

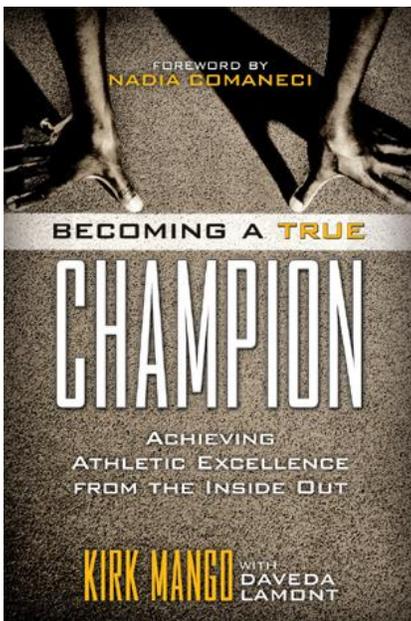
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## PRESS RELEASE

### SPORTS ON THE EDGE: ARE TRUE CHAMPIONS BECOMING EXTINCT?

Athlete, Coach, Author Kirk Mango Shows Athletes the Path to *Becoming a True Champion*

Naperville, IL (April 2012) In a world where athletes are celebrities and fame and fortune comes with high scrutiny and expectations, how do some manage to escape the bad media attention and be true champions? Why do some make the choices they do and garner that attention, giving athletes, in general, a bad name? Hall of Fame athlete Kirk Mango (a former National Champion, All-American, coach and author) shows athletes the meaning of *Becoming a True Champion*, utilizing the principals he learned that took him from a mediocre gymnast to one who defeated several Olympians and became known as "The Lord of the Rings."



In a desire to share his own story and wisdom on how to achieve success—both athletically and personally—Mango authored *Becoming a True Champion: Achieving Athletic Excellence from the Inside Out*, with Daveda Lamont (Rowman & Littlefield, \$17.95, May 2012). In it he tells the story of how he became a state champion in just one year. A self-described “mediocre” high school gymnast, Mango reached a turning point, making a life-changing decision that put him on the path to success.

Today, Mango focuses not on what it means to be a champion—but instead on how to *become one*. As a teacher, coach and mentor to high school students for over 30 years, he says that being successful is a process that requires hard work, discipline, perseverance, integrity and taking personal responsibility, something often not modeled in professional athletes. Blaming "everything outside the athlete," from poor referee calls to weather, shifts responsibility away from the athlete, Mango believes; staying true to one's own individuality and taking responsibility are the keys to achieving one's goals.

“So many young people are focused on immediate gratification today. They don't want to work for it,” says Mango. “But success takes time, and requires tapping into one’s internal, intrinsic motivations and being unwilling to give up.”

And while the outcome of this work might be a championship (fame or fortune) - it might not, but the building blocks behind success are established, portable and can apply to all areas of life.

Does that mean it will be easy? "Not at all," says Mango. "Students, and all athletes, face significant peer pressures and influences today, including cheating and other poor ethical choices, entitlement-type attitudes, steroids, and the like. Adversity can be a good thing, but when students rise above and stay true to their goals, these challenges can build character and mental discipline crucial for success."

And Mango's friends agree. Olympic champions like Nadia Comaneci and Bart Conner have endorsed the book, along with New York Giants punter, Steve Weatherford, and other sports experts and athletes.

"I have known Kirk for many years. As a fellow competitor, I know how hard Kirk worked to become an NCAA champion, said Conner. "I can attest to the fact that we need more coaches, teachers, and mentors like Kirk Mango. His message is more than an expert lecture on the keys to sports success, but rather a hands-on demonstration of how inner will and determination supports the concept of becoming the best one can be."

*Becoming a True Champion* is for athletes of all abilities and ages, and gives readers insight on how to achieve their personal best and avoid the pitfalls of temptations and influences that create a shortcut to success, but not long-term success.

The book is available on Amazon.com, BarnesandNoble.com and through the publisher, Rowman & Littlefield. For more information about Kirk Mango and his book, visit <http://becomingatruechampion.com/>.

### **About the Authors**

Nicknamed "Lord of the Rings" in the late 1970's, **Kirk Mango** received a state championship, a high school All-American award and full scholarship to compete in men's gymnastics in the still rings. He went on to compete nationally while in college, defeating several Olympians along the way and winning Gold and Silver Division I medals. Today, he is a member of the Hall of Fame at both of his alma maters; twice at Northern Illinois University (as an individual in 2000, and team member in 2012) and at Willowbrook High School. Kirk graduated NIU in 1979 with a Bachelor of Science in education and in 1992 received his Masters of Administration from Roosevelt University in Chicago. The father of two college athletes, he has taught high school students for 32+ years and coached student athletes for 17 of those years.

**Daveda Lamont** is an author, ghostwriter and developmental editor with many books to her credit. This is her fourth book and third as co-author. In 2000-2001, Daveda served as a contract editor for Powered, Inc., editing and co-writing courses for the corporate online universities of clients such as Barnes & Noble, Dell, Visa and Bloomberg.com.