

  
PEACHTREE  
**DISCUSSION GUIDE**

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## Outside Shot

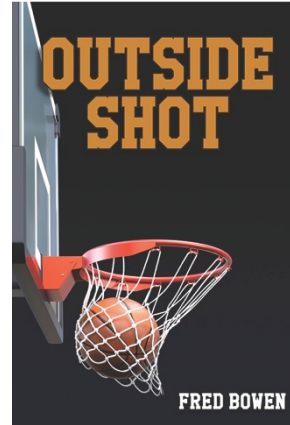
Written by Fred Bowen

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Ages 7–12 | Realistic Fiction  
Fred Bowen Sports Stories Series  
AR • AC • Lexile • F&P • GRL Q; Gr 4



### ABOUT THE SERIES

Fred Bowen’s fast-paced middle-grade stories offer readers themes of competition, cooperation, facing change, gender roles, overcoming challenges, and new experiences. In addition, they feature play-by-play action, snappy dialogue, and engaging plots. Bowen’s books are not the usual sports-fiction fare; each book loops in a little sports history and includes back matter with fascinating glimpses into that history and the heroes who made it happen.

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Richie Mallon is great at shooting the basketball. When the ball leaves his hand, it’s going in the bucket. Richie is sure he will be the starting shooting guard for the Knights, his middle school team. But when his shot deserts him, Richie is not sure of his place on the team. How can he help the Knights if he is not the team’s number one shooter?

### THEMES

Personal identity | Changing and learning new skills  
Hard work | Teammates | Family | Friends

### WRITING PROMPTS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

aligned with **Common Core Reading Standards**

#### DIRECTIONS

Use details from the text to support ALL of your responses.

#### CHAPTERS 1–3

- What does the author tell the reader about Richie Mallon in the first chapter? What does he tell the reader about Richie’s family?
- Describe the place where Richie and Bryce run. What do they talk about during their run?
- Describe Coach Sheridan. Bryce says Coach Sheridan is “plenty tough.” How do you know that is true?

#### CHAPTERS 4–6

- Describe some of the members of the team. What are the team practices like? What drill does Richie really dislike?
- How does Richie feel about starting the first game on the bench? How do you know he feels that way?
- What do the statistics on page 38 tell you about how Richie did in the game against Burr Middle School?
- What do the statistics tell you about some of the other players on the Knights?

**CHAPTERS 7–9**

- Describe the Anderson Tree Farm and the woman who owns it. Compare the tree farm to the other places in the book (the gym, school, and Richie’s home).
- What is the play that the Knights run at the end of the game against Saratoga? Does the play work?
- What is Cammy’s job with the team? How does she feel about Richie? How does he feel about her? How can you tell?

**CHAPTERS 10–12**

- What is happening to Richie’s ability to shoot the basketball? How does this change him?
- What do the statistics in chapter 11 tell you about what is happening to Richie?
- What is Cammy’s advice to Richie? What is Bryce’s advice? Compare the two friends advice. Does Richie believe them?

**CHAPTERS 13–15**

- Compare and contrast the Whites (the Knights’ first team) to the Blues (the Knights’ second team).
- How is the way Richie plays in chapter 13 different from the way he played in the games in chapters 6 and 8?
- How is this difference indicated in the statistics on page 99 and the statistics on page 38? Do the statistics tell you anything about another player who may be getting better?
- What does Richie do at the end of chapter 15? What does that tell you about what is happening to Richie?

**CHAPTERS 16–18**

- At the end of the game against Fair Hill, Richie passes the ball to Link. How does this show how Richie has changed since the beginning of the season? How does it show how Link has changed?
- Compare and contrast the relationship between Richie and Cammy at the beginning of the season to their relationship as they run through Stone Creek Park.

**OVERALL QUESTION**

In just a few words, write down what this whole story is about (the overall theme or big idea). Explain your response.

**“THE REAL STORY” FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS**

- The Real Story tells about some of the great shooters in basketball history. What other skills did these great shooters possess?
- How does the experience of those players compare to what happens to Richie in *Outside Shot*?

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Fred Bowen is the author of Peachtree’s popular Fred Bowen Sports Story series. A lifelong sports fanatic, he has coached youth league baseball, softball, soccer, and basketball. His kids’ sports column “The Score” appears each week in the KidsPost section of the *Washington Post*. Bowen lives in Maryland.

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