

PEACHTREE
DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Kid Coach

Written by Fred Bowen

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Also available in e-book

Ages 7–12 | Realistic Fiction
Fred Bowen Sports Stories Series
AR • AC • Lexile • F&P • GRL P: Gr 3



ABOUT THE SERIES

Fred Bowen's fast-paced middle-grade stories offer readers themes of competition, cooperation, facing change, gender roles, overcoming challenges, and new experiences. In addition, they feature play-by-play action, snappy dialogue, and engaging plots. Bowen's books are not the usual sports-fiction fare; each book loops in a little sports history and includes back matter with fascinating glimpses into that history and the heroes who made it happen.

ABOUT THE BOOK

When the Tigers lose their coach, they decide to coach themselves. It is a fantasy that a lot of kids have, but these kids pull it off. They keep their own stats and come up with their own game plans. In a daring move, they try using the "Williams shift" to stop a home-run hitter on a rival team. The shift worked against Red Sox slugger Ted Williams in the 1940s. But can it work for the Tigers?

THEMES

Friendship | Cooperation | Diversity | Secrets
Bullying | Peer pressure | Baseball history
Personal responsibility | Leadership

WRITING PROMPTS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

aligned with Common Core Reading Standards

DIRECTIONS

Use details from the text to support ALL of your responses.

CHAPTERS 1–3

Describe each of these following characters in two or three words: Scott, Drew, Fran, Benny, and Mr. Skelly. Coach Skelly misses a scrimmage and has to leave another scrimmage early. How do the Tigers deal with this problem?

CHAPTERS 4–6

How does Benny's knowledge of baseball history help Scott? How does Scott feel about coaching his first official game? How can you tell? What big decision does Scott have to make near the end of the game against the Expos? What is his decision? How does it affect the outcome of the game?

CHAPTERS 7–9

What device does the author use in chapter 7 to tell the reader how the Tigers are doing? What solutions do the kids suggest to help the team? Compare and contrast Scott and Drew's reactions to the suggestions. What are some things Benny's statistics tell Scott about the Tigers? What secret does Scott learn about Benny? Why does Benny want Scott to keep it a secret?

CHAPTERS 10–12

Looking at the statistics in chapter 10...

- Who has the highest batting average on the Tigers?
- Who has the highest on-base percentage?
- Who is the team's worst hitter?

Why do you think Scott tells Drew about Benny's secret? Compare and contrast Scott's get-together with Benny in chapter 12 to Scott's get-together with Benny in chapter 8. What is the Williams shift? What are the reasons Benny thinks it will work against Eddie Wilson?

CHAPTERS 13–15

Why does Scott toss the ball to Benny during the team meeting in chapter 13? How does this show how Scott's attitude has changed toward Benny and the statistics he has been keeping for the team? Describe how Drew's attitude toward Benny has changed. Compare and contrast Scott's coaching in the last game against the Red Sox to his coaching in earlier games.

OVERALL QUESTION

In just a few words, write down what this whole story is about (the overall theme or big idea). Explain your response.

"THE REAL STORY" FOLLOW-UP QUESTION:

How does the information in "The Real Story" relate to the theme or the plot of the book?

REVIEWS

"Bowen is quickly joining the ranks of today's most popular sports-fiction authors...he skillfully interweaves fact and fiction and uses historical sports plays and concepts as a backdrop for the story."

—*School Library Journal*

"Bowen is a natural when it comes to writing sports stories and informing his readers about the past. These books are perfect for kids ages 8 to 12."

—*Newsday*

"[Bowen's] pace is excellent and he has a knack for efficient evocation..."

—*Washington Post*

AWARDS

- Volunteer State Book Awards (master list, 4–6)
—Tennessee Association of School Librarians

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fred Bowen is the author of Peachtree's popular Fred Bowen Sports Story series. A lifelong sports fanatic, he has coached youth league baseball, softball, soccer, and basketball. His kids' sports column "The Score" appears each week in the KidsPost section of the *Washington Post*. Bowen lives in Maryland.

www.fredbowen.com

Available in the Fred Bowen Sports Story series

BASEBALL:

Dugout Rivals
The Golden Glove
The Kid Coach
Lucky Enough
Perfect Game
Playoff Dreams
Throwing Heat
T.J.'s Secret Pitch
Winners Take All

BASKETBALL:

The Final Cut
Full Court Fever
Hardcourt Comeback
Off the Rim
On the Line
Outside Shot
Real Hoops

SOCCER:

Go for the Goal!
Out of Bounds
Soccer Team Upset

FOOTBALL:

Double Reverse
Quarterback Season
Speed Demon
Touchdown Trouble


PEACHTREE

Discussion Guide prepared by Peggy Jackson

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