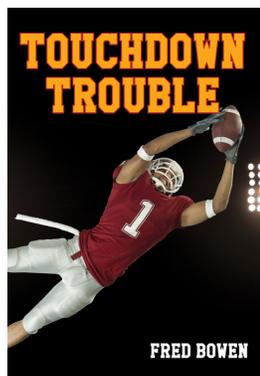


DISCUSSION GUIDE



Touchdown Trouble

Written by Fred Bowen

PB: 978-1-56145-497-6 | Also available in e-book

Ages 7–12 | Realistic Fiction | Series: Fred Bowen Sports Story
AR • RC • Lexile • F&P • GRL R; Gr 4

ALIGNED with
COMMON CORE
STANDARDS

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

Sam is twelve years old and a star player on an awesome team: the Cowboys. His teammates always pull together and play to win. Their effort pays off big time when they beat their archrival in a hard-fought game. But their celebration doesn't last long. Sam makes a discovery that threatens their victory and their team spirit. Can Sam keep the Cowboys together or will his discovery destroy the team?

THEMES:

Personal character | Group integrity | Leadership
Peer pressure | Honesty
Friendship | Fairness | Football
1940 Cornell vs. Dartmouth football game

WRITING PROMPTS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

aligned with Common Core Reading Standards

DIRECTIONS

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

CHAPTER 1

What can you tell about Sam from the first chapter? How do the play diagrams help the reader (you)?

CHAPTER 2

How would you describe the Cowboys as a team? Is Sam's father interested in Sam's football team? How can you tell?

CHAPTER 3

What does the touch football game tell you about the feelings between the Cowboys and the Giants?

CHAPTER 4

What does Sam find at the end of this chapter? What does he decide to do with it? How does Sam justify his decision? Could he have made another decision?

CHAPTER 5

How does Brady act in the meeting with Mr. Hanley? Why do you think he acts this way? Describe Mr. Hanley. Do you think he believes Brady and Sam?

CHAPTER 6

Trey says to Sam, “Now that you *found* that scooter...” The word *found* is in italics in the book. What does that tell you about how Trey said the word and how he feels about Sam keeping the scooter?

CHAPTER 7

How would you describe the game between the Cowboys and Giants? Why does the author keep mentioning the time left in the game?

CHAPTER 8

Describe how the Giants treat each other during the traditional Friday evening pizza party. Describe some of the personalities on the team. Sam’s happy at first but then his mood changes dramatically. What happened?

CHAPTER 9

Sam says the team did not win the Giants game fairly. Why does Sam think that? Why does Trey say the team should keep the win? Trey compares the Cowboys keeping the win in the Giants game to Sam’s keeping the scooter. Are they the same thing?

CHAPTER 10

Why does Sam return the scooter? How does Sam act around Sergeant Jones? How does Sergeant Jones act? Do you think she believes Sam’s story? Sam is offered a reward. Why does he refuse it?

CHAPTER 11

The setting is a rainy game. How does the author use the rain to help the reader understand the way Sam is feeling? Use exact words or sentences from the text to show what you mean.

CHAPTER 12

Why do you think Sam’s dad shows the film of the end of the Giants game first? What is the team’s reaction? Why does Sam’s dad tell the story of the 1940 Cornell vs. Dartmouth game?

CHAPTER 13

Compare the arguments that Sam and Trey make about whether the Cowboys should keep the victory over the Giants. How does the fact that Sam brought back the scooter help his argument against Trey about the game? How does the way the vote is taken increase the drama and tension of the chapter?

CHAPTER 14

Why do the Cowboys play poorly in the first half against the Lions? Why are the Giants cheering for the Cowboys? What is the Cowboys’ reaction?

CHAPTER 15

Compare how Sam and Trey treat each other in chapter 15 with how they treat each other in chapter 13. What has happened? Why did Trey change?

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

“Plenty of walloping gridiron action...unexpectedly potent drama.” —**Booklist**

“An excellent opportunity for a group discussion and will be a fine addition to other popular play-by-play sports chapter books.” —**School Library Journal**

AWARDS

- South Carolina Children’s Book Award (nominee)
—South Carolina Association of School Librarians
- Charlotte Award Suggested Reading List (intermediate) —New York State Reading Association

Available in the
Fred Bowen Sports Story series

BASEBALL:

Dugout Rivals
The Golden Glove
The Kid Coach
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

FOOTBALL:

Double Reverse
Quarterback Season
Touchdown Trouble

SOCCER:

Go for the Goal!
Out of Bounds
Soccer Team Upset

**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

Peachtree Teacher's Guide for
TOUCHDOWN TROUBLE

prepared by Peggy Jackson

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