's duplicitous, self-serving nature, the reader is never sure how true certain allegations are. A fascinating view of the seamy side of sports gambling, this will be of particular interest to college sports and basketball historians. Recommended for all libraries. John Maxymuk, Rutgers Univ. Lib., Camden, NJ Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

About the Author
A native of the Bronx and longtime pal of basketball guru Phil Jackson, CHARLEY ROSEN led the league in technical fouls during each of his six years as a coach in the now-defunct Continental Basketball Association. Since then he has become the world's foremost writer of fiction and nonfiction on the subject of basketball, chronicling the drama that takes place both on and off the court. His many novels include *The House of Moses All-Stars*, a *New York Times* Notable Book, and *Sammy Wong: All-American*. His non-fiction works include *The Scandals of 51: How the Gamblers Almost Killed College Basketball and More than a Game*, with Phil Jackson. Rosen is an analyst for hoopshype.com and a devotee of the Triangle Offense. He lives in Accord, NY.

Hardcover edition.