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Hoop Genius: How a Desperate Teacher and a Rowdy Gym Class Invented Basketball

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Book Review

Title: Hoop Genius: How a Desperate Teacher and a Rowdy Gym Class Invented Basketball

Author: John Coy

Illustrator: Joe Morse

Reviewer: Ariel Woodbury

Publisher: Carolrhoda Books

Publication Year: 2013

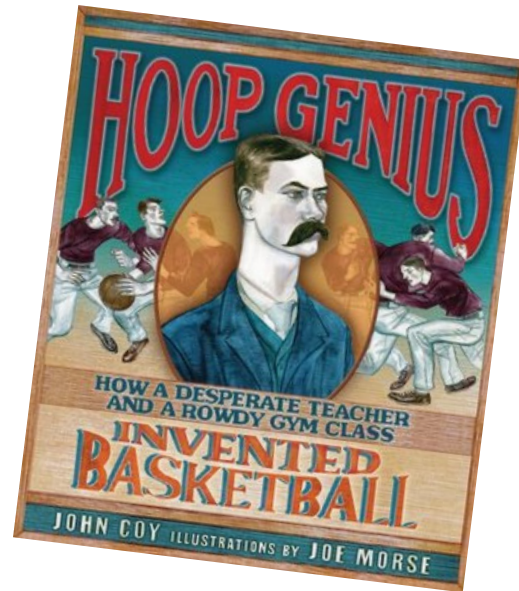
ISBN: 9780761366171

Number of Pages: 30

Interest Level: Preschool

Rating: Excellent

Review



James Naismith takes over a rowdy gym class that has already made two teachers quit. He tries to play football and soccer with them, but the kids keep getting hurt. One night he stays up trying to think of a game to play with them where they couldn't run with the ball (to prevent tackling). He remembers a game he played as a kid called Duck on a Rock that he adapts into basketball. The first day he tries out his new game, the kids are still too rough. But Naismith sets up the game so that if a player gets two fouls they can't play, so the kids quickly learn to play by the rules. Basketball spreads and becomes very popular.

This is an excellent book to teach children about history in a fun way! Children who play basketball or like watching games will especially love this storybook that is also a history book. There are a few sentences, at most, on a page so it isn't very heavy reading. The illustrations are full spreads and energetic, although the color scheme is rather muted. The story should give parents the opportunity to discuss historical inequality between men and women as well as between races. Nothing is brought up explicitly within the story, there is a women's basketball game and a modern day African American player, so the book presents a good introduction should parents or teachers choose to bring it up. Overall, a good book grounded in history.