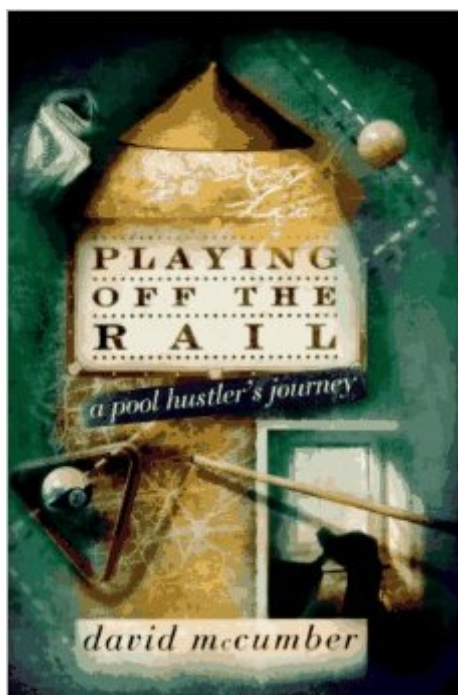


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Playing Off The Rail:: A Pool Hustler's Journey



Synopsis

Award-winning author David McCumber reveals the unknown world of the pool hustler as he travels across the country with one of America's top players, Tony Annigoni. From elegant snookers clubs to high-pressure tournaments to chancy dives, this wise-cracking and occasionally hair-raising road trip explores a distinctive American subculture.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tony Annigoni - house pro and part owner of the Q-Club in San Francisco. David McCumber - pool devotee and writer with some money to spare. These two go on the road across North America hustling games and looking for action. Annigoni plays and generally wins. McCumber bankrolls his bets and sweats on the sidelines taking the notes that turned into this book. McCumber's writing is strong, sometimes a bit too Hunter Thompsonish, but he loves the game and has a visceral sense of humor about the odyssey that could cost him a bundle. Annigoni is a great player, but the opponents are world class and life on the road in cheap hotels, late trains, and all night pool halls is a tiring exercise. This is a good book. Those who play a little pool will enjoy the tense action and will be able to follow the games closely. Those who just enjoy a book about a little-known facet of America's underbelly will be swept along. Those who liked "The Color of Money" will appreciate the reality check.

I just read it again--for the third time and I still found myself laughing out loud at McCumbers dead

on the money descriptions of high level pool hustling. The players he describes are authentic, anyone who has met Keith McCready or Bucktooth can vouch for that, and that is what makes this book so entertaining, that it is an authentic glimpse of big time pool gambling. If you would like to see this in real life, just go to Louisville Kentucky during the first few weeks of January every year and check out the Derby City Classic tournament.

I disliked the artsy writing style and the long blow-by-blow accounts of some of the pool contests . This book gets five stars because it more than makes up for those shortcomings with its amazing stories of gambling, cheating and near violence . Pool should be a game played in clean, modern halls by gentlemen . Yes, but that isn't the case for this author as he hits the road to back a hustler and risk a lot of money . There outta be a movie made outta this !

Very enjoyable read. Well-written, moves along, lots of good humor mixed with a longing for the glory days of the great pool rooms and the legendary hustlers, some of whom make appearances here. Certainly one of the finer pool books but not as amusing as Fats' autobiography, which is so funny it's in a league of its own. Still, McCumber delivers some very fine moments, and this is well worth the time if you've ever thought you knew how to shoot some pool.

I've read a lot of novels on pool this story is one of the best and using real people and places makes the story more fun.....especially for any one that may have been around a some.....read it I'm sure you will also enjoy the book ...

Read while flying to San Francisco, and truly enjoyed the long flight. The writing flows and makes this a great read. The Q Club is still there, although the name has changed, but the description of it and the neighborhood were dead on. A great book for anyone interested in the many games to be played on the billiards table, and for learning about life on the road.

This book was one of the few I have ever read that I simply could not put down. I must say, the author captured the true sensation of the hustler's hunt, the feeling in your stomach that you might eat a fancy steak dinner, or go hungry. As a small-time player myself (or a "shortstop," as the author calls us), I found this book to be truer to life than any other. Moreover, the people and places are still around, for the most part. As a player growing up in Philadelphia, the reference to my old pals was more than accurate; I could barely get a game with those tightwads either, and when I did, I had to

run for my life after winning! This is one fantastic book.

This is without a doubt the most fun I've had reading a book about pool. I couldn't put it down, and I finished it in about two days. About a true life story, this book just makes you want to play. There are some really funny moments in the books with some of the characters. Even though I'll probably never play that good, it just made me want to play. If you're looking for a really fun read that will revitalize your interest in the game this is the one.

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