



## Clearing Hurdles

*Dan O'Brien*

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## **Clearing Hurdles** Dan O'Brien

Only one man, the Olympic Gold Medalist in the decathlon, is officially deemed the World's Greatest Athlete. As an orphan who is never met his biological parents, as a recovering alcoholic, as the subject of a timelessly infamous advertising campaign, as the athlete of maybe the most publicized and shocking failure in the history of sports, and as a man who persevered through it all to dominate his sport like few athletes ever have, it is no wonder Track & Field News calls Dan's life, the stuff movies are made of.

Dan's meteoric rise to prominence saw him take the No. 1 world ranking less than two years removed from his only college season, and he became an overnight celebrity when cast alongside Dave Johnson in Reebok's massive Dan & Dave ad campaign. The commercials debuted during the Super Bowl, but when O'Brien infamously failed to qualify for the Olympic team it was called the most shocking moment in U.S. Olympic history, and to this day ESPN ranks it as one of the all-time sports busts.

Undeterred, O'Brien went on to capture his record-tying fifth national championship in addition to a third consecutive world championship the first decathlete in history to do so. Then at the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta, with what seemed like an entire country in his corner, O'Brien completed his tale of redemption by becoming the oldest decathlete to ever win an Olympic gold medal.

Now, through the pages of this profoundly inspiring and fast-paced memoir, Dan will chronicle his extraordinary career. *Clearing Hurdles* also offers a window into the world of the decathlon and an inside look at some of its most influential athletes. O'Brien offers an insiders view of some of the greatest Olympic decathletes -- of Bill Toomey the intellectual artist, Milt Campbell the most inspirational, and Bruce Jenner as the man most driven.

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