

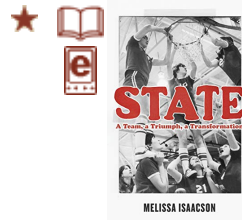
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## Booklist Review

Adult Books - Nonfiction - Sports & Recreation



### State: A Team, a Triumph, a Transformation.

Isaacson, Melissa (author).

Aug. 2019. 320p. Agate/Midway, \$27 (9781572842663); e-book, \$27 (9781572848252). 796.323.

REVIEW. First published [June 1, 2019](#) ([Booklist](#)).

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The mid-to-late seventies were a difficult time for girls' high-school sports. In 1972, President Richard Nixon had signed Title IX, which stated that high-school girls had to have the same athletic opportunities as boys. Good news, of course, but with it came resentment among some male coaches, whose once-exclusive domain was challenged. In 1975, the author was a freshman at Niles West High School in suburban Chicago. This is her account of the nascent girls basketball program at the school and how she and her teammates, plus a dedicated group of coaches and administrators, pooled their talents to win the 1979 Illinois girls high-school championship. Isaacson, who went on to cover the Michael Jordan Bulls as a beat reporter for the *Chicago Tribune* and is now on the faculty of Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism, digs deeply into the bureaucratic struggles it took to get teams up and running. The book is special because Isaacson captures the special bond that formed among the female athletes. Not only were they teammates, they were pioneers of a sort. For example, there were no girls' basketball shoes at the time, so the hunt was on for small Chuck Taylor Converse All Stars, the only basketball shoe available. In the epilogue, Isaacson summarizes the lives of her teammates after high school. They experienced a great deal of success and, of course, some heartache and tragedy as well. A wonderful book that is both eye-opening history and a moving and deeply personal memoir.

— Wes Lukowsky

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