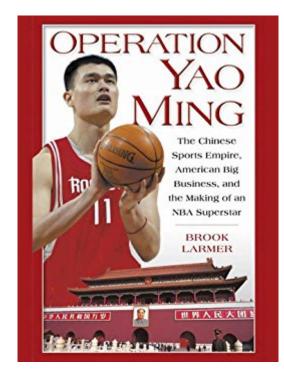
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Operation Yao Ming: The Chinese Sports Empire, American Big Business, And The Making Of An NBA Super Star





Synopsis

The riveting story behind NBA giant Yao Ming, the ruthless Chinese sports machine that created him, and the East-West struggle over Chinaâ ™s most famous son. The NBAâ ™s 7â ^6" All-Star Yao Ming has changed the face of basketball, revitalizing a league desperate for a new hero while becoming a multimillionaire pitchman for Reebok and McDonaldâ [™]s. But his journey to Americaâ "like that of his forgotten foil, 7â ^1" Wang Zhizhiâ "began long before he set foot on the worldâ [™]s brightest athletic stage.Operation Yao Ming opens with the story of the two boysâ [™] parents, basketball players brought together by Chinese officials intent on creating a generation of athletes who could bring glory to their resurgent motherland. Their children would have no more freedom to choose their fates. By age thirteen, Yao was pulled out of sports school to join the Shanghai Sharks pro team, following in the footsteps of Wang, then the star of the Peopleâ ™s Liberation Army team. Rumors of the pair of Chinese giants soon attracted the NBA and American sports companies, all eager to tap a market of 1.3 billion consumers. In suspenseful scenes, journalist Brook Larmer details the backroom maneuverings that brought Chinaâ [™]s first players to the NBA. Drawing on years of firsthand reporting, Larmer uncovers the disturbing truth behind Chinaâ [™]s drive to produce Olympic champions, while also taking readers behind the scenes of Americaâ [™]s multibillion-dollar sports empire. Caught in the middle are two young menâ "one will become a mega-rich superstar and hero to millions, the other a struggling athlete rejected by his homeland yet lost in America.

Book Information

File Size: 1151 KB Print Length: 352 pages Publisher: Avery (November 3, 2005) Publication Date: November 3, 2005 Sold by:Â Penguin Group (USA) LLC Language: English ASIN: B000OIZUT4 Text-to-Speech: Enabled X-Ray: Not Enabled Word Wise: Enabled Lending: Not Enabled Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled Best Sellers Rank: #1,122,844 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #14 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Sports > Basketball > Professional #86 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Basketball > Professional #228 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoor > Basketball

Customer Reviews

The story of Yao Ming--the NBA's tallest-ever player who stands 7'6"--is necessarily the tale of the "sports machine," of politics, and of international business deals. Caught up in the forces of history, Shanghai's own homeboy has emerged as a symbol of the love-hate, push-pull relationship between China and the West. In Operation Yao Ming, award-winning journalist Brook Larmer has penned an enlightening and somewhat controversial account of the factors that shaped Yao's life, paved his way to the NBA, and rendered him a bridge to and eventually a symbol of East-West relations. Tension is the key operative word in this story. There is tension between Yao's life as a basketball player and what it might be otherwise, between Yao's life as the star on a Chinese basketball team and as 2002's number one draft for the American NBA, between American basketball training methods and the Chinese sports training system, between communism and capitalism, between the concept of sports as a way to glorify a nation and sports for their own sake. As a pawn in the center of all of this, Yao served as the key to unlock the treasure chest in many high stakes games--sports and otherwise. While the book is intriguing for its presentation of research on the Chinese basketball system and how its star player winds up in the NBA, a few faults must be mentioned. Operation Yao Ming was derived from a series of articles written for Newsweek between 2000 and 2003. While that means that the book displays the merit of much research, it also unfortunately succumbs to the hazards of allowing all that information to be hastily thrown together.

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