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# Game Changers #1



## Synopsis

Mike Lupica delivers a New York Times bestselling middle grade series! Ben McBain is every football team's dream player. He's a jack-of-all-trades guy that can handle almost any position. When the game is on the line, Ben's number is the one being called for the final play. But Ben wants to be the starting quarterback and the one thing standing in his way is the coach's son. Shawn O'Brien looks the part. He has been groomed by his father, a former professional quarterback. But despite his size and arm strength, Shawn is struggling. Ben is torn between being a good teammate and going after his own dream. As Ben finds out, Shawn isn't the easiest person to help. And when Ben gets an unexpected opportunity, the entire game will change for the both of them. Best-selling author Mike Lupica kicks off a winning new series about sports and friendship that will captivate readers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I picked this book up through Vine for my high school classroom. I have several students who love sports, so I figured this would be right up their alley. Once I began reading the book, I immediately had concerns about the main characters being ten-years-old. Those concerns were put to rest,

however, when it became apparent that Lupica wrote them to sound far older. There were many times I felt as though they were college players, not pee-wee league. On the one hand, this bothered me to a certain extent. On the other hand, though, I reminded myself that the book wasn't written for a thirty-five-year-old, it was written for young adults and children. Bearing this in mind, I think my students will better relate to it because the characters sound older than their dictated age. I'd always heard Lupica wrote sports well. Now I know this to be true. His terminology is accurate and he achieved authentic pacing in regards to the games played. My athletes will really love that he got those things right. Finally, I greatly appreciated the positive messages delivered within the book. Lupica makes a point to reinforce the importance of good sportsmanship, team chemistry, doing the right thing, and having loving relationships with family. Though the dialogue of the characters seemed too sophisticated for the ages, I thought this book overall succeeded on many levels. I've already put it into the hands of a football player in my class and can't wait to get his take on it.

I downloaded this book on my Kindle and have been reading it nightly with my son. It's a great book for any child interested in football/sports. It also teaches about sportsmanship, being a team player and friendship. Would definitely read or let my son read the other Mike Lupica books.

I'll start off by saying I am NOT a Lupica fan, but I have to admit he writes a great sports book. My nephew is in Lupica's target audience and he enjoyed the story, and the book is great for young people in the midst of growing out of children's literature.

My son, like many other tween boys, would rather do something active than sit to read a book. Mike Lupica books have engaged him and held his interest. *Game Changers* revolves around the sport of football. It is not too difficult of a reading level. And the subject matter is sure to appeal to boys (or girls) who enjoy the sport. Mike Lupica writes knowledgeably about the sport. The book is clean and appropriate for the grade level. As is often the case in Mike Lupica books, there is a valuable lesson to be learned. And the story holds the interest of reluctant readers who are sports fans.

Eleven-year-old Ben McBain, though small for his age, is a good, all-around player with his football team, and he really wants to be the starting quarterback. However, Shawn O'Brien, whose father coaches the team and is a former professional quarterback, is chosen. Yet, despite his size and arm strength, Shawn is struggling and wants Ben to help him. So Ben must decide between going after

his own dream and being a good teammate. How can Ben and his friends Sam, Coop, and Lily, assist Shawn? Will Ben and Shawn ever become friends? And how can an unexpected opportunity for Ben change the entire game for the both of them? Mike Lupica is one of the most prominent sports writers in America, with a nationally-syndicated New York Daily News column, and is the author of several highly acclaimed sports-based novels for young people. I am not a big sports fan, so reading sports-based novels has never been a favorite pastime for me. However, I must admit that I enjoyed *Game Changers*, which is intended to be the first of a new series for middle grade readers. It extols the benefits of good friendships among young people, encourages them to do their best with a positive attitude, and illustrates good moral qualities. For example, there is a conversation between Ben and Shawn about the dangers of lying, and I like the way the fact that Ben and his family attend church is mentioned. The euphemistic "heck" is used a few times, and some current slang terms which will seriously date the book for future generations are found, but many of the obnoxious features of much modern youth literature are absent, so most parents will find it a wholesome read for their sports-minded tweens with little that is objectionable. The next book in the series, *Game Changers Book 2: Play Makers*, is due out in February of 2013.

My son loves Mike Lupica's books. We usually listen to them as audio books. However, when this one popped up for review, I requested a copy. We used it as a read aloud, making it part of our homeschool day. Having two boys, I enjoy Lupica's books because they teach me some things about sports and the love of a game, without me getting a headache trying to keep up with the rules. In this book, Shawn is harder on himself when he messes up than anyone else can be. Instantly, my son identified with Shawn. Once my kid feels he's messed up in a game, the rest of the game is ruined for him. When he relaxes and enjoys what he's doing, he throws strike after strike after strike. People stop to stare as he pitches on his park and rec team. But, like Shawn, when the fun stops, so does his confidence and the good attitude goes right down the drain. Haydn and I paid special attention, due to this similarity, to how the character of Shawn was developed, and I was happy with the eventual growth and humility. I hope it helped my son to see himself on the pages of this story. My only real complaint from me is a grammar issue. I have not noticed it in any of Lupica's previous novels. The word "said" seemed to be used every line. No one yelled or cried or told or interjected. They all "said." I started skipping the word and just reading the dialogue. Usually, you could tell who was talking without the said. Perhaps this only bothered me as a writer, and other readers may not even notice. The story was great. We will definitely continue reading Mike Lupica's novels.

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