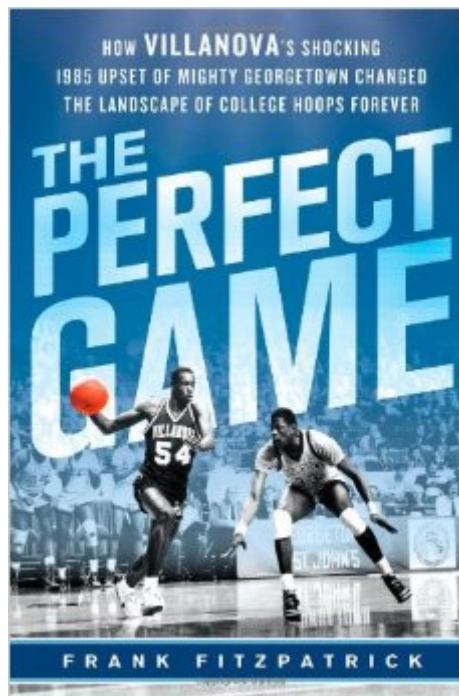


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The Perfect Game: How Villanova's Shocking 1985 Upset Of Mighty Georgetown Changed The Landscape Of College Hoops Forever



Synopsis

Critically acclaimed veteran sportswriter Frank Fitzpatrick takes readers courtside for one of the greatest upsets in college basketball history, the 1985 Villanova/Georgetown national championship showdown. A veteran Philadelphia Inquirer sportswriter and Pulitzer Prize finalist, Frank Fitzpatrick has long followed and covered Villanova basketball. In all that time, nothing compares with the Wildcats' legendary 1985 upset of Georgetown—a win so spectacular and unusually flawless that days after its conclusion, sports columnists were already calling it "The Perfect Game." The game, particularly its second half, was so different from what observers expected—so different, in fact, from what anyone had ever seen that a shroud of myth almost immediately began to envelop it. Over the years, the game took on mythological proportions with heroes and villains, but with a darker, more complex subtext. In the midst of the sunny Reagan Administration, the game had been played out amid darker themes—race, death, and, though no one knew it at the time, drugs. It was a night when the basketball world turned upside down. Villanova-Georgetown would be a perfect little microcosm of the 1980s. And it would be much more. Even now, a quarter-century later, the upset gives hope to sporting Davids everywhere. At the start of every NCAA Tournament, it is recalled as an exemplar of March's madness. Whenever sport's all-time upsets are ranked, it is high on those lists, along with hockey's Miracle on Ice. Now, through interviews with the players and coaches, through the work of sociologists and cultural critics, through the eyes of those who witnessed the game, Fitzpatrick brings to life the events of and surrounding that fateful night.

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Customer Reviews

Over the course of the 1980s, the NCAA basketball tournament progressed from being somewhat popular to being one of the premier events of the national sports calendar and a rite of spring. It certainly didn't hurt that seven of the eight championship games from 1982 to 1989 were classics that were not decided until the final minute. The 1985 title game in which the Villanova Wildcats dethroned the mighty Georgetown Hoyas was the most compelling of the decade and is the subject of Frank Fitzpatrick's "The Perfect Game." Heading into the 1984-85 season Georgetown was widely expected to repeat as national champion and the Big East, the conference in which Georgetown and Villanova played, was the strongest in the country in the latter half of the 1980s. Fitzpatrick provides brief histories of the two universities and biographical sketches of Villanova coach Rollie Massimino and Georgetown coach John Thompson, and also tells the story of how both squads were assembled. Georgetown was a polarizing team in the mid-Eighties--it was ardently supported by many blacks and despised by many whites, and Fitzpatrick recalls some of the ugly racial slurs that center Patrick Ewing had to endure during his career (the book has one glaring blight, though, in that the author then goes on to imply absurdly that the Reagan administration was hostile to blacks). Fitzpatrick leads the reader through the season for both teams and remembers how each made it to the Final Four in Lexington.

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