

**INDEPENDENT READING LIST
ARDSLEY HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
2009 - 2010**

Your independent reading selections must be made from the list below, unless you receive approval directly from your teacher. Feel free to select other titles by the authors listed.

For the list below, the accompanying numbers indicate the relative complexity of language and maturity of content.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3
Most accessible Most Challenging

Sports – Fiction and Non-Fiction

Alphin, Elaine Marie. The Perfect Shot (1): This engrossing thriller weaves issues of civil rights, racial prejudice, the judicial system, and the lessons of history into a suspenseful tale of a high-school basketball player who wants to do the right thing.

Armstrong, Lance. It's not About the Bike (1): Multiple Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong's memoir about surviving cancer, finding love, and becoming a father.

Asinof, Eliot. Eight Men Out: The Black Socks and the 1919 World Series (2): To the horror of their teammates and all of America, eight members of the champion Chicago White Sox gave in to greed and threw the 1919 World Series. Eliot Asinof vividly describes the tense meetings, the hitches in the plot, the actual plays in which the series was thrown, and the grand jury indictment and the famous 1921 trial.

Bailes, Julian and John McCloskey. When Winning Costs too Much: Steroids, Supplements, and Scandal in Today's Sports (2): In this day and age when the sports pages of the local newspaper read like either a police report or a pharmacology text, it is impossible not to conclude that the mantra of winning has entered very dangerous ground.

Beckham, David. Both Feet on the Ground (1): There is only one David Beckham -- and it's not always the one you read about in the newspapers and magazines or see in the movies. From humble East End London beginnings, the boy with prodigious soccer skills grew up to be one of the most gifted athletes of his generation.

Bissiner, HG. Friday Night Lights (2): Riveting true story of the lure of high school football in an economically depressed Texan town.

Blais, Madeleine. In These Girls, Hope is a Muscle (2): They were a talented team with a near-perfect record but a reputation for choking in the crunch of the state playoffs. Finally, after five straight years of disappointments, the Amherst Lady Hurricanes found they just might have what it took to go all the way.

Bouton, Jim. Ball Four (2): In the early '70s, he tossed off one of the funniest, most revealing, insider's takes on baseball life in *Ball Four*, his diary of the season he tried to pitch his way back from oblivion on the strength of a knuckler.

Schaap, Jeremy. Cinderella Man: Braddock James and Max Bear and the greatest upset in boxer history (2): Contains a look at the life and career of Depression era heavyweight boxer James Braddock, describing his

experiences as a fighter and a longshoreman, and includes a chronicle of his auspicious bout with champion boxer Max Baer.

Cantor, George. The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly Detroit Tigers (2): The Tigers have won four world championships, have had two managers die in one season, have played ball while their city rioted around them, and have played host to some of the best and worst players in Major League Baseball.

Collins, Jim. The Last Best League (2): Every summer, in ten small towns across Cape Cod, the finest college baseball players in the country gather in hopes of making it to "The Show." This book is about dreams fulfilled and dreams denied, about Cape Cod and the rites of summer, and about the way one small town grows to love a group of young men coming of age in America.

Conseco, Jose. Juiced (2): Canseco reveals one of Major League Baseball's darkest secrets: steroids. Entertaining, raucous, and unforgettable, Canseco takes you beneath the veneer of Major League Baseball, demonstrating how big muscles and performance-enhancing drugs have changed the rules of the game forever.

Crutcher, Chris. Running Loose (1): Louie, a high school senior in a small Idaho town, learns about sportsmanship, love, and death as he matures into manhood.

Stotan! (1): A high school coach invites members of his swimming team to a memorable week of rigorous training that tests their moral fiber as well as their physical stamina.

Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes (1): The daily class discussions about the nature of man, the existence of God, abortion, organized religion, suicide and other contemporary issues serve as a backdrop for a high-school swimmer's attempt to answer a friend's dramatic cry for help.

D'Orso, Michael. Eagle Blue: A Team, a Tribe, and a High School Basketball Season in Arctic Alaska (2): Eagle Blue follows the Fort Yukon Eagles, winners of six regional championships in a row, through the course of an entire 28-game season, from their first day of practice in late November to the Alaska State Championship Tournament in March.

Eig, Jonathan. Luckiest Man: The Life and Death of Lou Gehrig (2): Lou Gehrig was the Iron Horse, baseball's strongest and most determined superstar — struck down in his prime by a disease that now bears his name. This definitive biography gives us a deeper, more intimate understanding of the life of an American hero.

Fanaru-Wada and Lance Williams. Game of Shadows: Barry Bonds, BALCO, and the Steroids Scandal that Rocked Professional Sports (2): This is the window into the underground world of cheating at the highest levels, which set off a frenzy of activity and hand-wringing in the offices of Major League Baseball and Congress.

Feinstein, John. A March to Madness (1): Sportswriter John Feinstein takes readers inside college basketball's Atlantic Coast to illuminate the almost inconceivable pressures on coaches and players in the conference.

Frey, Darcy. The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams (1): The story of dreams and cynicism, the often naive hopes of youth played out against the realities of SATs, the NCAA, and the brutal world of college athletic sports recruitment.

Grisham, John. Bleachers (2): When his old coach dies, high school football star Neely Crenshaw returns to his hometown after fifteen years, reunites with his former teammates, and struggles to resolve his mixed feelings about the man.

- Halberstam, David. Summer of '49 (2):** This book is ostensibly about the pennant race between the Yankees and Red Sox that year and the "rivalry" between Joe DiMaggio and Ted Williams.
- Jeter, Derek. The Life You Imagine (1):** All-Star New York Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter shows how you can use the same game plan that helped an eight-year-old boy who fantasized about playing baseball for the Bronx Bombers grow up and become MVP of the 2000 World Series.
- Joravsky, Ben. Hoop Dreams (1):** The remarkable story of Arthur Agee's and William Gates' journeys from the playgrounds to high school competition to college recruitment.
- Kahn, Robert. The Boys of Summer (2):** This is a book about young men who learned to play baseball during the 1930s and 1940s, and then went on to play for one of the most exciting major-league ball clubs ever fielded, the team that broke the color barrier with Jackie Robinson.
- Kilmeado, Brian. The Games do Count (1):** A collection of vignettes based on years of interviews with celebrities, politicians, and top businesspeople, popular which reveals that nearly everyone shares a love of sports and has a story about how a game, a coach, or a single moment of competition changed his or her life.
- Kinsella, W. P. Shoeless Joe (1):** He went to Canada in the 1960's to avoid the draft. Now, back in the USA, he has a vision: build a ballpark in an Iowa cornfield "if you build it they will come." Two who do are the tragic ballplayer, Joe Jackson and the lead's father. This affecting novel was the basis of the *Field of Dreams*, Kevin Costner's landmark 1980's film.
- Levine, Anna. Running on Eggs (1):** When Karen and Yasmine become friends as well as members of a mixed Arab and Jewish track team in Israel, relatives and friends of both girls disapprove of the relationship.
- Lewis, Michael. The Blind Side: Evolution of a Game (3):** Details the life of University of Mississippi football player Michael Oher, who was raised by a crack addicted mother and adopted at the age of sixteen by a wealthy family, and explores the rising importance and salary of the offensive left tackle in the game of football.
- Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game (3):** Lewis examines how in 2002 the Oakland Athletics achieved a spectacular winning record while having the smallest player payroll of any major league baseball team.
- Lupica, Mike. Bump and Run (1):** Over the course of a single season, Molloy will get a crash course in steroids, gambling, crooked quarterbacks, idiot sportswriters, control-freak coaches, and philandering announcers.
- Myers, Walter Dean. Slam (1):** Sixteen-year-old "Slam" Harris is counting on his noteworthy basketball talents to get him out of the inner city and give him a chance to succeed in life, but his coach sees things differently.
- O'Connor, Ian. Jump (2):** Tells the story of Sebastian's journey—a rags-to-riches story of a kid from the Coney Island projects who succeeds in leaving behind the chaos, violence and economic hardship at home for a multi-million dollar life of professional ball and product endorsement.
- Orr, Wendy. Peeling the Onion (2):** Following an automobile accident in which her neck is broken, a teenage karate champion begins a long and painful recovery with the help of her family.
- Malamud, Bernard and Kevin Baker. The Natural (2):** Biting, witty, provocative, and sardonic, Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* is widely considered to be the premier baseball novel of all time. It tells the story of Roy Hobbs—

an athlete born with rare and wondrous gifts—who is robbed of his prime playing years by a youthful indiscretion that nearly costs him his life.

Paulson, Gary. Winterdance: The Fine Madness of Running the Iditarod (2): In the tradition of Jack London, Gary Paulsen presents an unforgettable account of his participation in the 1,100-mile-long dogsled race called the "Iditarod."

Shaara, Michael. For Love of the Game (1): Baseball legend Billy Chapel, having learned that the owners are planning to trade him after seventeen seasons, determines the game he is about to pitch will be his last, and takes that opportunity to go out with a bang.

Stowers, Carlton. Where Dreams Die Hard (1): An inspiring story by a two-time Edgar Award-winning writer of how a six-man football team united a school and a town.

Sullivan, Russell. Rocky Marciano (2): In this portrait of an American sports legend, Russell Sullivan confirms Rocky Marciano's place as a symbol and cultural icon of his era. As much as he embodied the wholesome, rags-to-riches patriotism of a true American hero, Marciano also reflected the racial and ethnic tensions festering beneath the country's benevolent facade.

Wojnarowski, Adrian. The Miracle of St. Anthony (2): In a city mired in endless decay, where the youth suffer through all the horrors of urban blight, hope comes in a most unassuming form: a tiny brick schoolhouse run by two Felician nuns where a singular basketball genius takes teenagers from the mean streets of Jersey City and turns them into champions on the hard court.