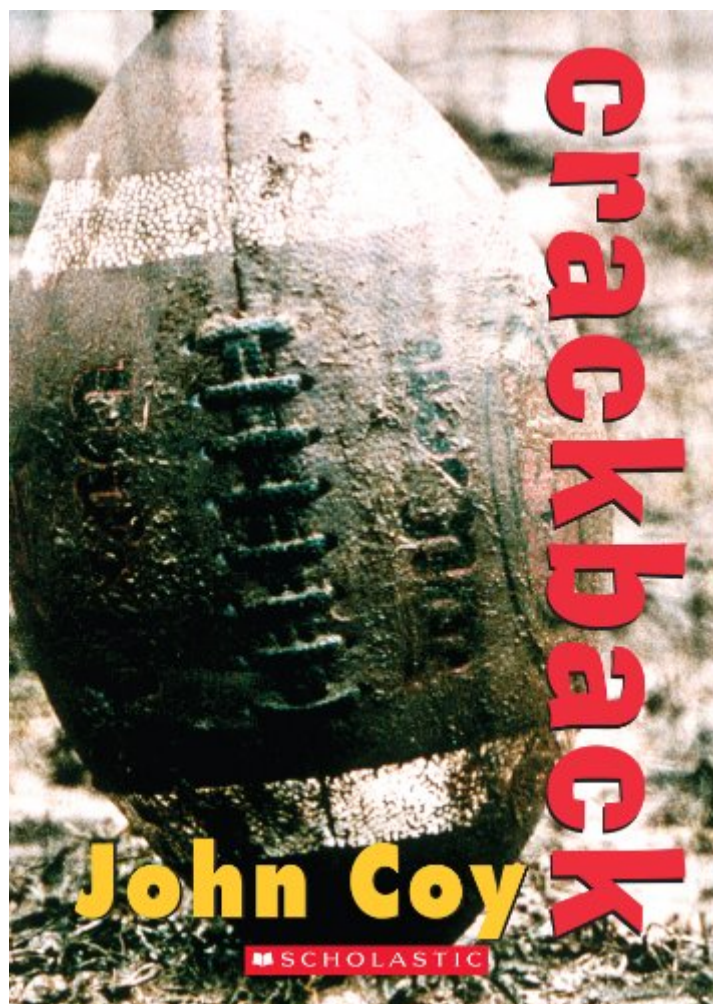


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Synopsis

In his gripping debut novel, acclaimed picture book author John Coy presents the high stakes world of high school football, where doing what it takes to win doesn't always mean doing the right thing. When Miles Manning, a successful high school football player, discovers his teammates are using steroids--and one of them is his best friend--he's faced with a tough decision: Is he willing to do what it takes to win? Football is his life, and his family, especially his dad, is pinning its hopes on him. It's a lot of pressure for a high school junior to bear. This gripping look into the world of high school boys and athletes--and their struggle to be the best--is provocative and searingly honest.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a debut YA effort, I can't fault John Coy's CRACKBACK for trying. In fact, it shows hints of bigger things to come, but ultimately I think this novel will please most its niche audience only -- middle school-aged boys who love football. I plan to offer it to my students who claim they don't read because reading's too boring because I think this will be of interest to them if they love playing football. Many other young readers will be disappointed or ambivalent about this book, however, as I

was. Most notable to me was the overabundance of short, simple sentences in rather large font. They actually slowed me down because I wasn't able to get into any reading rhythm due to the "staccato-like" diction. My advice to Coy would be to mix it up with some longer sentences and paragraphs now and then. I also thought the characterizations of both the protagonist's (Miles Manning's) father and one of his coaches (Coach Stahl) were too similar and too much like cardboard cutouts of creeps. There was an attempt at the end to salvage the father, but it just didn't go over so well. The good coach (Coach Sepolski), good teacher (Mr. Halloran), good little sister (Martha) and good mother (Mom) all had small roles here, so they didn't help to distract me from the Tweedledee and Tweedledum aspects of Dad and Stahl. The same is true for the other football players on the team -- minor roles, overall. A field goal for Coy on his knowledge of football, however. It does come across as realistic because he knows his sport. One plot development -- the issue of steroid use -- kind of fizzled after showing promise early on. Ditto the plot points surrounding evil Coach Stahl. The end on that count is as unrewarding as a tie game after overtime.

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