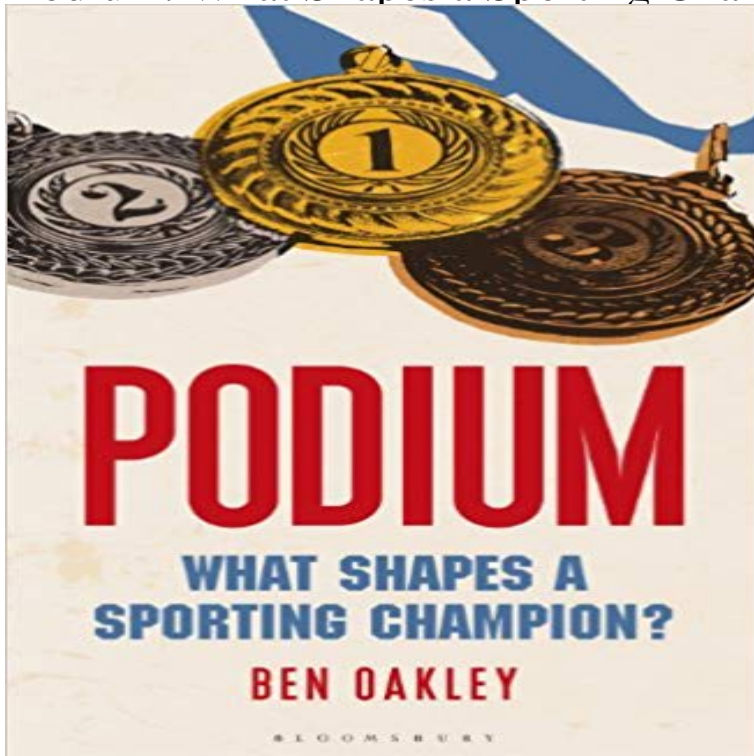


Podium: What Shapes a Sporting Champion?



What does it really take to make the podium? Which of the biological, environmental and psychological factors really shape a champion's route to the top?

To answer these questions, Ben Oakley has taken the original step of combining existing research with a study of leading athletes' autobiographies. Looking at the early histories and initial challenges of serial champions in their own words, *Podium* sheds new light on their commonalities. A similar focus in training, similar influences around them and, above all, similar mental attributes are revealed and tales of individual brilliance are given a fresh twist. From Ian Thorpe, Usain Bolt and Chrissie Wellington to Victoria Pendleton, Lionel Messi and Roger Federer, all we see is a smooth progression to glory, but each is a rocky path punctuated by critical episodes, and it is the response to these events that can transform talented people into winners. *Podium* is fascinating reading for anyone interested in the big names at the peak of their respective sports, and essential for coaches or parents of the next budding star. This enthralling read will enrich your interpretation of champions' lives and provide a map of the complex paths through sport to the podium.

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