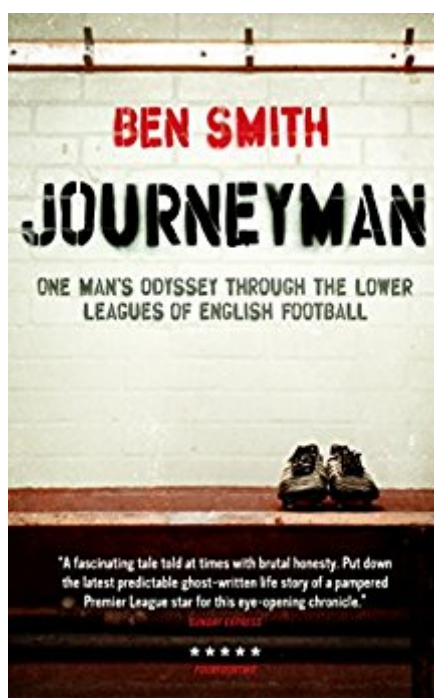


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# Journeyman: One Man's Odyssey Through The Lower Leagues Of English Football



## Synopsis

**BEN SMITH: PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER.** Recognise the name? Of course you don't. That's because most of Smith's years in the game were spent outside the vaunted, big-money environs of the Premier League - and this sporting memoir is all the more entertaining as a result. 1995: an adolescent Ben arrives at the training ground of one of England's biggest clubs to begin his journey and realise his dream of playing top-flight professional football. Aged just sixteen, he shares pre-season sessions at Arsenal with the likes of Dennis Bergkamp and Ian Wright. Surely this is the start of a stellar career? Instead, the next seventeen years saw the bright young star descend the ranks from Highbury to obscurity. With seasons playing for the likes of Reading, Yeovil, Southend, Hereford, Shrewsbury and Weymouth - and a career including three promotions, one relegation and some very memorable FA Cup games - Ben's story is one of a quintessential journeyman footballer. Candidly describing the negotiations, insecurities, injuries, relocations, personal implications and wet Saturday afternoons playing in front of 500 people, *Journeyman* offers a unique insight into the unvarnished life of a lower-league player - so far removed from the stories of pampered Premiership stars - as well as documenting the many teammates, opponents, managers and coaches who left an indelible mark on Ben's eclectic career. Refreshingly unsentimental and often hilarious, Smith's story is essential reading for all true fans of the not-always-so-beautiful game.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I've yet to discover a book written by a footballer that exclusively plied his trade in the lower echelons of the English game that is both as entertaining and fascinating as this. The author struggled to maintain the self-discipline and consistency in his game that may have allowed him to play at a higher level, and he is honest and self-critical about this, as well as about some poor career choices he made. Life in the lower divisions is described in some detail, and the lack of career stability these footballers experience is an eye-opener. One does tire of reading the self-indulgent, self-glorifying autobiographies from famous footballers that crop up from time to time, and it often seems to be the more 'ordinary' players that come out with some truly entertaining stories (e.g. Tony Cascarino's brilliant 'Full Time' and Brian McClair's 'Odd Man Out'). This is one such story. Recommended.

Great read. Having read many footballer autobiographies, I would recommend this one to anyone looking for a glimpse into life outside the bubble at the very top.

Couldn't put this book down it was fascinating . Must read for any fan of the great game of football.

Very interesting read to get a perspective of a footballer's life in the unglamorous lower leagues.

I found this to be very difficult to read, not because it was poorly written but because of the attitude of the subject, here is a person born with a gift that was completely disregarded, thrown away, no moral character, really unforgivable. He was making so much money for nothing. It is not an odyssey it's story about wasted opportunity, unforgivable IMHO. I hope his wife has a strong backbone she will, in the future, I'm sure, need it.

The book is enjoyable enough but it is incredibly frustrating to keep reading over and over again how Smith throws away every opportunity he has to be a successful footballer. This book should be required reading for all aspiring footballers on how NOT to conduct yourself. Damn. It was frustrating to read about this arrogant kid just wasting his talent. Definitely an odyssey through the

lower leagues but mainly as a result of self-inflicted injury.

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