

MIND GAMES

EXPLORATIONS INTO THE MENTAL ARENA OF SPORT

**NO
FEAR**

FEATURING THE PHOTOGRAPHIC IMPRESSIONS OF
TIM MANTOANI



Theo Fleury,
right winger.

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DEDICATED TO JEFF KROSNOFF (1965-1996),
RACE CAR DRIVER WHOSE LIFE WAS CUT SHORT BY
A WRECK AT THE MOLSON INDY RACE IN TORONTO,
FOR HIS COURAGE, STRENGTH AND DEDICATION
THAT INSPIRED US ALL BOTH DURING HIS LIFE
AND AFTER HIS DEATH

M I N D G A M E S

**NO
FEAR**



Brett Favre,
quarterback.



Sammy Duvall,
water-skier.

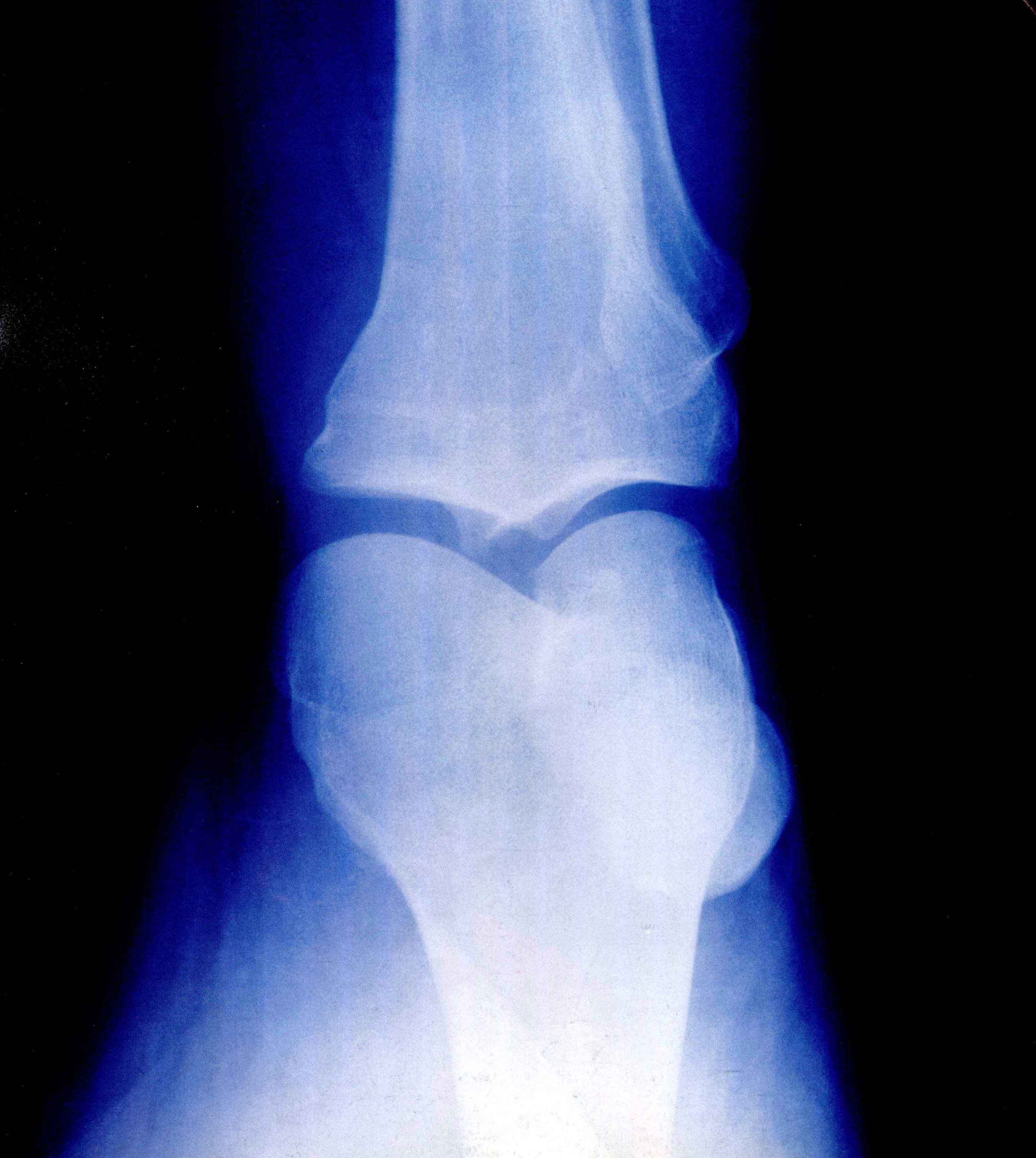
M I N D G A M E S



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Greg Welsh,
triathlete.

F O R E W O R D

From that first moment when a child realizes it makes a difference if he wins or loses, his perceptions of life are changed. Child's play becomes competition, and as the child gains a measure of himself, he defines his dreams, hopes and aspirations. When the child's mind focuses on victory, he becomes a man.

The passion that grows in his heart brings much with it: commitment to hone his skills; an almost primeval desire to defeat any rival who walks on stage to face him; the will to endure setbacks, pain and adversity; and intense mental focus on the strategies and techniques of a chosen sport. The young man sets his sights on his dreams.

In the struggle to reach the very pinnacle of success — and who competes to finish second? — challenges arise, with consequences that can derail life. The most ruthless of Darwinian selection comes into play, crushing the weak and able alike, a never-ending process that separates wheat from chaff.

At every step, more and more of life's competitors realize the limitations of their abilities, their skills and their commitment. Each makes his peace and retires from the battle, his only solace being the knowledge that he pressed his limits, that he plumbed the depths of his soul.

With every new and higher level of refinement, the successful athlete's mental focus grows tighter — and more profound. The purest mental focus comes to the athlete once he has fulfilled all the other requisites of greatness: a nearly unconscious mastery of his craft and unyielding faith in his own physical ability. He can then operate on a different plane, and perform like someone from another planet. His body carries him where his mind wants to go.

Champions, those who have chosen to compete (and compete hard) in this game of life, are what this book is about. On the following pages, you'll find the greatest of champions in all sports, captured in brilliant full-color glory.

But even unquestioned champions — from Hercules to triathlete extraordinaire Greg Welsh — must understand that their greatness is but a shadow cast on the wall. So the champion athlete embraces each victory as if it were the first and last, and revels in it before the flood of time washes him away.

In the end, what separates the champion from the man who never dared is the memory of battles won and battles lost, and with that, the satisfaction of having measured his own soul.

M I N D G A M M E S

No Fear®: Explorations Into the Mental Arena of Sport

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We take these risks, not to escape life, but to keep life from escaping us.

TWO: FOCUS 32

Fear is born when desire dies.

THREE: FAITH 52

At 200 miles per hour, you have no friends.

FOUR: SACRIFICE 72

No scrapes, no scars, no proof.

FIVE: RIVALRY 88

You do not greet death, you punch him in the throat repeatedly until he drags you away.

SIX: PERSEVERANCE 104

Get in, sit down, shut up and hold on.

SEVEN: VICTORY 124

Nothing is more painful than regret.





ONE

DREAMS

DREAMS

"I want." It is part of our nature. As a species we learned long ago that some sense of worth comes from what is earned and what is lost.

So, as children we dreamed of conquests on school yard playgrounds. As adolescents, we dreamed of chicks and cars. Adulthood brings with it the quest for money and power, along with other things — the trophy, the cup, the belt — things that are not freely given.

They can only be acquired first by setting goals and then through victory. The prize is simply one thing taken from another. It is cherished and dreamed about because it's mine and not yours.

It is difficult to determine all that comes with it, as it is handed over from one champion to the next. What is really taken can't be seen. It is the erosion of another man's confidence, and the theft of his exhilaration for having won it in the first place.

It is the realization of our dreams. That is the sweetest taste of victory. But it should also be a reminder that the trophy is temporary.

It comes with one condition: It must be defended. It must be won or lost again. The appetite is never satisfied, and the dream continues.





Jesse James Leija, boxer.

