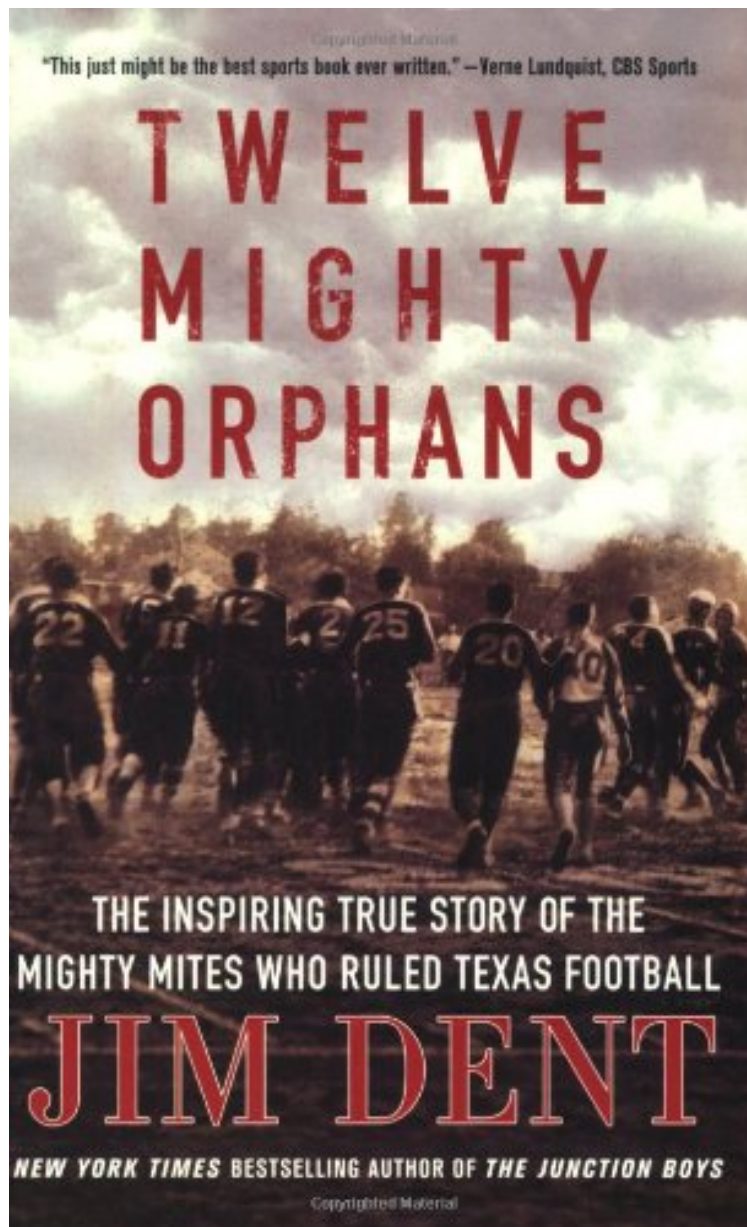


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## Twelve Mighty Orphans: The Inspiring True Story of the Mighty Mites Who Ruled Texas Football

*Jim Dent*

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**Jim Dent : Twelve Mighty Orphans: The Inspiring True Story of the Mighty Mites Who Ruled Texas Football** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Twelve Mighty

## Orphans: The Inspiring True Story of the Mighty Mites Who Ruled Texas Football:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. One of the finest true stories of what can be accomplished by a ...By Eugene M. Mc Master  
One of the finest true stories of what can be accomplished by a wise, resourceful and dedicated coach. He began a program where the school did not even have a practice or playing field, a football, shoes, uniforms, etc., let alone a sizeable population of students, around 140 including girls. You cannot believe what these 12 boys were able to do to schools with much larger student populations, more than adequate equipment and facilities and the national attention and following they eventually won. A real winner. Gene  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enough to Thrive  
By Dewey Johnson  
Inasmuch as I have been privileged to know the Morton descendants of Rusty and Juanita Russell - Betty Russell Morton, her husband A.C., and their children - I also consider it a privilege to have read Dent's account of the family history at the Masonic Home and School. What Coach Russell did with the football team there is a story that needs telling to many more people than just those who read books nowadays. Here's hoping that along with "Seabiscuit" and "Unbroken" that one day "Twelve Mighty Orphans" will grace the silver screen with its testament to the joyous life that can be had in spite of having less than what others deem necessary. Enough is still enough.  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Hooked in the Chapter 1  
By Cherylynn3I  
I purchased Jim Dent's "The Boys Got It Right" for my husband, as he'd immensely enjoyed "Junction Boys." At hubby's urging, I also read those two Dent books, and we are both now hooked on his work...but for different reasons. I enjoy "back stories" and tales of character forged during hard times of simpler days. He pursues examples of excellence and achievement. "Twelve Might Orphans" is my favorite of these three tales, and it's made even more appealing by personal familiarity with Texas towns and iconic characters. Should you have reluctant readers age 12+ in your family who also happen to be sports fans, this tale will hook them in chapter 1 - guaranteed! Both my nephew and my uncle rediscovered the pleasures of a great book in the "off season."

Jim Dent, author of the New York Times bestselling *The Junction Boys*, returns with his most powerful story of human courage and determination. More than a century ago, a school was constructed in Fort Worth, Texas, for the purpose of housing and educating the orphans of Texas Freemasons. It was a humble project that for years existed quietly on a hillside east of town. Life at the Masonic Home was about to change, though, with the arrival of a lean, bespectacled coach by the name of Rusty Russell. Here was a man who could bring rain in the midst of a drought. Here was a man who, in virtually no time at all, brought the orphans' story into the homes of millions of Americans. In the 1930s and 1940s, there was nothing bigger in Texas high school football than the Masonic Home Mighty Mites—a group of orphans bound together by hardship and death. These youngsters, in spite of being outweighed by at least thirty pounds per man, were the toughest football team around. They began with nothing—not even a football? yet in a few years were playing for the state championship on the highest level of Texas football. This is a winning tribute to a courageous band of underdogs from a time when America desperately needed fresh hope and big dreams. The Mighty Mites remain a notable moment in the long history of American sports. Just as significant is the depth of the inspirational message. This is a profound lesson in fighting back and clinging to faith. The real winners in Texas high school football were not the kids from the biggest schools, or the ones wearing the most expensive uniforms. They were the scrawny kids from a tiny orphanage who wore scarred helmets and faded jerseys that did not match, kids coached by a devoted man who lived on peanuts and drove them around in a smoke-belching old truck. In writing a story of unforgettable characters and great football, Jim Dent has come forward to reclaim his place as one of the top sports authors in America today. A remarkable and inspirational story of an orphanage and the man who created one of the greatest football teams Texas has ever known . . . this is their story? the original Friday Night Lights." This just might be the best sports book ever written. Jim Dent has crafted a story that will go down as one of the most artistic, one of the most unforgettable, and one of the most inspirational ever. *Twelve Mighty Orphans* will challenge Hoosiers as the feel-good sports story of our lifetime. Naturally, being from Texas, I am biased. Hooray for the Mighty Mites."? Verne Lundquist, CBS Sports "Coach Rusty Russell and the Mighty Mites will steal your heart as they overcome every obstacle imaginable to become a respected football team. Take an orphanage, the Depression, and mix it with Texas high school football, and Jim Dent has authored another winner, this one about the ultimate underdog." ? Brent Musburger, ABC Sports/ESPN "No state has a roll call of legendary high school football stories like we do in Texas, and, admittedly, some of those stories have been 'expanded' over the years when it comes to the truth. But let Jim Dent tell you about the Mighty Mites of Masonic Home, the pride of Fort Worth in the dark days of the Depression. Read this book. You will think it's fiction. You will think it's a Hollywood script. But *Twelve Mighty Orphans* is the truth, and nothing but. It is powerful stuff. Some eighty years later, the Mighty Mites' story remains so sacred, not even a Texan would dare tamper with these facts. And Jim Dent tells it like it was."? Randy Galloway, columnist, Fort-Worth Star Telegram

From Publishers Weekly  
Dent, who told the story of Bear Bryant's brutal preseason training of the 1954 Aggies in *The Junction Boys*, turns to the incredible story of Rusty Russell and his undersized team of orphans who dominated the

gridiron of Texas high school football for the better part of the 1930s. True underdogs, most boys from the Masonic Home never held a real football; they used two socks stuffed together as footballs and, when Russell first took over, used Clabber Girl baking cans during practice. But the lean, scrappy Mighty Mites—as they were later dubbed—achieved an 8-2 record their first season of play in Class B. A few years later, in 1932, they moved up to Class A, the big leagues of high school football at the time. There, the Mites would face teams that outweighed them by as much as 50 pounds per man and fielded 47 players to their 12, and the orphans would win. Dent's strength is his play-by-play accounts of key games, but descriptions of personal interactions are often forced and lifeless. Also, many characters and events that are introduced at length don't factor significantly into the larger story line. Dent does more to mythologize the team and its players than to give them flesh and blood. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist The Masonic Home, an orphanage outside Fort Worth, became a high-school football dynasty in Depression-era Texas. Despite having virtually no equipment or uniforms, and despite their linemen often being outweighed by 50 pounds, the Mighty Mites, as they came to be known, reached the Texas state semifinals three times and the championship game once. Dent, author of *The Junction Boys* (1999), another inspirational story of Texas football, produces a riveting narrative from the saga of the Mites and their innovative coach, Rusty Russell, who compensated for his team's physical shortcomings with imaginative formations and trick plays. Using extensive first-person research and, when that wasn't possible, interviews with the immediate descendants of the principals, Dent builds a sense of drama and immediacy by placing readers in the heart of the Depression and a Texas that still had a bit of the Wild West in it. This is *Seabiscuit* for football fans, sure to attract narrative nonfiction fans who like to mix sports, inspiration, and popular history. Lukowsky, Wes “Dent builds a sense of drama and immediacy ... This is *Seabiscuit* for football fans, sure to attract narrative nonfiction fans who like to mix sports, inspiration, and popular history.” ?Booklist “The Mites' story is inspiring.” ?Kirkus s “Incredible story...Dent's strength is his play-by-play accounts of key games.” ?Publishers Weekly