

Book Reviews

Hockey Agony

by Donna M. McDine

Title: *Hockey Agony*

Written by: Donna McDine

Illustrated by: Julie Hammond

Ages: 8-12

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Hockey Agony by Donna M. McDine revolves around Larry and sports. Larry is unable to play any sport because of a broken leg so he is given the duty of running the clock during the big hockey contest. The story actually begins from there. The illustrations make the read very visual.

The book contains multiple emotions, beautifully entwined in the story so that a child can actually understand them perfectly. Larry and the sensation of walking on crutches, and his inability to participate in sports like other boys of his age permeates through the book. The teasing he receives because of his broken leg is realistically portrayed.

Hockey Agony takes a new twist when his teammate asks him to cheat by turning the clock in their favor. Larry is caught off guard by that request and he does not know what to do. Larry's emotional upheaval is well portrayed here. Children who are into any sport will find this book enjoyable because it deals with the details of a game, the winning spirit, and the good and the ugly side of competition.

Larry's emotional and physical pain, and the thoughts that race through his mind make the book emotional for the reader. Will Larry listen to his teammate and cheat or will he uphold his ideals and do the right thing?

~ Reviewed by Mamta Madhavan for Readers' Favorite Five Star Review ~

www.readersfavorite.com/book-review/12267

What if something prevented you from doing the thing about which you were most passionate? Such is the case in *Hockey Agony*, which is about Larry, whose broken leg precludes him from playing on his school hockey team. When given the responsibility of running the clock during the game, Larry's teammate tries to convince Larry to cheat in order to help ensure a win for the team. Larry is left to decide between winning and doing the right thing.

Hockey Agony is a story that addresses the importance of honesty; maintaining a positive, respectful attitude; and not succumbing to peer pressure. Parents and teachers will appreciate the important messages brought up in this book. McDine's masterful, descriptive story-telling, coupled with Julie Hammond's colorful illustrations will draw in young readers. This is a must-read book!

~ Reviewed by Stacey Marshall, author of *Captain Courage and the Fear-Squishing Shoes* ~ CaptainCourage.com

Larry hobbles up the steps of his school. His crutches support his broken leg. He feels his coach will blame him for not being able to play on the team. To the contrary his coach gives him a job that is of great importance and a responsibility that requires integrity. Larry's friend thinks he should be loyal to his teammates first, and honesty can take a hike when it comes to a winning score for their team.

Hockey Agony written by Donna McDine and illustrated by Julie Hammond is a story to serve many adolescents who come up against decisions that could alter the way they see things and eventually send them down the road of dishonesty.

This is a great book for kids to identify with the pressure of issues they are faced with many times over. Most kids want to be honest, but many weaken under peer pressure. Does Larry stand up to an arena of cheering fans, or does he falter and help his team to victory? I recommend this book for pre/teens, as life lessons and assurance back up what most kids feel when faced with peer pressure.

Great book for boys and girls. I give it five stars and a hockey stick! Woo Hoo!

~ Reviewed by Susan Hornbach, author of children's literature ~ www.susanhornbach.com/ & www.bagfullofbooks4kids.blogspot.com/

Hockey Agony is steeped in teen angst. Larry is on crutches, and he does not appreciate Coach Brennan's blah, blah, blah, homilies. Coach has a good heart, but Larry will have none of it. And when Coach asks Larry to be the clock runner for Friday's game, it's a twist that really puts the outcome in question.

Will Larry sideline his attitude and run the clock?

Will he shave off a few seconds, as hinted at, if needed?

And will his co-clock runner Matthew, from the enemy team, be a push over? Maybe, maybe not?

The title says it all. *Hockey Agony* author, Donna McDine, knows teen boys. So my advice is: read this book ASAP, and discover the answers for yourself.

~Reviewed by Margot Finke, children's author ~ <http://margotfinke.com/>

In *Hockey Agony* a modern young boy must learn to fight against not only peer pressure, but dishonesty, injury, and a struggle with his own attitude problems. I very much enjoyed McDine's portrayal of the hockey players. Teenage boys are a challenge to understand, parent, and love, but McDine developed her characters as if they were telling her the story themselves.

~ Reviewed by Traci McDonald, writer and book reviewer ~

<http://tracimcdonald.blogspot.com/2013/10/bonus-review-hockey-agony-by-donna.html>

What a wonderful chapter book for teens. The book addresses important issues such as attitude, respect, discipline, cheating, honesty, and peer pressure. It is a must-read for all children age 8 and up. Who would have thought that playing hockey would have be so agonizing and have so many important lessons for the players? But playing hockey, as most other sports, teaches kids a lot of important habits and it makes them much more resilient and able to cope with many of life's challenges.

When Larry breaks his leg, playing hockey, the coach gives him the opportunity and responsibility to be in the score box to run the clock. At first Larry is not happy, and his tone to his coach is anything but respectful. You see, he had to sit with the opposing team player to run the clock, and the thought of this made him more than a bit uncertain. But he decided to try it.

When his peers and friends learned that he would be running the clock at the hockey game, they tried to set him up to lie and cheat. But when push came to shove, he acted honestly and with integrity. What a GREAT message for kids!

I recommend this book for all older kids and teens. It will teach teens and kids many important lessons about peer pressure and honesty. And when all is said and done, honesty is more important than belonging to any group.

Rating: 5+ Stars

~ Reviewed by Irene S. Roth, freelance writer and book reviewer ~

<http://rothsinspiringbooksandproducts.wordpress.com/2013/09/25/hockey-agony-by-donna-mcdine-book-review>

This story is of a young boy, Larry who has broken his leg and is no longer able to play ice hockey for his school Stony Point. His coach still wants him involved in the next match against Pearl River and makes him clock runner along with Matthew, who is from the opponent team. Before the match, Larry is asked by his teammate to cheat by shaving off a few seconds just in case it is required by their team. Already having attitude and discipline problems and unsure of what to do, what does Larry do? Does he compromise and succumb to the pressure? Does he let his team win by fibbing or does he takes the path of honesty? Do read the book to find out.

The book beautifully captures the attitude and behavioral problems of children. It is a good book with good artwork done by Julie Hammond.

As all of Donna M. McDine's books, that I have reviewed, this book also imparts important lessons to children regarding honesty and behavior. The book comes highly recommended.

~ **Reviewed by Zealot Readings** ~ <http://zealotreaders.blogspot.com/2013/10/hockey-agony-by-donna-m-mcdine.html>

Hockey Agony, by Donna McDine, and illustrated by Julie Hammond, is one of those short books that grabs your attention. Not because of the title -- though it does put you on notice something painful is coming -- but because of the subject matter. Here's Larry, a teenager and excellent hockey player, who's struggling. We see him in pain from a broken leg and in worse pain since he can't play for his hockey team. Adding insult to injury, Peter, somewhat of a bully and "bad boy," has taken Larry's coveted spot on the team.

In addition to his humiliation and frustration, his Coach wants Larry to improve his attitude. Coach gives Larry the job of clock runner in the next game. This means Larry will have responsibility and monitor the game with a member of the other team. When Peter hears of Larry being the clock runner, he pushes temptation squarely in Larry's face. And in his bully way, Peter leaves no doubt as to what he expects Larry to do, if the opportunity presents itself – cheat in favor of their team. Will Larry bow to this temptation and give an advantage to his team, or will he do the right thing?

Julie Hammond's artwork is suggestive of Americana folk art – an enjoyable and picturesque style – that adds to the feeling of the story. She's captured the characters; giving us "true life" facial expressions and body language. Her depiction of high school life is timeless and even other-worldly, as if we see the scenes through a special soft lens.

As parents and teachers, we hope the lessons we present on honesty, integrity, giving your word, and doing your best will be absorbed and integrated into our students' characters. The reality is that we seldom get to see whether these lessons bear fruit. Talk, as they say is cheap, and actions speak volumes. When presented with temptation, will our students find their moral and ethical center? Will they take the high road and do the right thing? We all are tested throughout our lives and have important choices and tough decisions to make. Read *Hockey Agony* and see how Larry handles his temptation.

~ Reviewed by Penelope Anne Cole, Award-winning Children's Author ~

<http://penelopeannecole.blogspot.com/2013/10/hockey-agony-by-donna-mcdine-artwork-by.html>

Larry is a hockey player for his school team. Unfortunately, he is unable to play due to a broken leg. Now he has to sit and watch his team play against Peal River without him, he wasn't happy at all. But his coach decided to give him the responsibility of being in the score box to run the clock. Larry wasn't pleased and by the tone in his voice his coach wasn't pleased with his attitude and lack of respect, but he saw potential in Larry. So Larry decided to run the clock during the game bad enough he couldn't play now he has to sit with the opposite team player to run the clock.

When Larry's teammate Peter heard that Larry will be the clock runner for Friday's game he tries to convince Larry to shave a few seconds off the clock if they get a penalty to ensure a win for their team, Larry felt that was cheating. But will he shave off a few seconds to save his team?

This book addresses attitude, respect, peer pressure, discipline, cheating and honesty. I highly recommend this book.

~ Reviewed by Ella Johnson ~ <http://mymcbooks.wordpress.com/2013/09/15/book-review-giveaway-hockey-agony-ends-october-5th/>

Hockey Agony, by Donna McDine and illustrated by Julie Hammond, is a must read. I like the subject matter of the book. As a parent and educator, I am always looking for books that teach about integrity.

The main character Larry, a teenager, and excellent hockey player, can't play because of a broken leg. Much to his dismay a bully has taken his coveted spot on the team. Coach gives Larry the job of clock runner in the next game. Peter, the bully expects and pressures Larry to cheat in favor of their team.

Will Larry bow down to temptation and cheat in favor of the team?

As parents, we hope the lessons we teach our children will help them make the right decision in times of pressure. We can't be with our children twenty four hours a day, we can only hope they take the high road and do the right thing in tough situations.

Julie Hammond's artwork captures the essence of the story. The facial expressions give the story that extra special feeling of being there in person.

Hockey Agony is a classic book, and I believe it can be used to teach children how to handle pressure.

~ Reviewed by Nicole Weaver, Award-winning Children's Author ~

<http://mysisterismybestfriend.blogspot.com/2013/11/book-review-hockey-agony-by-donna-mcdine.html>

Hockey Agony, tells the story of Larry, who, with a broken leg, is unable to play a big game and instead must keep score. Larry grapples with a tough choice.

Hockey Agony has valuable lessons hidden within this excellent story and makes for excellent read. I encourage you to check out this book this holiday season. Donna is a wonderful writer who obviously knows what children enjoy reading. This book would make an excellent Christmas treat!

~ Reviewed by Sharon Stanley, children's author ~

<http://www.farmandfrufu.blogspot.com/2013/11/a-recommendation.html>

Hockey Agony is informative and useful in thematic units. Especially ones about health, and sports. However the most important lesson was to be honest with yourself. Larry faces an inner dilemma and a dilemma with his teammates. Larry has to weigh keeping his friends or being true to himself. This is a lesson that everyone has to learn. It is never too early to learn about peer pressure. 5/5

~ Reviewed by Deal Sharing Aunt ~ <http://dealsharingaunt.blogspot.com//2013/12/donna-mcdine-reviews-and-trailers.html>