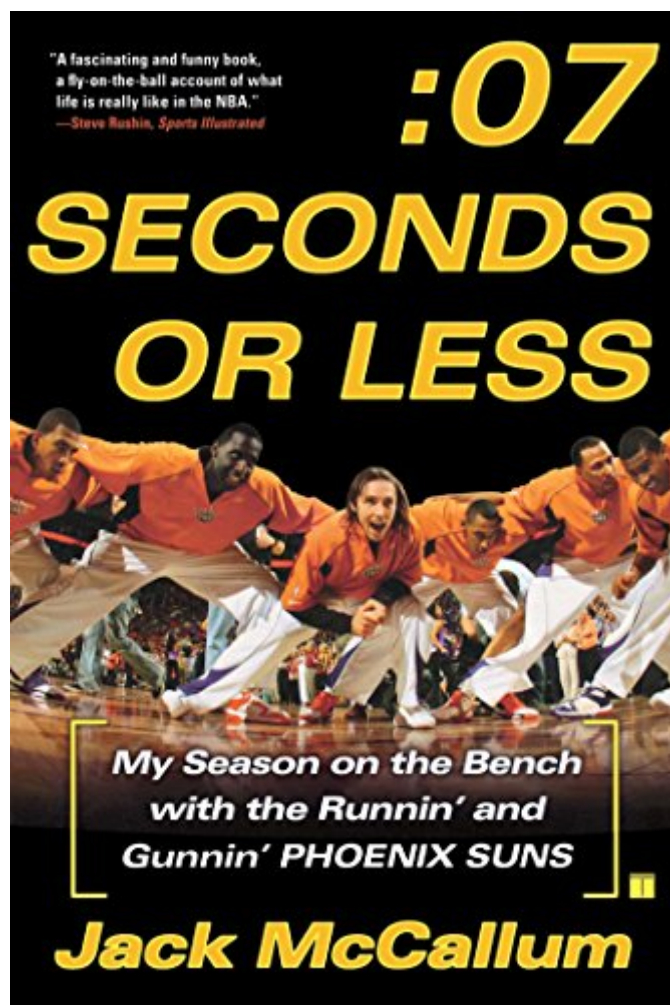


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Seven Seconds Or Less: My Season On The Bench With The Runnin' And Gunnin' Phoenix Suns



Synopsis

In *Seven Seconds or Less*, Sports Illustrated's chief NBA writer, Jack McCallum, gets in the paint with the Phoenix Suns and takes a season-long look at the NBA's most exciting and controversial team. A few weeks before the 2005-2006 NBA training camps began, Jack McCallum called the Phoenix Suns ace director of public relations to propose a story idea for Sports Illustrated. He would spend the preseason with the team as an "assistant coach" and then write a story about his experiences. He was quickly granted access, and while his role as "assistant coach" lasted only through the preseason, McCallum stayed on with the team throughout their amazing 2005-2006 season. McCallum was looking for real inside access and he certainly got it. He spent the season in the locker room and in the coaches' meetings, learning what makes this wildly popular, innovative, and international assemblage of talented players and brilliant coaches tick. For years, NBA basketball was marked by a plodding, dull-as-dishwater style of play -- that was until coach Mike D'Antoni, point guard Steve Nash, and the high-flying Phoenix Suns set the league on fire with their old-school, run-and-gun approach to offense. Along the way they won back legions of disillusioned fans and demonstrated the virtues of team play to a league preoccupied with one-on-one theatrics. In *Seven Seconds or Less*, McCallum describes his year trying to keep up with the fast-breaking Suns on and off the court. He takes readers inside the heads of Nash, the team's mercurial floor general; the maverick D'Antoni; and dozens of others who make up the close-knit Suns family. On the court, there's excitement as the Suns overcome a rash of injuries to once again battle for a conference title. Off the court, controversy rages as the team endures a major front-office change in midseason. Throughout it all, the team continues to bedevil opponents and challenge the status quo with their throwback style. In the spirit of Buzz Bissinger's *Three Nights in August* and John Feinstein's *A Season on the Brink*, *Seven Seconds or Less* is an in-depth look at one of the greatest shows in sports.

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Customer Reviews

Jack McCallum's outstanding "Seven Seconds or Less" chronicles a season (2005-2006) spent inside the Phoenix Suns organization. McCallum uses 40 years of journalism skills and his decades as SI's top NBA writer to give us a compelling story of the Sun's tremendous achievements last year. Beset by season-ending injuries to stalwarts Amare Stoudemire and Kurt Thomas, Suns coach Mike D'Antoni and his staff somehow piece together 54 victories and two already-classic 4-3 series victories against the Lakers and Clippers before simply running out of gas against the Mavs. The centerpiece of the book are the three playoff series, especially the stirring comeback from a 1-3 hole against the Lakers. There's probably 100+ pages on those games alone. Whoever made the editing decision to front-load and spotlight that material deserves an award. By starting out with that series, the book takes a two-fisted grab of your attention and never lets go. For those curious about the title, it alludes to Coach D'Antoni's philosophy that his offense has the best chance to score if it gets a shot off within the first seven seconds of its 24-second possession. It's that philosophy that makes the Suns so exciting and refreshing to watch. McCallum and the coaching staff make the point that the NBA is, in general, over-coached and, well, flat-out boring. Let's hope more teams see the product and the results that D'Antoni is getting and sign up. [Eddie Jordan's Wizards look to be on pace this year.] I'm sure players around the league are dying to play for D'Antoni. McCallum's book can only reinforce that perception. He comes across as a good guy and a talented coach who has the respect of his players. The one eye-opening surprise in the book is the fragility of Shawn Marion's ego and psyche.

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