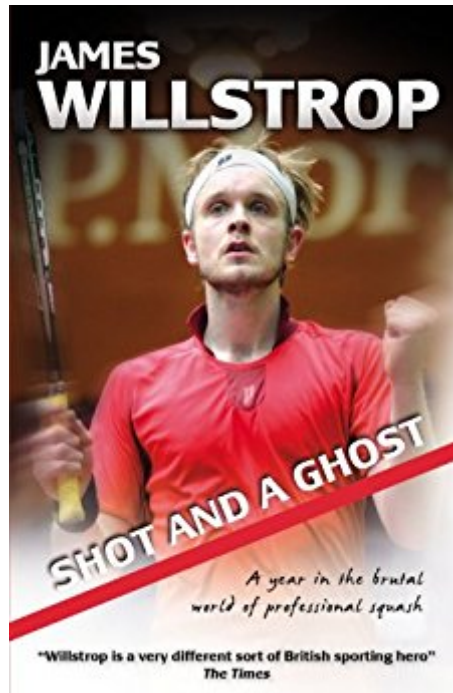


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# Shot And A Ghost: A Year In The Brutal World Of Professional Squash



## Synopsis

James Willstrop is one of the world's leading squash players and one of the sport's most complex and cerebral characters. Brought up in Pontefract, UK, he is anything but the archetypal Yorkshireman - a poetry-loving vegetarian with a love of musicals, Morrissey, Oscar Wilde and Philip Larkin. Fiercely competitive yet renowned for his sportsmanship, he became the world number one in January 2012 despite being accused by many of being 'too nice' to be a winner. At the age of 28 James has just written his first book - a diary style account from January 2010 to February 2011 - which provides a fascinating insight into the life and pressures of an international athlete competing in a sport that takes him all over the world. As critical of himself as of others, he talks openly about his close relationship with his father and coach, Malcolm; the devastating death of his mother, Lesley; and his fierce and often acrimonious rivalry with fellow Yorkshireman and former world number one Nick Matthew. His account of sometimes brutal training sessions reveal the pain and dedication necessary to compete at the top of one of the most physically and mentally demanding sports. Acclaim for *A Shot and a Ghost*: "There aren't many sports books that I read and feel the sportsman himself jumps off the pages. James' book shows the stresses of top level sport on and off the court. A great read." Matt Pinsent, BBC Sport and four times Olympic gold medalist "Willstrop is a very different sort of British sporting hero: a militant vegetarian, lover of musicals, obsessive-compulsive with a constant need to wash his hands and a man who had been coached from childhood by his father. Yet he is also one of Britain's finest ever racket sports players and in this fascinating autobiography, he reveals his journey from the cold municipal courts of Pontefract, through crippling injury and personal despair to the world No 1 ranking in squash. A sportsman who deserves greater publicity than he gets" Patrick Kidd, The Times

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A brilliant and fantastic insight into one of the worlds most under-appreciated sports, and the stresses and strains that professional sportsmen have to endure. The story itself is as heart-warming as it is brutal - it is a true testament to what can be achieved if one is willing to put everything they physically and mentally have into a sport. At times, this is a very difficult read, highlighting the otherwise hidden world of professional sport and how crushing it can sometimes be on a person. As one of the first public outputs from the game of squash, I sincerely hope this grabs the attention of the public, as squash suffers from a severe deficiency in public awareness and support. James talks about himself and the current world no.2 Nick Matthew, who are seldom recognised as two of the greatest British sportsmen of our generation, and whom we should be incredibly proud. One can only hope that this helps to build squashing increasingly positive reputation to the point where the IOC recognise it's benefit and potential. Most of all however, this book serves as a rare illustration to the incredibly positive effects sport and especially squash can have on a person's life and how they can become defined by it. James stands as a truly fantastic role model for sportsmen, a gentleman and a true ambassador for the game. His character will serve as a priceless positive asset for as long as James stays on the PSA Tour - a true genius with a racket as well as being an extraordinarily nice person and unfalteringly moral. To the rest of the sporting world - I urge you to stand up and take note of this spectacular sport, and of this remarkable character and truly gifted sportsman.

I really enjoyed this book. In fact I couldn't put it down once I picked it up. It delivers an open and honest insight into the mind of James Winstrop and a fascinating look at what it takes to be a World Class squash player. From the rivalry with Nick Matthew, to life with a dad as a coach, with insight into his levels of obsessive compulsiveness, and taking on board the effects of his mom dying too soon, James tackles all topics and delivers both a gripping story and a very human one. For anyone who's ever picked up a squash racket or a racket of any sort and wondered what is going on in the

heads of the top players then this book is a must read.

I was really impressed with James' writing style and the way this book read, as it was not ghost written.. It's such a good read you're going to blow right through it. He covers a year of his life on the way to his #1 ranking. At the same time he hits a lot of flashbacks of his youth and how he arrived at where he is as a professional athlete. He tells a very honest story, going into detail about his obsessive compulsive habits, some of which we all have.. Anyone who has lost a parent to cancer can relate and appreciate James's relationship with his mother. I highly recommend this book, not only to squash players but to anyone who enjoys autobiographies by great writers. I would love to see James write a book on Squash Training & Fitness, amassing all he's learned throughout the years. I really think his honest approach to writing would result in a much needed book on the modern approach to squash training.

I really enjoyed the book Jimbo I met you at the North American Open in Richmond, VA last year and really enjoyed watching you play and the book. Thanks and good luck on upcoming season.  
Andrew Stiles [...]

Even if you're not a squash aficionado, this is a powerful and captivating book. James Willstrop has opened a part of his life for his readers, showing himself honestly - even if it means not showing himself in the best light. I empathised and cried with some of his struggles and heartbreak, was stunned at some of the "not so shiny" realities of being a professional sportsman (even if you're world no. 1), felt awe at the mind and body breaking schedule of the life he leads and had a few good belly laughs along the way. I found it interesting and inspiring and I enjoyed his writing style. Take my advice - just read it!!!

I flew through this book- it flows really well and It's impressive that James did this without a ghost writer. After attending my first major squash event as a spectator, I was interested in learning more about the sport and what's it's like to be a professional player. "Shot and a Ghost" is personal, honest, and really gets the reader in on the action. Even non- Squash players such as myself would benefit from reading this book. The themes of discipline, hard work, and integrity are relatable to all fields and by the time I finished, I felt newly inspired. Great read! :-)

It was interesting to learn something about a player that I only know from watching matches on the

internet. For all those squash players out there you will see that the pros are not that different from the rest of us when it comes to the ups and downs, self doubt and elation that come from this great game. For someone who describes himself as shy and somewhat introverted, James gives readers a candid look inside his personal world.

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