

Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher: Jessica Hendershot Grade: 7 School: OBMS

Book Title: Gym Candy Genre: Realistic Fiction

Author: Carl Deuker Pages: 313

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Copyright: 2007

In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.

Book Summary and summary citation: (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

Mick Johnson is determined not to make the same mistakes his father, a failed football hero, made. But after being tackled just short of the end zone in a big game, Mick begins using "gym candy," or steroids. His performances become record-breaking, but the side effects are terrible: Mick suffers steroid rage, depression, and body acne. Gym Candy's subject matter is just as hard-hitting as its football scenes. You'll find yourself unable to look away as Mick goes down a road that even he knows is the wrong one to travel

Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s): (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)

Reading Applications: Literary Text Indicator: Explain the defining characteristics of literary forms and genres, including poetry, drama, myths, biographies, autobiographies, science fiction, fiction and non-fiction.

This is a great text that supports a modern problem research topic - peer pressure in sports, peer pressure by parents in sports, attempted suicide, steroid use, friendship,

Include two professional reviews of this title: (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

From Booklist

Having grown up in the shadow of his father's failed NFL career, high-school football player Mick Johnson is determined not to make the same mistakes. But when he's tackled just short of the goal in a pivotal game, he decides that vitamin supplements aren't enough and begins purchasing "gym candy," or steroids, from the trainer at his local gym. His performance starts breaking records and his father couldn't be more proud, but along with gains in muscle, he suffers "roid rage," depression, and unsightly acne. When his secret finally comes out, he attempts suicide. Even after therapy, Mick is left wondering if he'll continue to be tempted by steroids. Deuker skillfully

complements a sobering message with plenty of exciting on-field action and locker-room drama, while depicting Mick's emotional struggles with loneliness and insecurity as sensitively and realistically as his physical ones.

Review #2

VOYA

Mick wants to blame his father for making football his life's focus, but it is only partly true. His dad has carefully planned his football career, even starting Mick in school a year late to give him a size advantage by high school as a running back. On the other hand, his mother does not even want to see the potentially violent and injurious football games. His good friends Drew and DeShawn want to excel at football also, but they were never driven like Mick. Mick was brought down just one foot from the goal line the previous season by an immense Foothill linebacker, so he works all summer to increase his size. He trains with weights to exhaustion and uses steroids to become a star, but in the end, he must accept that he does it for himself and that winning almost costs him his life and all that matters. He willingly puts up with the depression and rages that ensue. He gives up on a budding romance and on hanging out with his friends. This well-written work highlights the "bigger, stronger, faster" competitive culture to which Americans have been conditioned to subscribe in sports. Steroids have become commonplace, but this persuasive story is able to disseminate the facts and heartbreak of their use by showing what can happen to a driven, everyday guy. This story will make a great addition to both school and public libraries and an eye-opening recommendation to all budding athletes.

What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?

Title: Crackback Author: John Coy

Title: Boost Author: Kathryn Mackel

Title: Pop Author: Gordon Korman

Title: Knights of the Hill Country Author: Tim Tharp

Title: Payback Time Author: Carl Deuker

Title: Heart of a Champion Author: Carl Deuker

Document any potentially controversial content:

drinking, drugs, smoking, violence, steroid vocabulary: D-bol, stack, pills, needles, XTR, syringe, 'roid rage,

Page 5 "He kept a keg of beer in the den and whenever he filled his beer stein, he'd let me sip the foam off the top" when Mick was talking about his dad.

Page 122 "He had us do hack squats, leg extensions, and bench presses on a brand-new Smith machine. Peter was very particular about form; every time I did something, he'd put his hand on my arm or leg to show me what I was doing wrong. I tried to listen, but whenever he touched me all I could think was Is this guy gay? A couple of times I looked over at Drew and I knew he was thinking the same thing.

Page 296 "I put my hand in my pocket and felt the metallic coldness of the gun. "You can't go to Carlson," I said, my voice as icy as the revolver. "You can't tell him. You can't tell anybody." I pulled out the revolver and pointed it him [Drew] ... But he didn't stop. I aimed, than then aimed again, but I couldn't pull the trigger. ... The fear went away. I put the revolver to my temple, felt the coldness of the muzzle there, took a deep breath, took another one, and pulled the trigger.

Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)

Gifted/Accelerated Regular At Risk

GRADE LEVEL(S): 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

Reading level of this title (if applicable): Ages 12 and up

Date Submitted to Department Chair: 5/23/2012

Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults