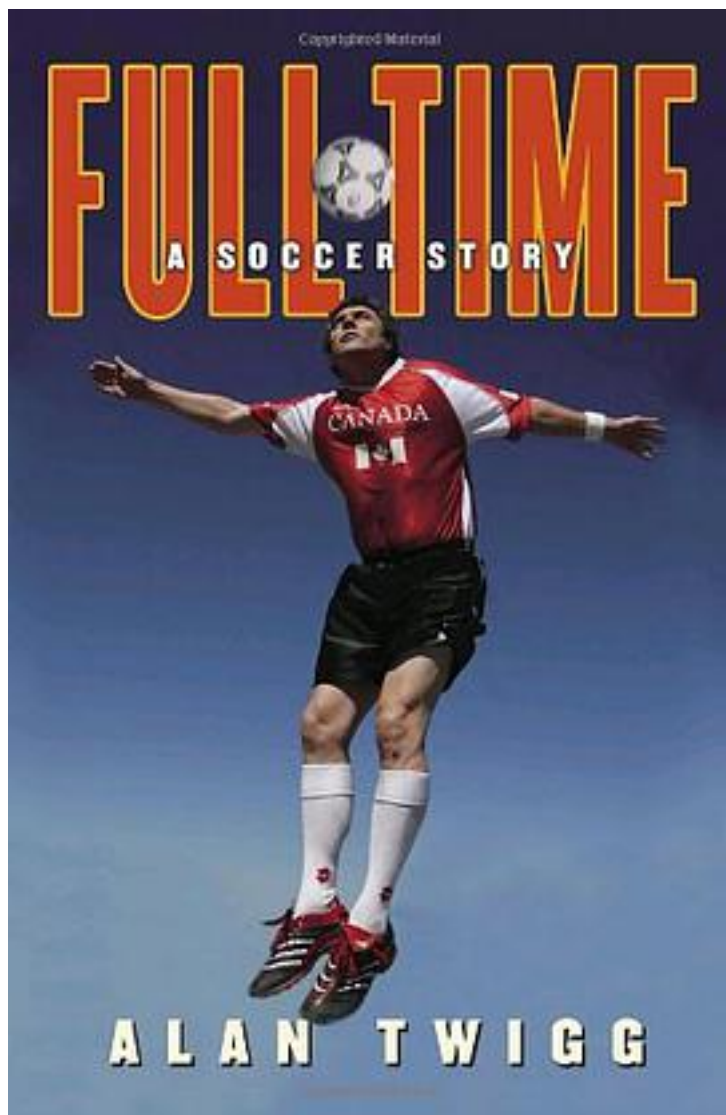


Full-Time



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For the 840,000 registered soccer players in Canada and the millions of soccer fans, here at last is a book about Canadians who play the world’s most popular sport — and about how a team of grey-haired underdogs in their fifties and sixties (and one player aged seventy) set off to challenge former European professionals in Spain.

In soccer, “full-time” refers to the end of play. In Alan Twigg’s memoir, “full-time” refers to playing to the end. He quotes Sir Stanley Matthews, the venerable English winger and philosopher, who said: “You don’t give up playing football because you get old. You get old because you give up playing football.”

Every week, throughout the year in B.C., several hundred men over the age of fifty get together to play competitive soccer. Fisticuffs are not uncommon. Many of their wives can be excused for thinking they are like small boys. In Alan’s case, ever since he had a brain tumour removed a few years ago, he tells his wife Tara that he doesn’t head the ball, and she pretends to believe him. Chemotherapy treatments for cancer only temporarily halted two of his teammates prior to testing their mettle in Granada, beneath the walls of the Alhambra, with CANADA on their chests.

This quixotic quest for glory will appeal to every sports fan as the team prepares for its own version of the World Cup (“the whole world may not be watching, but our wives will be”), playing against a much younger team called the Granada Veterans in a converted bullring. All for the love of the game — and the love of not growing old.

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