

Dream Jobs: Meet sportswriter Mike Lupica

By Washington Post, adapted by Newsela staff on 10.04.17

Word Count **574**

Level **810L**



Journalist Mike Lupica appears at the NBA Store in New York City to read his book "Long Shot" to students on January 6, 2009. Photo by: Michael Loccisano/Getty Images.

Mike Lupica has achieved almost everything a sportswriter can achieve. He has written a notable newspaper column for more than 40 years. He has co-written books with sports legends Reggie Jackson, a pro baseball player, and Bill Parcells, a famous football coach. Lupica even hosted a television sports show.

But kids might know Lupica for another reason. He is the author of more than 25 sports books for young readers, including the best-selling titles "Travel Team," "Heat" and "QB 1."

Last week, Lupica answered questions about his job before speaking to a roomful of fans at the Chevy Chase Library in Maryland.

Did you play sports as a kid?

I played baseball, basketball and one year of football, and I ran cross-country. But my best sport was probably golf.

How did you get into sportswriting?

When I was at Boston College, I wrote for three school newspapers. That was where I learned journalism. I also wrote articles for the Boston Globe and Boston Phoenix newspapers.

After college, I went to New York, and a week later I was covering the pro basketball team, the New York Knicks.

What did you learn as a kid that helps you as a sportswriter?

All I ever wanted to do was to write. So when I was 10 years old, I was writing mysteries and adventures with me as the main character. In high school, I wrote columns of one-liners. They were similar to the column I write now, "Shooting From the Lip."

Why did you start writing sports books for kids?

I had no plans to write for kids. Then my son got cut from a basketball travel team. Two days later, I was telling the NBA coach Jeff Van Gundy about my son. He said, "If this was a movie, you would take all the kids who got cut, make your own team, and they would win the big game."

So I took all the kids who had been cut, hired a coach and became the general manager of a unofficial travel team.

How did the team do?

They got better. In the last game, they beat a team that had crushed them at the beginning of the season. They had been knocked down, but they got up.

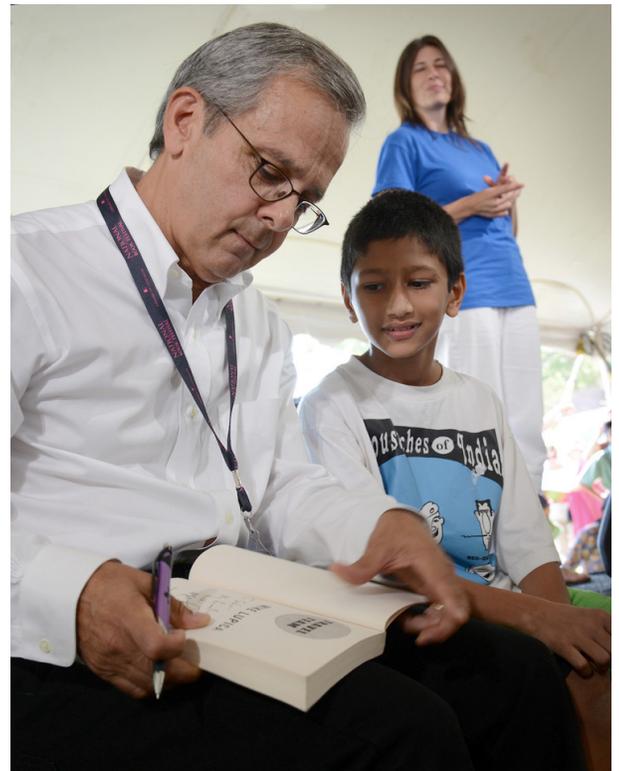
But I couldn't let go of the story of the team. The story became "Travel Team," my first book for kids. It sold 500,000 copies and changed my life as a writer.

Your latest book - "Lone Stars" - is about concussions and brain injuries in football. Why did you write about that?

The book is my way for me to get in on the conversation parents and kids are having about football. The book is not preachy; it just lays things out. Clay's mother is an important character in the book. She is a football fan, but she is also a mom.

What do you want kids to get out of your books?

I want them to learn about the solid foundations of any childhood: friendship and loyalty. In my books, if you are not a good friend and teammate, you are going to have trouble.



#1 bestselling author of TRAVEL TEAM, HEAT,
and FANTASY LEAGUE

MIKE LUPICA

LONE STARS



Quiz

- 1 Read the section "What do you want kids to get out of your books?"
Which of the following is the MOST accurate explanation of this section?
- (A) Lupica hopes his books teach kids to love playing sports.
 - (B) Lupica wants kids to learn how to be a good person from his books.
 - (C) Lupica likes to write about his childhood.
 - (D) Lupica wants kids to learn why concussions are dangerous.
- 2 Select the paragraph that BEST shows Mike Lupica is concerned about the health of kids who play sports.
- 3 Read the section "What did you learn as a kid that helps you as a sportswriter?"
How does this section contribute to the article's MAIN idea?
- (A) It shows that Lupica likes to write about many different things.
 - (B) It explains how Lupica became a sportswriter.
 - (C) It tells readers the name of Lupica's sports column.
 - (D) It shows kids that Lupica started preparing for his career as a kid.
- 4 How effective is the introduction at introducing Mike Lupica?
- (A) The introduction is effective because it tells readers why Lupica is well-known.
 - (B) The introduction is effective because it tells readers about all of Lupica's books.
 - (C) The introduction is not effective because it does not tell the name of Lupica's most popular books.
 - (D) The introduction is not effective because it does not tell where the interview took place.