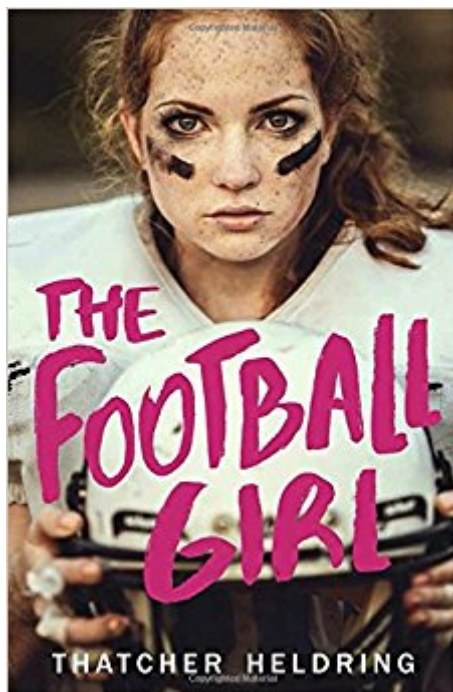


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# The Football Girl



## Synopsis

For every athlete or sports fanatic who knows she's just as good as the guys. This is for fans of *The Running Dream* by Wendelin Van Draanen, *Grace, Gold, and Glory* by Gabrielle Douglass and *Breakaway: Beyond the Goal* by Alex Morgan. The summer before Caleb and Tessa enter high school, friendship has blossomed into a relationship . . . and their playful sports days are coming to an end. Caleb is getting ready to try out for the football team, and Tessa is training for cross-country. But all their structured plans derail in the final flag game when they lose. Tessa doesn't want to end her career as a loser. She really enjoys playing, and if she's being honest, she likes it even more than running cross-country. So what if she decided to play football instead? What would happen between her and Caleb? Or between her two best friends, who are counting on her to try out for cross-country with them? And will her parents be upset that she's decided to take her hobby to the next level? This summer Caleb and Tessa figure out just what it means to be a boyfriend, girlfriend, teammate, best friend, and someone worth cheering for. A great next choice for readers who have enjoyed Catherine Gilbert Murdock's *Dairy Queen* and Miranda Kenneally's *Catching Jordan*. "SLJ Fast-paced football action, realistic family drama, and sweet romance" "[will have] readers looking for girl-powered sports stories" [find[ing] plenty to like. "Booklist Tessa's ferocious competitiveness is appealing." Kirkus Reviews "[The Football Girl] serve[s] to illuminate the appropriately complicated emotions both of a young romance and of pursuing a dream. Heldring writes with insight and restraint." The Horn Book

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## Customer Reviews

“A great next choice for readers who have enjoyed Catherine Gilbert Murdock’s Dairy Queen and Miranda Kenneally’s Catching Jordan.” SLJ “Fast-paced football action, realistic family drama, and sweet romance” “[will have] readers looking for girl-powered sports stories” “[find] plenty to like.” Booklist “Tessa’s ferocious competitiveness is appealing.” Kirkus Reviews “[The Football Girl] serve[s] to illuminate the appropriately complicated emotions both of a young romance and of pursuing a dream. Heldring writes with insight and restraint.” The Horn Book

THATCHER HELDRING grew up in the Pacific Northwest, where he taught himself to write and play sports “though not at the same time. Heldring has had several jobs in publishing. He has also worked as a grocery bagger, a ditchdigger, a small forward, a goalie, a scorekeeper, a coach, a rabid fan, a benchwarmer, and a shortstop. He lives with his wife and son in Seattle, a good place for indoor sports. He is the author of Toby Wheeler: Eighth-Grade Benchwarmer, Roy Morelli Steps Up to the Plate, The League, and The Football Girl. To learn more about Thatcher and his books, visit him online at [spitballinc.com](http://spitballinc.com) or follow @theldring on Twitter.

The ending kinda sucked. If you're looking for the girl who becomes this big football girl and kicks all their asses then this is NOT the book for you.

It's a sports story, sure. It's got a feminist theme, sure. But the reader does NOT need to be an athlete or even to think about feminism to find this completely engrossing and enjoyable. You will love at least one character and like many of them. You will recognize middle school and high school stuff whether you're in the midst of them now or long past them. I hope the author considers writing about what happens later to this batch of kids. For me it was a cover-to-cover, nonstop read!

Afterward I kept remembering (actually, I keep remembering) scenes as if I'd been there and seen them play out. When the movie gets made, I may not go, because the images I created from the book are so vivid and satisfying. Aw, who am I kidding? When the movie is made, I'll be in line for tickets on the opening night.

Tessa is a 14-year-old average girl who enjoys team sports, she has just won a race with her best

friends who are hoping to join the high school team. She does everything to get attention from parents who are focused on her mother's political career. Caleb is also a normal 14-year-old boy who likes to follow family traditions. His father played football, his older brother Charles plays and he is following in their footsteps. He has his brother as a great counselor and example and in teaching Tessa to play flag football he never imagined that he would be encouraging her friend to follow in his footsteps and provoke a real revolution. Football is a tough sport only for boys, is not it? Big mistake .... Narrated in the first person alternating Tessa and Caleb, the writer presents the doubts proper to adolescence, the need for recognition and self-affirmation and the discovery of love. With simple, straightforward language with short chapters, he weaves the plot on prejudice and pattern release in a light and pleasant way with a sweet backdrop storyline until it all comes to a very interesting and motivating ending. The first thing that attracted me to the book was the cover that in my view conveys this atmosphere of feminine challenge and struggle, because the challenge of Tessa is to prove that football can be a sport for girls. I don't favorite it because I do not understand anything about football and in some chapters I was a bit lost in the details presented about the game, leaving the reading a little slower. Recommend. 4/5 stars Kisses, My!

Thatcher Heldring has written a book with a strong female lead who shows that when you really want something and are willing to work hard for it then gender boundaries begin to dissipate. Don't let it fool you. Although this is the perfect junk food book, as in one to read to just to pass the time and not expect life changing mantras from, there is still a good bit to glean from it. It's not a bad book but I can see this being for a very niche audience. There's a lot of play by play football scenes so if you're not into football or not into reading about football you're probably going to get bored easily. But if you're into women exploding across gender boundaries and succeeding at it, even if you don't like football, then you'll be able to find something worthy about using your time to check this book out. There is more than football though. There's the obligatory romance since it is after all a YA novel. There's also the prototypical parents who don't seem to care about anything other than themselves. As an adult reading this, although I didn't care about the romance aspect, seeing the parent-child relationship was eye opening because I think as adults you do get too wrapped up in your own life and forget how that can appear to your kid particularly if it seems your child has become more of a tool to further your image than a human being in need of your love. It's a very short book, with very short chapters and is written with a quick pace so you have no excuse to not check it out unless of course you're anti-football.

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