

The Rookie Bookie

AUTHOR: L. Jon Wertheim and Tobias Moskowitz

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GENRE: Realistic Fiction

LEXILE: 680L

SUMMARY:

Eliminate the risk. Maximize the reward. Advertise. Give people a good deal. Seventh grader Mitch Sloan has quite the analytical mind - he can read statistics, understand sophisticated business concepts, and get kids to play into his betting ring. When he befriends classmate Jamie Spielberger (whom he DOES NOT have a crush on!), Mitch creates a get-rich scheme that may or may not work out the way the two have planned.

BOOKTALK:

How would you like to make A TON of money? Sounds good, right? Well...What if, to make all that money, you were taking advantage of your friends and classmates? Would you still do it? Seventh-grader Mitch Sloan and his friend Jamie face that dilemma in the book *The Rookie Bookie*. Mitch is super smart and knows how to manipulate things so he and Jamie take in some money no matter which way their fellow students bet on NFL football games. But something goes wrong, and it puts a strain on Mitch and Jamie's friendship. Can Mitch make things right again, or will Jamie stay angry at him indefinitely? Read *The Rookie Bookie* to find out!

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Other books written by these authors:

Wertheim:

Strokes of Genius: Federer, Nadal, and the Greatest Match Ever Played

Blood in the Cage: Mixed Martial Arts, Pat Miletich, and the Furious Rise of the UFC

Running the Table: The Legend of Kid Delicious, the Last Great American Pool Hustler

Transition Game: How Hoosiers Went Hip-Hop

Venus Envy: A Sensational Season Inside the Women's Tennis Tour

Foul Lines: A Pro Basketball Novel (co-written with Jack McCallum)

Scorecasting: The Hidden Influences Behind How Sports Are Played and Games Are Won (co-written with Tobias Moskowitz)

Moskowitz:

Scorecasting: The Hidden Influences Behind How Sports Are Played and Games Are

Won (co-written with Tobias Moskowitz)

Publications with links: <http://faculty.chicagobooth.edu/tobias.moskowitz/research/>

CHALLENGING WORDS

1. financier (p. 8): a person who controls the use and lending of large amounts of money.
2. scowling (p. 18): to look at someone or something in a way that shows anger or disapproval.
3. haltingly (p. 37): marked by a lack of sureness or effectiveness.
4. heaping (p. 54): a great number or large amount of something.
5. disoriented (p. 98): lost or confused.
6. accountability (p. 140): a willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.
7. co-conspirator (p. 152): a person who is involved with others in a secret plan to do something harmful or illegal.
8. machinations (p. 155): a scheming or crafty action or artful design intended to accomplish some usually evil end.
9. surreptitious (p. 228): done in a secret way.
10. skullduggery (p. 228): secret or dishonest behavior or activity.
11. bliss (p. 249): complete happiness.

**Definitions from the *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does Jamie advise Mitch to do with his first-round fantasy football draft pick? Why? (Chapter 1)
2. Mitch and his family have just moved from California to Indiana for “a fresh start.” Describe Mitch’s parents.
3. Compare and contrast Mitch and his brother Kevin.
4. Which adult figures out that Mitch and Jamie are running a football-betting ring? How does Mitch (and also the reader) know this person knows? (Chapters 7 and 9)
5. What options does Mrs. Allegra give to Mitch and Jamie when their betting ring is revealed? (Chapter 11)

6. What punishment do Mitch's parents dole out for the football-betting ring?

ACTIVITIES WITH STANDARDS:

Language Arts:

- Create a football chain story. Divide class into small groups. Give one person a paper with a photo of an interesting football scene on one side and a paper on the other. The first student will look at the photo and write a few lines of text to start a story about the photo. The rest of the students will not look at the photo but continue to add a few lines to the story.

4.W.3.3 Write narrative compositions in a variety of forms.

- The main words in the title *The Rookie Bookie* rhyme. One cover image of the book depicts the rookie bookie (12 yr. old boy in baseball cap, sports shirt and whistle around neck. He is twirling a football in one hand, and has a fistful of money in the other. Bills of various denominations are falling all around him. He looks smug.) Use any set of vocabulary words and have students: 1. Define a word. 2. Come up with a rhyming word to go with that vocabulary word. 3. Define the rhyming word. 4. Draw a creative and accurate picture of the rhyming combination.

4.RV.2.2 Identify relationships among words, including more complex homographs, homonyms, synonyms, antonyms, and multiple meanings.

4.RV.2.5 Consult reference materials, both print and digital (e.g., dictionary), to find the pronunciation and clarify the precise meanings of words and phrases.

- Some of the Indiana references in *The Rookie Bookie* are actual people, places and things. Others are made up. As a class, create a list of the Indiana references and have students research which are real and which are fictional.

4.W.5 Conduct short research on a topic.

- Rugby is a type of football that is very popular in England. Compare and contrast Rugby to our American football.

6.W.3.2 Write informative compositions in a variety of forms.

Mathematics:

- Mitch and Jamie use statistics to determine who will win the football games in their betting ring. Have each class member pick out two quarterbacks from teams competing in a football game this week. Compare the statistics of the two players, and create bar charts comparing touchdowns, interceptions, and games won so far.

Use this information to predict which team is likely to win the game. Have students analyze both the quarterback statistics again and the whole team's statistics after the game to determine why their predictions were correct or incorrect. (You can use <http://www.pro-football-reference.com/> for the statistics as well as many other Fantasy Football websites.)

4.DA.1: Formulate questions that can be addressed with data. Use observations, surveys, and experiments to collect, represent, and interpret the data using tables (including frequency tables), line plots, and bar graphs.

Social Studies:

- Many NFL teams get their names from where they play, some highlighting the history of the area. For example, the 49ers are named after the people who rushed to participate in the California Gold Rush and the Green Bay Packers are named for meat packers in the area. Give students a map of the United States and a list of all 32 NFL teams. Have the students try to figure out the home of each of the NFL teams. Invite students to guess if the team name is connected to the location or not.

5.3.2 Identify and describe cultural and physical regions of the United States

5.3.3 Use maps and globes to locate states, capitals, major cities, major rivers, the Great Lakes, and mountain ranges in the United States.

RELATED INTERNET SITES:

Publisher's webpage about the book. Includes Reading Group Guide.
<http://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/l-jon-wertheim/the-rookie-bookie/9780316249812/>

Interview with L. Jon Wertheim

<http://onlyagame.wbur.org/2014/11/01/jon-wertheim-the-rookie-bookie-book>

Time for Kids Author Interview

<http://www.timeforkids.com/news/winning-novel/181886>

Pro-football Reference <http://www.pro-football-reference.com/>

A website with football statistics.

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