



## **Pre: The Story of America's Greatest Running Legend, Steve Prefontaine**

*Tom Jordan*

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For five years, no American runner could beat him at any distance over a mile. But at the age of 24, with his best years still ahead, long-distance runner Steve Prefontaine finally lost. Driving alone at night after a party, Prefontaine crashed his sports car, putting a tragic, shocking end to the life and career of one of the most influential, accomplished runners of our time. From his humble origins in Coos Bay, Oregon, Pre became the first person to win four NCAA titles in one event. Year after year, he was virtually unbeatable. Instead of becoming one of the new breed of professional track athletes, Pre chose to stay amateur and fight for the adequate funding he felt American amateur athletes deserved. But Pre not only touched runners; his exciting racing technique as well as his maverick lifestyle made him a favorite of the fans. A race with Prefontaine in it was automatically an event. This is his story.

## **Pre: The Story of America's Greatest Running Legend, Steve Prefontaine Details**

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## **From Reader Review Pre: The Story of America's Greatest Running Legend, Steve Prefontaine for online ebook**

### **Brugge says**

You want inspiration...read this book. Steve Prefontaine or as fans call him Pre was one of the most famous athletes of the early 1970s and well on his way to becoming more than an athlete but an activist who would make a real impact on the world before his untimely death just prior to the summer games of 1974. Trust me read this book and you'll become a Pre fan, a Pre historian, & you'll lace up your shoes and want to go on a jog. I'll leave you with his quote, that will make you want to pick up this book and learn more, "To give anything less than your best is a sacrifice to the gift!" – Steve Prefontaine

p.s. as far as Pre movie's go

Without Limits & Prefontaine – both based on Pre's life and came out within a year of each other. I like Without Limits better but they are both enjoyable.

Fire On the Track – is a Pre documentary with real footage which is a must see

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### **Pat (AZ Realtor) 480-840-7166 says**

A tragic biography of a world class runner cut down in the prime of his life. I love all things PRE! Read the book then read Bowerman and the Men of Oregon. Then watch Without Limits and Prefontaine.

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### **Ryan says**

This book read like an over-long, uninspired AP article. Jordan did a great job of sticking to the facts, but I was hoping for backstory instead of just a rundown of his athletic achievements.

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### **Jason says**

This is such a great story that I remember growing up with and hearing about from my coaches. I remember watching the movie and thinking about how fascinating Pre was. Unfortunately, for me, I felt like this book was kind of all over the place and focused too much on individual events. Would have liked to hear a little bit more about Pre as a person and have some more closure to the ending.

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### **Brian says**

I have always known about Pre, and have seen the movies. The only word that describes him after reading this book is WOW! I have never heard of another athlete with his tenacity and mental toughness, and my guess is that it would be hard to find someone to match him. What he put himself through and the level he maintained for so long is astonishing.

The only other athlete that I can compare his toughness to is Lance Armstrong. His drug taking aside, Armstrong trained with the same tenacity as Pre. They both had to win, devoured opponents that challenged them, and drove themselves into the ground daily.

His tragic ending is beyond words. One can only think of the greatness he would have continued had he lived. I think this book should be on the reading list for every high school student. It would show them what they can become if they put their mind to it.

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### **Jeffrey says**

It seems to me that Steve Prefontaine merits a high quality biography. His story is the stuff of legends, so much so that high school cross-country kids wear "Pre Lives" shirts from Nike not fully aware of who the guy is. For five years, Pre remained undefeated in the U.S. at any distance over one mile. He ran two 10K races. In the first, he set the American record. He never won on the biggest international stage, the Olympics, but he had the unfortunate timing of being at Munich and he died before his probable prime. And, ironically, his next Olympics would have been none at all because he would join the other infuriated American athletes who would have to miss the Olympics because they were in the Soviet Union and the U.S. boycotted them. He's not the only athlete to run his mouth with an arrogance that some love and others cringe at, but he's really the first runner to bring a blood and guts toughness to distance running. He is also the first athlete-promoter for a company (in this case, Nike), and he led the fight to end "shamateurism", the Olympic and AAU rules that treated athletes like crap, expecting them to somehow train full-time and not get paid for running in races. But this biography is very disappointing. I don't think a non-runner would bother reading through this flavorless endless list of split times and workout routines, and any runner would be bored and disappointed to see such a legendary figure turned into numbers. You receive little to no window into what Steve Prefontaine the man was like. I know he was no Da Vinci, but his life outside of track was interesting and it is barely mentioned in his biography. The end of the book is moving, but that is because the story is so sad, not because of Tom Jordan's writing. The whole thing reads like a just-the-facts AP article. Pre deserves much more.

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### **Andrew Duenez says**

When I first picked up this book I couldn't put it down. At the time it was a first for me. Way better than the movies about him. This man wanted to race the best because he believed down to his bones that he had more guts than anyone on the track to win. By racing the best, he made himself better.

amazing book.

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### **Jeremy Costello says**

This book was terribly disappointing. The book could have been written by a computer. It was just a jumble of times, records, and slight commentary in between. Hardly anything was written about besides Pre's accomplishments on the track. I didn't get a sense of Pre the person, who he was off the track, which is what is usually included in a biography. Childhood, a fascinating period in any legend's life, was covered in a few references to records broken on the track and in cross country. Pre deserved a better author to write his

biography, as this gives no depth to America's greatest running legend.

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### **Chrisl says**

Have 1950s HS track memory of running on U of O's great track, "hitting the wall" on Hayward Field.

Among my sports heroes: the milers ... Prefontaine ...

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve\\_P...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steve_P...)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hayward...>

Learned from, appreciated Jordon's book.

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### **John says**

This little book accomplished what the author set out to do, that is to provide a glimpse into the life and running career of Steve Prefontaine. It's a tale of triumph and tragedy, ending like no fictional story ever would. That's the problem with real life; sometimes the endings suck.

I remember learning about Prefontaine's death. I was mad at him for months because he died late at night while driving drunk. Ever since his gutsy run at the Munich Olympics I had been looking forward to see what he could do at Montreal. Now he was dead and I'd never know. It was a stupid, infantile reaction on my part, of course, but that's how I felt. It still irritates me that people who should know better drive drunk and/or without a fastened seat belt. A sober, seat-belted Steve Prefontaine on that night in May 1975 would probably still be alive today.

If you have ever run your guts out while training or in a distance race, you will appreciate this book. When even a great runner like Prefontaine says, "You have to wonder at times what you're doing out there", you will know exactly what he means.

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### **Jimmy Scharpf says**

Definitive (really only) biography of Steve Prefontaine. An inspirational figure whose life was cut short in a controversial car crash after a night of partying. He brought a new style to running that led a boom of popularity across the US and took down the AAU which had been mistreating athletes for years. The book, however, disappoints. Pre is a true hero of mine so I was unhappy to find out this very short read was basically laced with facts you could find anywhere on the internet and mostly filled with recounts of his races and fell short on details of the runner as a person.

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### **Willie O says**

My all time running hero! Brought back great memories of wanting to run like PRE.

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## **Angela Hansen says**

What an incredible person. I've always been fascinated by Steve Prefontaine. After reading the book I am even more fascinated by him. His story is so great, an underdog from Coos Bay Oregon. He was an incredible runner, and it was because he gave 120 percent to everything he did. And the people of Oregon loved him for it. Thousands of people would show up at the University of Oregon to watch him run. He called his fans his people, and he did everything he could not to let them down. He was an incredible runner, that people still measure themselves against him today is amazing. It's a great book if you are a runner, and even if you aren't his story is worth reading.

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## **John says**

This book has a lot of problems. Let's begin with the first one -- it's poorly written.

I went into this book very excited -- I love running. Prefontaine is a huge inspiration. But the details of his life and character are very flimsy -- the author doesn't even include one interview from Pre's family or key head coaches -- a very telling omission. Instead, we are stuck getting bombarded with times, a few rivalries that don't seem to amount to much and are interchangeable as we learn so little about the human character of the competitions, and a few moments where Pre is dismissive or pissy.

Pre's well known front running is barely mentioned and it would have been interesting to hear more thoughts on that -- from coaches, sports therapists, his family. The Olympics and the disappointment after that event are also essentially a passing reference. I also would have appreciated learning more about his relationships (both notable girlfriends are barely mentioned), his financial struggles, and the accident. The author also spends some time justifying Pre's drinking ahead of the car crash. I'm not saying saying Pre was driving impaired, and it appears that we'll never know for sure. But the author dismisses the idea Pre was drunk in an almost 'hero worship' manner -- it's pretty unprofessional.

So basically, I didn't like this book and clearly wanted a lot more. Two stars feels generous -- I think one was for Pre.

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## **Billy says**

What an exceptional bio! A very impactful too short life!

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