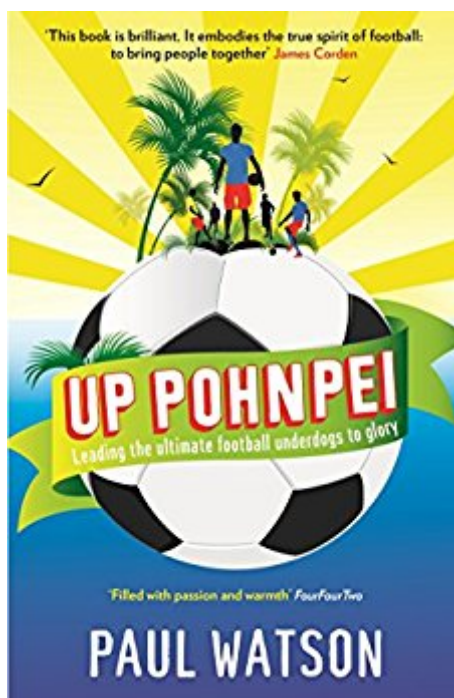


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Up Pohnpei: Leading The Ultimate Football Underdogs To Glory



Synopsis

After one too many late night discussions, football journalist Paul Watson and his mate Matthew Conrad decide to find the world's worst national team, become naturalised citizens of that country and play for them - achieving their joint boyhood dream of playing international football and winning a 'cap'. They are thrilled when Wikipedia leads them to Pohnpei, a tiny, remote island in the Pacific whose long-defunct football team is described as 'the weakest in the world'. They contact Pohnpei's Football Association and discover what it needs most urgently is leadership. So Paul and Matt travel thousands of miles, leaving behind jobs, families and girlfriends to train a rag-tag bunch of novice footballers who barely understand the rules of the game. Up Pohnpei tells the story of their quest to coach the team and eventually, organise an international fixture - Pohnpei's first since a 16-1 defeat many years ago. With no funding, a population whose obesity rate is 90 percent and toad-infested facilities in one of the world's wettest climates, their journey is beset by obstacles from the outset. Part travelogue, part quest, Up Pohnpei shows how the passion and determination of two young men can change the face of football - and the lives of total strangers - on the other side of the world.

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Customer Reviews

I have never really been a soccer fan (I am an Indiana University Grad, and this is the basketball state!), but I am Pohnpeian/American! I love the island culture and I embrace my culture to the fullest. I was shopping for books I came across this book, read what few reviews it had and thought "ehhhh ill give it a try?" I could not stop reading! I enjoyed the sense of humor through out the book. I enjoyed the details as he describes the people of pohnpei along with the players. I thoroughly enojyed the entire book! I highly recommend it! Thanks!

Really entertaining and a fun read. Having traveled extensively throughout Micronesia, I really appreciated the cultural aspects of this book

Awesome

So I was browsing reddit 5 days ago, as I usually do. A film student by the name of Matt Conrad had posted an AMA about how he was a "novice soccer coach that led the `worst team in the world' to their first ever international victory". Football is big in my family - I refereed for many years, up until knee problems got in the way, and my dad still does referee. We all support Nottingham Forest. Understandably, this AMA took my interest and learned that Matt Conrad and his friend Paul Watson flew to a small island in Micronesia called Pohnpei, and formed a team with themselves as coaches. Matt filmed the latter part of their journey (google 'The Soccermen' to find out more), and sports writer Paul wrote and published a book about it, which, to my luck, is readily available on kindle for \$9.99. It all started out with the two football-mad men wanting to play internationally, mostly for the love of the game and because they weren't good enough to play for England. Or any English team, for that matter. That got dashed fairly quickly upon realising that they would probably need to give up british citizenship to play, and, more importantly, these teams needed dedicated coaches, not players. This led them to Pohnpei, the only place to have never won a game against another country's team. Pohnpei, as I mentioned before, is in Micronesia, which, if you didn't know, is also one of the wettest places on the planet. It's raining constantly - the Englishmen thought they knew rain but they had another thing coming. Combined with that, they were met with several financial difficulties as they tried to establish funding (much of it came from their own pockets) and met with a near-infuriating laid-back island attitude towards commitment to the team. I was not surprised to learn that FIFA was an uninterested bureaucratic nightmare that gave them absolutely no help. Regardless, Matt and Paul managed to get a decent team together, they managed to form a

league, and they managed to get their team to Guam to do a 3 game tour. Everything culminates with that tour - if they are marginally successful, then Guam has pledged funding to get proper fields and an international team for Micronesia going. I really enjoyed reading this. It's a great bucket list story for sports fans like my dad and myself. The book itself is fairly simplistically written - but I guess that's to be expected and I don't think it takes away from the story-line too much - it's positively begging to be turned into a big Hollywood movie. 4/5

I am not generally much of a soccer fan but when I heard about this book I just had to read it. Basically it tells the story of football journalist Paul Watson and his friend Matt's quest to turn around the fortunes of what was dubbed to be "the worst football team in the world". Told with much humour the book takes you to the Micronesian Island of Pohnpei where the pair's efforts are persistently thwarted by a serious lack of funds, a flagging team of undisciplined overweight players with no kit, and unrelenting monsoon weather. As you read it you can see the movie unfolding before your eyes: stories of a local penchant for the narcotic effects of the betel nut, frogs on the football pitch, shopping in Pohnpei with its dearth of fresh foods, and a hugely expensive and unreliable internet service making contact with the UK nigh on impossible. I can't imagine anyone not enjoying this story - it's a thoroughly good read and one that I couldn't put down.

Look, I'll be honest with you, I haven't read the book yet, although I did just order it all the way from the UK, but I'm here to try and help the guys finish their movie. Just recently, they've started a Kickstarter project, and want to finish their film based on the book. I really want to watch this movie! If you've come here after watching Soccer AM today or from anywhere really, go to Kickstarter and search for "The Soccermen". That's all I'm going to say. Oh, and buy the book too! BTW - Don't know the guys, not affiliated with them, I just think the story looks really interesting and fun, and think it would make a great documentary.

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