

Judson Literacy in Motion
Conference 2010
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(A separate handout listing only the books we present will be passed out at the presentation. The following is an annotated list of all books found.)

Sports Booklist

Alice the Tennis Fairy, by Daisy Meadows, Scholastic, 2008

Genre: Fantasy

Annotation: It's a beautiful sunny day in Tippington, but something seems to be amiss at the local tennis club. Can Rachel and Kirsty find Alice the Tennis Fairy, work out what is going on, and find her Magic Tennis Racquet? This book is one of 7 sports-themed books in the popular Rainbow Magic Fairies series. Interest level 2-3.

Babe & I, by David A. Adler, Harcourt Brace, 1999

Genre: Biography--Historical fiction

Annotation: Told in first person by a boy whose father has lost his job during the Great Depression. While helping his family make ends he sells newspapers and happens to meet Babe Ruth. Reading level: 2.8

Babe Ruth Saves Baseball, by Frank Murphy, Step into Reading series, Random House, 2005

Genre: Historical fiction--Biography

Annotation: The setting of this book is 1919, when there is a lack of interest in the sport due to the Shoeless Joe scandal. Babe gets the fans rallying again when he makes a bet that he can get 50 homeruns in a year. This easy-to-read book is a good one to lure a struggler into reading. Reading level: 2.0 ?

Barnstormers, by Loren Long and Phil Bildner, Simon & Schuster, 2007

Genre: Fantasy

Annotation: It's 1899, and the Travelin' Nine go to Cincinnati to play ball, hoping to raise some money. Young siblings Griffith, Ruby, and Graham treasure a tattered baseball with a mysterious hole in it. There are lots of mysteries: why Uncle Owen is in a wheelchair; why their mother is called "Guy" and pins up her hair when she plays catcher, their dad's old position; why trains and fog appear on the field, visible to the barnstormers but invisible to the other team. Old-timey baseball lore and phrases fill the margins, the prose is atmospheric, and Long's soft-edged, period illustrations fit the misty mood. Any true resolution or clarity, however, must await Game 2. Interest level 2-5

Baseball Ballerina, by Kathryn Cristaldi, Random House, 1992

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: Many girls will feel an affinity for this young narrator. Her mother insists that she take ballet lessons, and the child worries that her baseball teammates will find out. But at the recital, she saves the show when she rescues her friend's crown with a

well-executed dancing catch. Also by this author: *Baseball Ballerina Strikes Out*. Interest level 1-4.

Big Kicks, by Bob Kolar, Candlewick Press, 2008

Genre: Fiction—Picture Book

Annotation: Biggie Bear, a loner, is asked to join the town soccer team by his smaller animal friends in hopes that he will spur them on to victory playing the Mighty Giants. Biggie has never played any sport before and makes a clumsy attempt on the field. His clumsiness helps them win the game as well as a bigger victory in learning about friendship. Interest level: Pre K-3.

Buster Catches a Wave, by Marc Brown, Little, Brown, & Co., 2005

Genre: Fiction – Fantasy

Annotation: Kids love Buster the bunny, Arthur’s sidekick from Marc Brown’s books and the popular PBS show. In this story from the “Postcards from Buster” series, Buster and his dad travel to Cocoa Beach, Florida and learn about surfing and ocean life. Buster writes postcards to his friends back home telling them about his adventures. Interest level: K-2

Curious George at the Baseball Game, by Laura Driscoll, Houghton Mifflin, 2006

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: George’s curiosity gets him into trouble once again – this time at the baseball field! The man with the yellow hat is friends with the manager of the Mudville Miners, but he and George get kicked out of the dugout when George starts imitating the coach’s signals and gets everyone mixed up. George finds more adventure in the grandstands. He also finds a lost little boy and saves the day. Interest level K-3.

Dog That Pitched a No-Hitter, by Matt Christopher, Little Brown, 1988

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: Mike gets help from his dog, Harry, when he has to pitch against the toughest team in the league. Harry tells Mike what pitches to throw using ESP. The story is told with a lot of humor. In the end, Mike learns that he doesn’t really need to rely on Harry to win games. Reading level: 2.5 (F&P/L)

Dino-Soccer, by Lisa Wheeler, Carolrhoda Books, 2009

Genre: Fiction—Picture Book

Annotation: The plant-eating Grazers take on the meat-eating Biters in a soccer game. This book will appeal to dinosaur and sport fanatics alike. It is written with a play-by-play commentary with lots of soccer terms and a bit of humor. This book is a sequel to *Dino-Hockey*. *Dino-Baseball* will be coming out soon! Interest level: K-3.

Dirt Bike Racer, by Matt Christopher, Little Brown, 1979

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: Ron goes scuba diving with Tony and finds a dirt bike at the bottom of the lake. Ron has always wanted a dirt bike and decides to fix it up. However, he doesn’t

have enough money. The story tells how Ron preserves to earn the money when Mr. Perkins, a blind man gives him a job selling bike parts. The blind man also teaches Ron about racing and some more important lessons in life. Reading Level 2.8 (F&P/M).

Donavan McNabb, by Michael Sandler, Football Heroes: Making a Difference, Bearport, 2009

Genre: Biography

Annotation: This book begins with the Eagles selection of McNabb as their 1999 number one draft choice, when he is booed by the Eagle fans. It goes tells how Donovan changes their minds! The book then retraces his childhood, with photos of Donovan as a Little Leaguer. It also brings to light Donovan's involvement in charity work, especially for diabetes research. Reading level: 2.6

Eli Manning, by Pete DiPrimio, Rookie Reader, Mitchell Lane, 2009

Genre: Biography

Annotation: The book opens in the final minutes of Super Bowl XLII and then recounts Eli's earlier years as a part of the Manning family. The book is a narrative, written in chapters. Many action photos are included as well as a stat table, chronology, glossary, and links to more information. Reading level: 3.5

Eli Manning, by Sarah Tieck, Big Buddy Books—Buddy Bios, ABDO, 2009

Genre: Biography

Annotation: Action-packed photos, interesting and east-to-read text, fact boxes sprinkled throughout, and links to learn more about Manning make for a well-organized and engaging text. Reading level: 3.0

Farm Team, by Linda Bailey, Kids Can Press, 2006

Genre: Fiction—Picture Book

Annotation: A hockey team made up of pigs, ducks, and cows takes on the Bush League Bandits, wild creatures including a porcupine that needles front line farm players. The creatures have "claws on their fangs and fangs on their claws." Young children will find this book both amusing and engaging and will delight in the surprise ending. Interest level: K-2

Float Like a Butterfly, by Ntozake Shange, Hyperion, 2002

Genre: Biography

Annotation: Shange sings Muhammad Ali's praises in this visually appealing picture-book tribute. The first half of the book highlights significant events in Ali's childhood. The theft of his bike inspired him to begin boxing; growing up amid racism in the pre-civil rights South fueled him to excel to become the greatest. Bordered quotes in bold print jump off the pages. The cartoon artwork, full page and double spread, is a definite draw for comic-book fans. The action-packed illustrations are as dramatic as the text and accentuate the superhero theme, never letting readers forget that Ali is "a hero for all time." Interest level K-3.

Goalie's Mask, by Mike Leonetti, Raincoast Books, 2004

Genre: Historical fiction—Picture Book

Annotation: The main character, Marc, comes from a family of goalies. Marc talks to his grandfather when he has a problem with his coach. His grandfather shares playing tips and also tells Marc the story of Jacques Planté, a famous goaltender, who was hit in the face with a puck and refused to return unless allowed to wear the special mask he had designed. Planté was instrumental in making hockey a safer game. Reading level: 3.2

Good Sports, Jack Prelutsky, Alfred A. Knopf, 2007

Genre: Poetry

Annotation: Prelutsky's gleeful verses team up with Raschka's economic, energetic, and humorous illustrations to create a winning book. Seventeen brief, untitled poems, mostly presented across eye-catching spreads, describe the experiences and emotions of young athletes as they participate in a variety of physical pursuits, including soccer, football, ice skating, and gymnastics. The narrators display varying levels of expertise, and although they may not excel at their endeavors, they are all at heart "good sports," dedicated to trying their best. Interest level K-5.

Hank Aaron Brave in Every Way, by Peter Golenbock, Harcourt Brace, 2001

Genre: Biography—historical fiction

Annotation: Hank Aaron had a dream of becoming a major league baseball player even though there were no black players in the majors when he was growing up. This biography tells of Aaron's strength and perseverance through poverty and discrimination as he pursued his dream. Reading level: 3.9

History of the Chicago Cubs, by Aaron Frisch, Creative Education, 2003

Genre: Non-fiction

Annotation: This beautifully illustrated book will fascinate young Cubs fans as it highlights the history of Wrigley Field, memorable games, and key players. Although the reading level is 5.9, lines are double spaced with much information accessible to 2nd and 3rd graders. Reading level: 5.9

I Smell Like Ham, by Betty Hicks, Roaring Brook Press, 2002

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: Nick uses his new stepmother's clove shampoo and is humiliated when he smells like ham. He tries to keep a sense of humor while also dealing with a dorky new stepbrother, and peer pressure from his friends as he works to succeed on the basketball Team. Reading level: 4.4

Just Like Mike, by Gail Herman, Delacorte Press, 2000

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: When Michael Brown's mother remarries, Michael's new name becomes Michael Jordan. With adjustments to make as he enrolls in a new school, he has the added burden of living up to the expectation that he is a good basketball player. The truth is that he is terrible at sports. This book has won several awards. Reading level: 2.0

Legend of the Curse of the Bambino, by Dan Shaughnessy, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005

Genre: Historical fiction—Picture Book

Annotation: Presents a picture book retelling of the legendary curse of the Bambino in which a dad explains to his daughter why some people believed the Red Sox were cursed never to win another World Series after trading Babe Ruth to the New York Yankees in 1920. Reading level: 3.4

Mama Played Baseball, by David A. Adler, Harcourt, 2003

Genre: Historical fiction—Picture Book

Annotation: In 1943 when professional baseball players were serving in the military, the All-American Girl's Professional Baseball League was formed. This book tells the story of a mother who joins the team and her daughter who helps her practice.

Reading level: 2.3

Mighty Casey, James Preller, Feiwel and Friends, 2009.

Genre: Poetry

Annotation: Casey Jenkins plays for the Delmar Dogs. They are the worst team in the league, and Casey is their worst player. Nonetheless, these kids try hard, and are supported by their parents. One game starts off so badly that the Dogs are down 5-0 in the first inning. Things are looking bad. Then the action picks up and actual plays start to happen. When the score is tied, and bases are loaded, Casey comes up to bat. Does this sound familiar? The ink and watercolor drawings vary in size and are full of energy and movement as the players engage in different activities. The faces are expressive and fun to look at. This is a great baseball book for all those T-ball and Little League players out there. Interest level K-3.

Mighty Jackie: The Strike Out Queen, by Marissa Moss, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004

Genre: Historical fiction—Picture Book

Annotation: In 1931 Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig played in an exhibition game hitting against Jackie Mitchell, a 17-year-old girl and pitcher for the Chattanooga Lookouts. In this factual narrative the reader will feel the tension and excitement as Jackie strikes out both of these baseball giants. The book also traces Jackie's childhood. This book is the winner of many awards. Reading level: 3.5

Play Ball, Amelia Bedelia, by Peggy Parish, Harper Collins, 1972

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: With one player sick, the Grizzlies baseball team needs a replacement fast. Literal-minded Amelia Bedelia steps up to save the day, but has trouble understanding how to run home, tag a runner, and take a player out. Her mix ups make for an interesting game! This "I Can Read" book level 2 is a good way to introduce girls to books on sports. Interest level 1-3.

Players in Pigtails, by Shana Corey, Scholastic Press, 2003

Genre: Historical Fiction – Picture Book

Annotation: Katie Casey is in a league of her own: "She preferred sliding to sewing, batting to baking, and home runs to homecoming." Unfortunately, baseball is not considered ladylike in 1942. But when the male professional baseball players are called away to war, Katie has her chance to step up to the plate. *Players in Pigtails*, inspired by the movie *A League of Their Own*, is a delightful tribute to the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. Young readers will enjoy this exuberant, well-paced picture book about good old-fashioned girl power, complete with an informative and engaging author's note about the girls' league. Interest level K-4.

Racing Against the Odds, by Carole Boston Weatherford, Marshall Cavendish, 2009

Genre: Biography

Annotation: Wendell O. Scott made history as the only black driver to win a race in a NASCAR Grand National (now Sprint Cup) division. Born in Danville, Virginia, he scrimped and saved to buy his first car, a Model T, at age fourteen. He never had the resources or sponsorship to buy a brand-new racecar. Using secondhand Fords that he fixed up in his garage, he competed in five hundred races in NASCAR's top division. The rhythmic text tells the story of a man who "didn't just dust the competition, he blazed a trail." Interest level 2-6.

Score: 50 Poems to Motivate and Inspire, by Charles Ghigna, Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2008

Genre: Poetry

Annotation: This book speaks to all ages with motivational messages of keeping a positive attitude and aiming for success. Illustrations are tied into the messages and will appeal to young readers.

Scuba Diving, by Valerie Bodden, Active Sports Series, Creative Education, 2009

Genre: Non-fiction

Annotation: Simple text and beautiful photography introduce the sport of Scuba diving to young readers in an engaging format. Highlighted vocabulary is defined in a glossary. Reading level: 1.6

Shoeless Joe & Black Betsy, by Phil Bildner, Simon & Schuster, 2002

Genre: Non-fiction

Annotation: Shoeless Joe Jackson became a baseball legend by batting the highest average by a rookie in his first full season in the major leagues and for having once played a game in his stocking feet when his new shoes were giving him blisters. But in this folksy picture book, readers are introduced to the *real* reason Shoeless Joe became such a great hitter. An afterword provides additional information on this appealing character from sports history. Interest level K-3

Spy on Third Base, by Matt Christopher, Little Brown, 1988

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: T.V. Adams, 3rd baseman for the Mudders, has an uncanny ability to predict where batters will hit the ball. He is accused of having psychic powers but this is not the case. T.V. gets an anonymous phone call before each game warning him not to predict any hits and is also taunted by fans in the stands. Through it all, he shows great sportsmanship. Reading level: 2.5 (F & P/L)

T is for Touchdown, a Football Alphabet, Brad Herzog, Sleeping Bear Press, 2004

Genre: Poetry/Alphabet

Annotation: This is much more than an alphabet book for beginning readers. It is a picture book with large, richly colored, realistic oil paintings, and many facts about football, including some history, rules, well-known players, and famous moments. Although the text is a bit dense at times, this is an informative look at the game for independent readers. Also by this author: *J is for Jumpshot* and *H is for Homerun*. Interest level 2-6

The Greatest Game Ever Played, by Phil Bildner, Penguin, 2006

Genre: Historical Fiction

Annotation: The New York Giants are Sam and his father's favorite baseball team until they move west. Sam misses the team, but most of all he misses spending time with Pop, who has forsaken sports--despite Sam's breathless discovery of a football team with the same name. When Sam is given tickets to the 1958 NFL championship game, he and Pop go together, and Pop gets enthused despite the Giants' loss. The father-son relationship, often bound together by sports, is realistically portrayed. The energy of Pullen's illustrations perfectly matches Bildner's lively text, which brings to light some great football history to share across generations. Interest level 1-4

The Littlest Leaguer, by Syd Hoff, Harper Collins, 1976

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: Of all the players in the little league, Harold was the littlest. No matter how hard he tries, Harold is no good at baseball. The ground balls always bounce over his head, and his little legs never get him to the pop flies fast enough. So the only place Coach Lombardi puts him is on the bench. Until one day, during a very important game, Harold gets his big chance to show that being little isn't so bad after all. This Level 1 reader by the author of the popular *Danny the Dinosaur* books has bright pictures on every page. Interest level: K -1

The Missing Mitt, (Hardy Boys) by Franklin W. Dixon, Simon & Schuster, 2010

Genre: Fiction

Annotation: Frank and his brother, Joe, are excited! It's the final game in the Little League season, and their team, the Bayport Bandits, has a real shot at winning. Sure, the other team is good -- but they don't have the Bandits' good luck charm. The charm is their teammate Jason's mitt. His dad, a major-league pitcher, wore it in the World Series. The

whole team touches it before every game for luck. Right before the game, Jason's mitt goes missing. The team is devastated. Can Frank and Joe solve the case of the missing mitt before the Bandits lose the game? Interest level 2-4.

The Shot Heard Round the World, Phil Bildner, Simon & Schuster, 2005

Genre: Historical Fiction

Annotation: The story of Bobby Thomson's home run in the Polo Grounds on October 2, 1951--the deciding blow in a three-game National League Championship playoff between the victorious New York Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers--has been retold thousands of times. Bildner reprises the tale from the perspective of the losing team's young fans. The account progresses from the Dodgers' seemingly insurmountable midsummer lead through the Giants' comeback to Thomson's fateful homer, with the text showing how baseball in the pre-television era was a community passion, shared on front stoops and around radios. Payne's painterly mixed-media illustrations are bathed in attractive autumnal colors, suggesting the October setting as well as the melancholy of the Dodgers' defeat. Interest level 1-4

The Worst Team Ever, Leonard Kessler, Dell Publishing, 1985

Genre: Fiction – Fantasy

Annotation: Before there was baseball, there was swampball. The Green Hoppers are the worst swampball team ever. They are so bad that even their coach quits. Old Turtle, who once won a coach of the year award, agrees to help, but only if the team will follow his rules and work hard. Interest level: K-3

This is Figure Skating, by Margaret Blackstone, Henry Holt & Co., 1998

Genre: Non-fiction - Picture Book

Annotation: In this playful introduction to figure skating, readers learn about jumps, spins, and figure eights. Margaret Blackstone's pithy, declarative sentences and John O'Brien's bright, happy illustrations will score a win with aspiring young figure skaters. Other books by this author include, *This is Soccer*, and *This is Baseball*. Interest level:K-2

Willie and the All-Stars, by Floyd Cooper, Penguin, 2008

Genre: Historical Fiction

Annotation: It's 1942 and 10-year-old Willie, a big Cubs fan, looks forward to the day when he'll be a major leaguer. When he hears men on the corner excitedly talking about players he has never heard of—Satchel Paige, Papa Bell—Willie thinks they can't be that good if they're not in the majors; he is told he wouldn't be able to play either because he is black. Then, excitement! Willie is given tickets to an exhibition game between Negro League and major league all-stars—in Wrigley Field. By looking at race relations through the prism of baseball, Cooper will draw readers. The soft-focus sepia-touched artwork, vintage Cooper, is a nice mix of action and nostalgia. An author's note gives a brief baseball history: first the races played together, then apart, before finally coming together once more. Interest level 1-4.

You Never Heard of Sandy Koufax?! By Jonah Winter, Random House, 2009

Genre: Historical fiction

Annotation: This is an eye opening account of a young Jewish baseball player for the Dodgers. It is told from the viewpoint of an unidentified teammate, who boasts about Koufax's pitching career. Koufax' struggle to perform on the field was the major focus of the piece. Few Jewish players played in the major leagues and often retreated due to lack of acceptance. Finding his own self-confidence in the end gave him the ability to play at his best level. Winner of the 2010 Sydney Taylor Book Award for Younger Readers.
Reading level: 4.0