



The author and his Starting Five in the stands at the United Center, home of two of his favorite teams – the Chicago Bulls and Blackhawks. Rabbi Gordon's two most favorite teams? His family and Team Spirit Institute. (Left to Right: Carmi & Rita Muskin; Marilyn, Rabbi James, Sophie & Max Gordon)

Descended from a long tradition of rabbis, Rabbi James (Yaakov Moshe) Gordon leads the day-to-day operations of Team Spirit Institute. He utilizes his experiences as a rabbi, educator, author, administrator, attorney, and parent, in ensuring TSI's success.

A prolific and creative writer, Rabbi Gordon's passion for sports and Jewish education inspired him to write the book *PRAY BALL! The Spiritual Insights of a Jewish Sports Fan* (Gefen Publishing House, Jerusalem/New York, 1999) – a first of its kind in the literary world. The highly favorable reviews and outpouring of support for the original *PRAY BALL!* encouraged him to later found Team Spirit Institute. Rabbi Gordon is widely-recognized for his innovative, engaging and thought-provoking ability to connect the Jewish tradition, as well as universal values, to the world of sports and athletics.

An alumnus of Jewish day schools and summer camping programs, Rabbi Gordon received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Michigan, *S'mikha* (Rabbinic Ordination) from the Hebrew Theological College (Skokie, IL) and a Juris Doctor from the Northwestern University School of Law. He has worked as an attorney and arbitrator in both the public and private sectors. His more than thirty years as an educator and healthcare chaplain have provided Rabbi Gordon with the opportunity of working with Jews of all ages and from all walks of contemporary Jewish life.

Rabbi Gordon and his wife Marilyn, a medical professional, live in suburban Chicago, and are the proud parents of three adult children: Max, Rita (Carmi) and Sophie.

Front Cover: Coach Carmi Muskin reminding his players of the importance of Sportsmanship / *Derekh Eretz v'Khavod* (Respect and Honor), both on and off the court – on the sidelines of the Chicago Bulls' court at the United Center.

Back Cover: The Lady Red All Stars and Lady Blue All Stars exchanging ("Good game!") high fives as part of a sportsmanship line on the Chicago Bulls' court at the United Center.

Cover (Front & Back) and Author Photos: Courtesy of Team Spirit Institute / David Blachman, Photographer



"Rabbi Gordon's book celebrates the capacity of sports to teach young players important values such as respect for fellow participants, optimism, and a strong work ethic . . . I gained so much from my experiences playing sports in middle school, high school and college and was glad to have a chance to read a book that frames the value of sports in a moral and Jewish context."

**REBECCA YOSHOR**

2014 NCAA leader (women & men) in rebounds per game; featured in *Faces In The Crowd* (*Sports Illustrated*); Academic All-America at Yeshiva University Stern College for Women

"Why do we love sports? For the action. For the competition. For the stories. For the joy of rooting as a community. And also for the lessons. Games build character, and that's a lesson Rabbi James M. Gordon understands and illuminates so well in this terrific book."

**JONATHAN EIG**

*New York Times* best-selling author of *Luckiest Man*, *Opening Day*, and *Ali*

"Rabbi Gordon, a one-of-a-kind storyteller, recounts in *PRAY BALL 2!!* stories about the people he loves best: sports figures and rabbis. Interweaving those stories with memorable spiritual insights, he offers here a book that should inspire students of all ages. The more people who read and internalize the values taught in *PRAY BALL 2!!*, the better our world will be."

**DR. JONATHAN D. SARNA**

Joseph H. and Belle R. Braun Professor of American Jewish History, Brandeis University

"*PRAY BALL 2!! Spiritual Insights into Sportsmanship* is an extraordinary work, masterfully blending *Torah* and Jewish knowledge with American culture in an accessible manner for students of all ages."

**RABBI DR. ZEV ELEFF**

Associate Professor of Jewish History, Touro College and University System; Chief Academic Officer, Hebrew Theological College



Why \$28.32? Go to: [www.TeamSpiritInstitute.org](http://www.TeamSpiritInstitute.org)

**TEAM SPIRIT PRESS**  
A Division of Team Spirit Institute

PRAY BALL 2 !! Spiritual Insights Into Sportsmanship

Rabbi James M. Gordon

TEAM SPIRIT PRESS

# PRAY BALL 2!!

## Spiritual Insights Into Sportsmanship

Rabbi James M. Gordon



Preface by Rabbi Dr. Zev Eleff Foreword by Jonathan Eig

*PRAY BALL 2!! Spiritual Insights Into Sportsmanship* is the second book in the *PRAY BALL!* series and is the first in a series of books that each highlight a specific, key value in the world of sports, and provides valuable lessons from Jewish tradition and history about this value. Divided into 30 easy-to-read chapters, the book explores such topics as: (1) Rabbi Gordon's Four Levels of Sportsmanship; (2) Enforcing Sportsmanship; (3) The Causes of and How to Prevent Bad Sportsmanship; and (4) Sportsmanship Awards and Inspirational Quotes.

Sports figures used to illustrate (positive) aspects of sportsmanship (more than 150), include: Michael Jordan, Bill Walton, Coach John Wooden, Sandy Koufax, Mickey Mantle/Roger Maris, Jackie Robinson, Jesse Owens, sisters Serena and Venus Williams, and collegiate softball players Sara Tucholsky and Mallory Holtman. Rabbi Gordon includes stories from all levels of competition, from youth sports to top-tiered professional competition. Figures in Jewish history cited in this book (more than 150) include: *Biblical* heroes Abraham and Sara, King David and Jonathan; *Talmudic* figures *Rabbi Akiva*, his students and his wife Rachel; Sages *Hillel* and *Shammai*, and *Nachum Ish Gamzu*; and such heroes from modern Jewish history as Anne Frank, Professor Nechama Leibowitz and Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook. Not afraid to take on controversial topics, the author examines the challenges that brain injuries bring to life after sports, and how sports is compromised by the use of illegal steroids and other PEDs.

Written especially for sports fans and athletes (boys, girls, men & women) of all ages (12–120), in addition to being an attractive gift item, this book is intended to be used as a textbook / curriculum for youth sports programs in Jewish schools (physical education courses, team sports and intramural competitions), youth groups, summer camps and Jewish Community Centers (year-round and Maccabi competitions).

Proceeds from the sale of this book will be donated to the Team Spirit Institute (TSI), a 501(c)(3) charitable foundation/organization, and will be used to help fund the creation/implementation of supplemental educational materials and future books in these series.

*PRAY BALL 2!!* can also be used as a fundraising gift item for Jewish organizations.

For further information please contact the author at: [RabbiGordon@TeamSpiritInstitute.org](mailto:RabbiGordon@TeamSpiritInstitute.org) / 847.987.7876 or visit: [www.TeamSpiritInstitute.org](http://www.TeamSpiritInstitute.org).

