DISCUSSION GUIDE

Out of Bounds

Written by Fred Bowen

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Ages 7–12 | Realistic Fiction
Fred Bowen Sports Stories Series
AR • AC • Lexile • F&P • GRL Q; Gr 4

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
Nate, an eighth grader, and the rest of his teammates are
competitive, especially when it comes to playing against
their rivals, the Monarchs. They want to win so badly
that they’re willing to root against the Monarchs when
they play other teams. Something happens though, and
Nate starts feeling uncomfortable about their win-at-any-
cost attitude. But what can he do about it? He’s just one
guy on the team.

THEMES
Sportsmanship | Attitudes about winning
Friendship | Leadership
Peer pressure | Sports | Soccer

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
How is Aunt Lizzie different from Nate’s parents? How
does Nate act around Aunt Lizzie? How does Nate react
to Aunt Lizzie’s play when she purposely kicks the ball
out of bounds?

CHAPTERS 4–6
Describe the Strikers as a team. Compare Nate and
Sergio’s attitudes toward winning and competition.
Describe Hunter and the other Monarchs. Compare them
with Nate and his teammates.

CHAPTERS 7–9
Compare Nate and Aunt Lizzie’s attitudes toward
winning and competition. Lizzie tells Nate, “You want
to win, but you want to win the right way.” What does
she mean by that? What is Nate’s reaction to her advice?
How does Nate feel about rooting against the Monarchs?

CHAPTERS 10–12
Why do you think Nate kicks the ball out of bounds?
What is Sergio’s reaction to the play? What is the
Monarchs’ reaction? How does Nate feel about the play after the game? How is his feeling about the play changing? How does Aunt Lizzie’s soccer video affect Nate’s feeling about the play?

CHAPTERS 13–15
Sergio does not think that the Monarchs will try to win their game against the Devils. Why not? Hunter tells Nate, “We want to beat you not cheat you.” What does Hunter mean by that? How does Hunter feel about Nate’s decision to kick the ball out of bounds?

CHAPTERS 16–17
Nate says at the end of the book, “Things turned out all right.” What does he mean by that? What are the “things” he is talking about?

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 whole story?

REVIEWS
“Bowen tucks in plenty of soccer action—plus a chocolate chip cookie recipe—and closes with some real-life sports incidents that exemplify the principle he wants to highlight.”
—Booklist Online

AWARDS
• Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List (intermediate) —Kansas National Education Association

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:
The Final Cut
The Golden Glove
The Kid Coach
Lucky Enough
Perfect Game
Playoff Dreams
Throwing Heat
T.J.’s Secret Pitch
Winners Take All

BASKETBALL:
Double Reverse
Quarterback Season
Speed Demon
Touchdown Trouble

FOOTBALL:

SOCCER:
Go for the Goal!
Out of Bounds
Soccer Team Upset

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