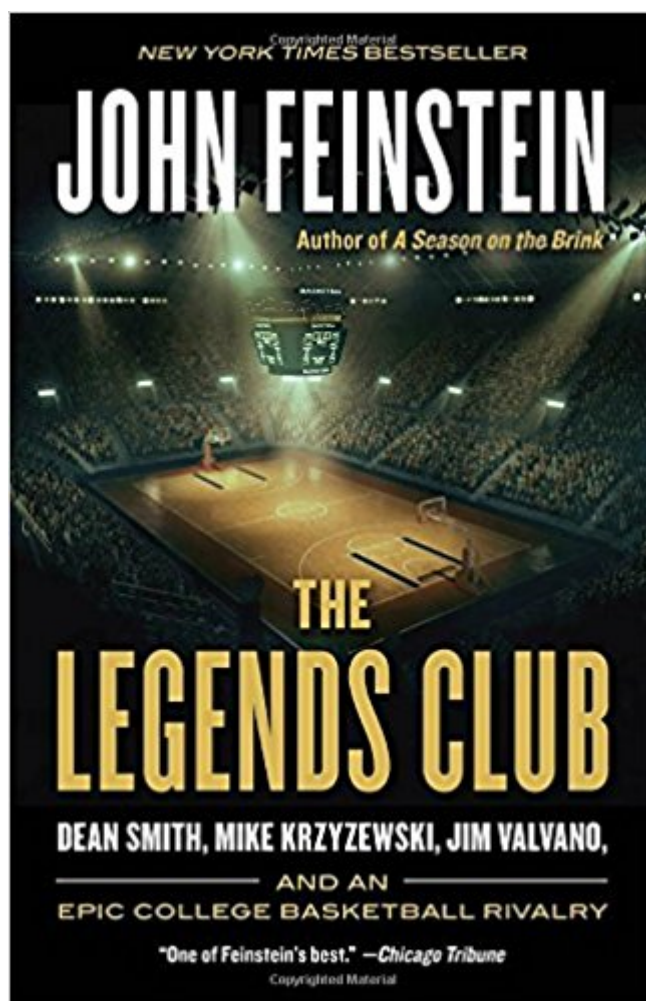


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# The Legends Club: Dean Smith, Mike Krzyzewski, Jim Valvano, And An Epic College Basketball Rivalry



## Synopsis

On March 18, 1980, the Duke basketball program announced the hiring of Mike Krzyzewski, the man who would restore glory to the team. The only problem: no one knew who Krzyzewski was. Nine days later, Jim Valvano was hired by North Carolina State to be their new head coach. The hiring didn't raise as many eyebrows, but the two new coaches had a similar goal: to unseat North Carolina's Dean Smith as the king of college basketball. And just like that, the most sensational competitive decade in history was about to unfold. In the skillful hands of John Feinstein, *The Legends Club* captures an era in American sport and culture, documenting the inside view of a decade of absolutely incredible competition. Feinstein pulls back the curtain on the recruiting wars, the intensely personal competition that wasn't always friendly, the enormous pressure and national stakes, and the battle for the very soul of college basketball.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The book is one of [John Feinstein's] best, a beguilingly personal, sometimes heartbreaking look at the psychic cost of doing battle in America's most brutally, nakedly competitive (and actual) arenas. It makes a fitting bookend to the author's first, *"A Season on the Brink"* (1986), his hair-raising exposé of Indiana coach Bobby Knight, expletives included." •The Wall Street Journal

"A compelling story of the complex relationships and backyard rivalries of the three coaches who dominated college basketball during the 1980s and early '90s...Feinstein's relationship with all three coaches gave

him the intimate details that form the backbone of the book. One story leads quickly to another story in this fast-moving account of a memorable era in college basketball. — Dating back to Feinstein's first interview with Smith, this book was nearly 40 years in the making. It was worth the wait, because it is one of Feinstein's best. — Chicago Tribune Feinstein entertains readers with fair, objective observations based on fact and his unique inside access gained not only through years of his coverage but also through many new interviews with former players, coaches and administrators... In a famous speech before he died, Valvano implored all of us to attempt to do three things each day: laugh, think and cry. He would be pleased with — "The Legends Club" — because it will evoke all three from readers, no matter where their college basketball allegiances lie. — The Washington Post — "The legends are right there in the subtitle: — Dean Smith, — Mike Krzyzewski, — Jim Valvano, — and an Epic College Basketball Rivalry. — The unbilled fourth legend is the author. His longstanding relationships with the principals give the book its insider appeal; his history with each man goes back decades, and the intersecting, layered looks at each are built on firsthand knowledge... Funny and smart. — USA Today "Duke, UNC and N.C. State fans might quibble about the details, as they always do, Feinstein faithfully captures a rivalry that will remain a legend in sports. — BookPage — "Fascinating. . . . The book is crammed with enough minutia and fresh anecdotes about the three competing coaches to satisfy any basketball junkie. — Lincoln Journal Star — "The author informs his narrative with myriads of interviews with all of his principals — and with those who have survived them — and enriches all with his deep knowledge and love of the game. He navigates through the murky waters of recruiting and explains how certain rules have affected the game — e.g., the 45-second shot clock, the fairly recent NBA ruling that forbids young men to enter the draft right out of high school. A text that will delight college basketball fans. — Kirkus — "Feinstein's long history with these coaches gives him intimate knowledge of his subjects, allowing him to provide an insider's perspective that likely will be new even to ACC aficionados. — Publishers Weekly

The Legends Club is John Feinstein's 36th book. He is the author of *A Season on the Brink* and *A Good Walk Spoiled*, both #1 New York Times bestsellers and *Last Shot*, which won the Edgar Allen Poe Award for mystery writing in the Young Adult category. He was inducted into the U.S. Basketball Writer's Hall of Fame in 2000; the National Sportswriters and Sportscasters Hall of Fame in 2011 and the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in 2013. He currently writes for The Washington

Post and Golf Digest and is a regular contributor to The Golf Channel, Comcast Sports Regional Networks and hosts a college basketball show and a golf show on SiriusXM Radio. He lives in Potomac, Maryland with his wife Christine and is the father of three children, Danny, Brigid, and Jane.

Published just in time for college basketball's "March Madness," John Feinstein's thirty-sixth book, many of which I've read and enjoyed, looks at the intense rivalry and relationships of three Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) basketball coaches. The book gives insight to the sometimes strained relationships between three coaches who won a total of eight national championships - North Carolina basketball coach Dean Smith (2 titles), Duke's Mike Krzyzewski (5 titles) and North Carolina State's Jim Valvano (1 title), and how those relationships evolved over time. Feinstein has been personally acquainted with all three, and also visited with friends, family and players for this entertaining book. One of his strengths is as a story teller, and there are many of them in this entertaining book. Feinstein began as a reporter for the Duke Student newspaper, the position he had when he first interviewed North Carolina's Dean Smith in 1976. At that time, North Carolina was dominant in the ACC. Valvano and Krzyzewski were hired at North Carolina State and Duke respectively in 1980. Smith would win his first title in 1982 when Michael Jordan hit what would be the game-winning shot with seventeen seconds remaining. Valvano would win his only title in 1983 when Lorenzo Charles dunked a shot that had come up short as time expired. Krzyzewski won the first of his five championships (second only to John Wooden) in 1991. Feinstein goes into much detail about Krzyzewski's rivalry with Smith, but then gives a touching account of how their relationship changed near the end of Smith's life (he died in 2015 after years of dementia). A special part of the book was the detailing of Krzyzewski's relationship with Valvano as he spent time at Duke University Medical Center before dying at age 47 in 1993. A chilling quote about Smith that Feinstein recounts from Valvano's early days at North Carolina State was "I can't outcoach him, but maybe I can outlive him." Sadly, that would not be the case. I enjoyed hearing stories about amazing ACC players such as Jordan, Ralph Sampson, Tim Duncan, Grant Hill, Christian Laettner, etc. This book will be enjoyed by ACC basketball fans, college basketball fans in general and also those who enjoy leadership books.

Anyone who is a fan of college basketball and especially the long rivalries in the ACC...this is a GREAT GREAT read. FEINSTEIN is a master of the sports book. I've read several and they are all 'spot on' at revealing the details, excitement, and behind the scenes details of the story...Highly recommended...The developing relationships between DEAN SMITH, COACH K, AND JIM VALVANO and their telling of the back story is wonderful stuff for any college hoops fan.

Arriving at UNC as an undergraduate in 1962 I had the experience of watching Dean Smith who arrived in '61 to coach The Tar Heels--Great Times watching Carolina Beat Duke !! Dean Won His First of Two NCAA Championships in 1982--Feinstein is a Very Good Author--I'm Enjoying Reading about Coach Smith and Coach K, Two Great Legends of College Basketball ! Oh Yeah, Carolina has 6 NCAA Championships, Duke has 5 !! Go Tar Heels, Joe

First of all I am not a basketball fan. I believe watching basketball means coming in in the last 5 minutes to see the drama and the conclusion. However, this book is really not about basketball as much as three great coaches who strongly influenced the game not only by their coaching skills but also by their character. This book provides insight into the world of coaching. The pressure and techniques involved recruiting and retaining top athletes, forming cohesive teams from athletes of diverse skills and personalities, and managing the pressure of the fans and alumni boosters. The book is about three different coaches with three different personalities and coaching styles. Or maybe they aren't really all that different. You can decide for yourself. The only book that rival this, in my mind, is "The Teammates" by David Halbersham.

I have always enjoyed sports author John Feinstein's writing. He's easy to read - funny, tells a good story, writes about subjects I really like, and has a great perspective. "The Legends Club" is no exception. He tells the story of the three ACC basketball coaches' national accomplishments in an enjoyable and interesting way. His sources are many, knowledgeable, and very credible. He weaves in entertaining side stories, and in general, paints a good picture of them and ACC championship basketball during the last 50 years. The minuses are that he is sometimes a bit repetitive. Also, this book should not be viewed as taking a critical look at big-time college basketball - it doesn't, and I don't think Feinstein would ever claim that it does. The money issues, 'amateur' athlete issues, and sometimes dubious scholastic issues are not addressed. (There are other good books that do delve into college sports problems, if one is interested.) If you're looking for an easy, enjoyable read about three remarkable coaches, however, this is the book for you. I liked it.

Brought back memories of the day Dean Smith brought the Tar Heels into Providence, RI to play the Friars during my undergraduate days and PC pulling out an upset win just after a 35 inch blizzard had paralyzed the city. Just a year ago I was in the press conference at which Coach K won his 1000th game and I asked the last question. Coach Valvano I watched at Iona but did not meet him, everyone who knew him had a story to tell. Lots to learn from our friend John Feinstein who has another winner to add to his extraordinary career. I read off my Kindle a couple of chapters at a time, will be an enjoyable read for basketball fans this summer.

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