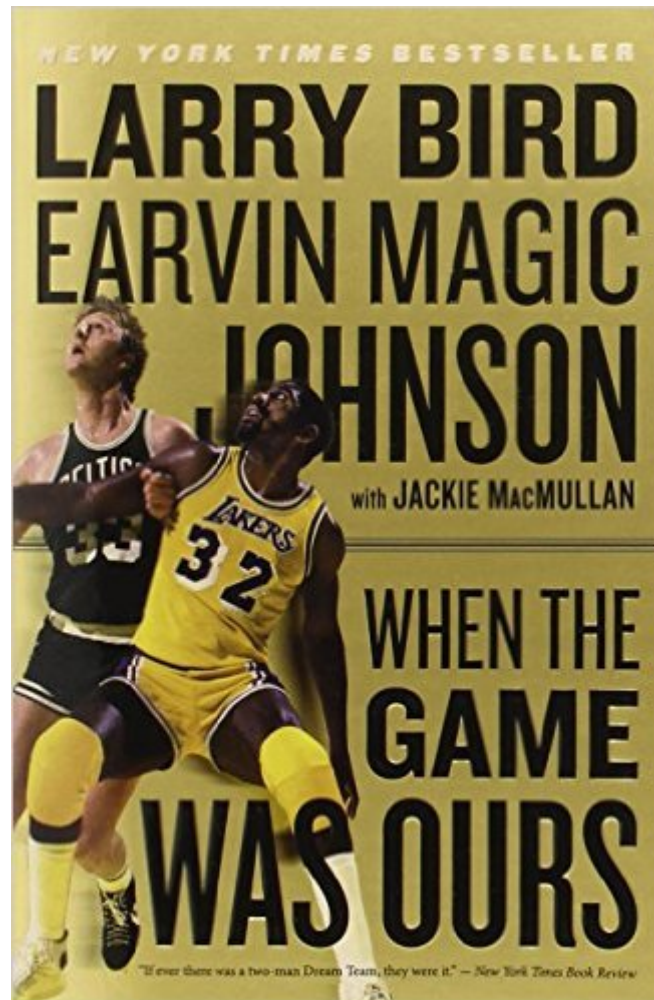


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# When The Game Was Ours



## Synopsis

From the moment these two players took the court on opposing sides, they engaged in a fierce physical and psychological battle. Their uncommonly competitive relationship came to symbolize the most compelling rivalry in the NBA. These were the basketball epics of the 1980s — Celtics vs Lakers, East vs West, physical vs finesse, Old School vs Showtime, even white vs black. Each pushed the other to greatness — together Bird and Johnson collected eight NBA Championships, six MVP awards and helped save the floundering NBA at its most critical time. When it started they were bitter rivals, but along the way they became lifelong friends. With intimate, fly-on-the-wall detail, *When the Game Was Ours* transports readers to this electric era of basketball and reveals for the first time the inner workings of two players dead set on besting one another. From the heady days of trading championships to the darker days of injury and illness, we come to understand Larry's obsessive devotion to winning and how his demons drove him on the court. We hear him talk with candor about playing through chronic pain and its truly exacting toll. In *Magic* we see a young, invincible star struggle with the sting of defeat, not just as a player but as a team leader. We are there the moment he learns he's contracted HIV and hear in his own words how that devastating news impacted his relationships in basketball and beyond. But always, in both cases, we see them prevail. A compelling, up-close-and-personal portrait of basketball's most inimitable duo, *When the Game Was Ours* is a reevaluation of three decades in counterpoint. It is also a rollicking ride through professional basketball's best times.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I'm sorry to be the one voice in opposition to the other reviews but I was so excited to get this book and had the worst time getting through it. First...I never got the impression anybody but Jackie MacMullan was the author. If Larry Bird and Magic Johnson had not been listed as authors I'd have never wondered reading this why not. It doesn't read like they wrote it and Jackie put form to it...it reads as if Jackie wrote it and had interviewed them as well as many others...like a typical biography. I was more expecting that I'd be reading what I felt was direct writing from the two stars of the story. My biggest gripe is the non linear story telling style used. In the brilliant book on Sandy Koufax the author alternated chapters of his life with a chapter about each of the innings of his perfect game and that was a clever way to tell the story and the biographical chapters were pretty much in chronological order. Books about folks who really don't have a great life story but a recent event of significance often begin with a "teaser" about something recent and then after the reader is grabbed take you back in time. The story of Bird and Magic needs no such gimmicks as this is a meaty story full of drama and much of it in my opinion is LOST because the author bounces around from year to year back and forth with no respect for chronological order so much of the story is confusing and drama lost. I say that as someone who knows the story and feels that the natural story arc is truly something special...and not needing of the continual back court dribble that the author employs. The author also spends more pages on the first Converse commercial they filmed than either the 84 or 85 playoff series...man I was sad about that.

For twenty-years basketball fans have heard and read from many sources what the true feelings of Larry Bird and Magic Johnson were like as these two unbelievably competitive men changed the game of basketball. They were so totally different... and yet at the core... so totally alike. For the first time Larry and Magic collaborate to reveal what they "really" thought about each other through each and every step of their game-changing careers. It's like having a split screen with Magic on one side and Larry on the other as they share their childhoods... college... and NBA careers... and even their post playing lives. At the end of each historical milepost the split screen becomes one as both Hall of Famers summarize in real-time... adding comments that are more sage with the blessing of age and maturity. When Magic and his Michigan State team met Larry's Indiana State team for the National Championship Game in 1979 it drew a 24.1 Nielsen rating, "THE HIGHEST IN COLLEGE BASKETBALL HISTORY, A NOTEWORTHY MILESTONE THAT REMAINED UNTOUCHED THREE DECADES LATER." From that time forward Larry and Magic were forever linked-compared-and-intertwined for the rest of their lives. A mutual hatred breded mutual respect and in the end a lifetime friendship. Along the way they were universally credited with saving the

NBA. "IN 1979 THE LEAGUES FOUR-YEAR DEAL WITH CBS WAS WORTH \$74 MILLION. BY 2002 THE LEAGUE HAD INKED A SIX-YEAR DEAL WITH ABC, ESPN, AND TNT VALUED AT 4.6 BILLION." The author's pull no punches as they both admit that starting in the aftermath of their NCAA showdown that one hated the other. After Magic won the NBA championship in his rookie year Bird now admits extreme jealousy.

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