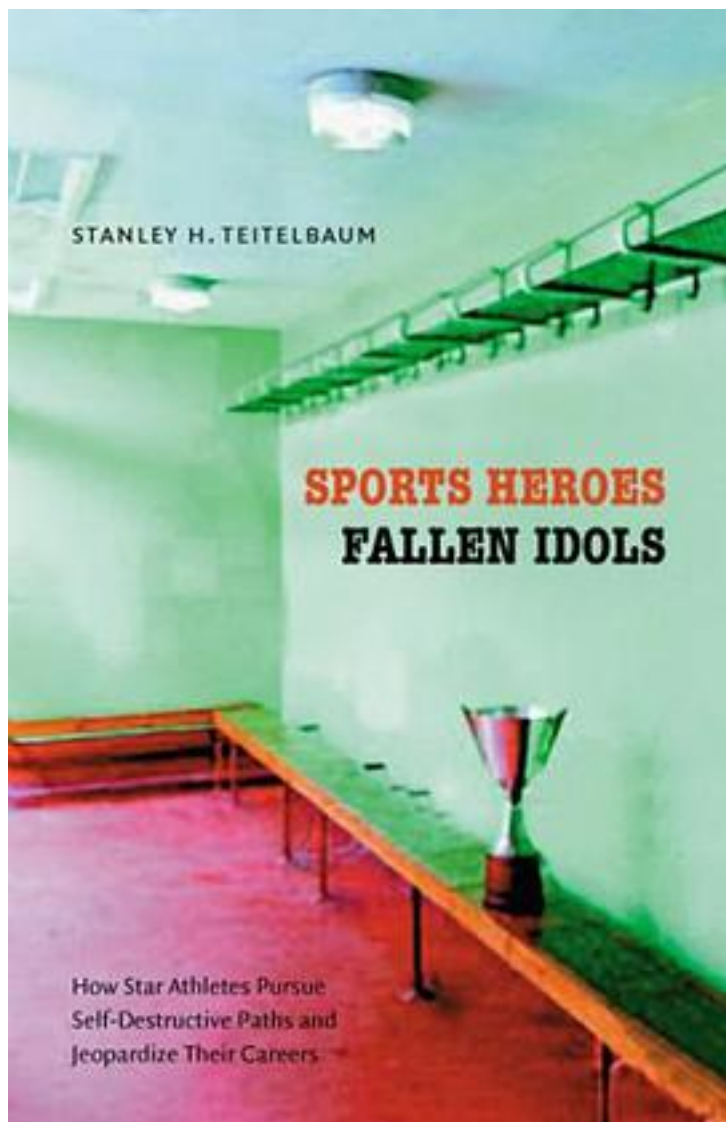


Sports Heroes, Fallen Idols



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On the court and on the field, they are the world's winners, exhibiting a natural grace and prowess their adoring fans can only dream about. Yet so often, when off the field, our sports heroes lose: their perspective, their balance, their place. In a work as timely as the latest fracas on the basketball court or the most recent drug-induced scandal in the dugout, Stanley H. Teitelbaum looks into the circumstances behind so many star athletes' precipitous fall from grace. Why, he asks, do these sports heroes who seem to have it all also seem, increasingly, to have a superhuman proclivity for self-destruction? In his psychotherapy practice, Teitelbaum has worked extensively with professional athletes and sports agents - work he draws on here for insight into the psyche of sports figures as well as the off-the-field challenges they face. Considering both historical and current cases, he shows how, in many instances, the very factors that elevate athletes to superstardom can contribute to their downfall: the adulation of fans and obsessive attention of the media and the distorted self-image and personal demons that often accompany a headlong drive to succeed. An evenhanded and honest look at athletes who have faltered, Teitelbaum's work helps us see past our sports stars' exalted image into what that image - and its frailty - says about our society and ourselves.

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