

Rick Reilly

Famed Author, ESPN Personality, Sports Illustrated Columnist

Rick Reilly has been voted National Sportswriter of the Year 11 times. He is a front-page columnist for ESPN.com and delivers human-interest television features for ESPN's Monday Night Countdown, opinion essays and features for ESPN's golf coverage, and essays for SportsCenter, which he also occasionally anchors.

Reilly won the 2009 Damon Runyon Award for Outstanding Contributions to Journalism, an honor previously won by Jimmy Breslin, Tim Russert, Bob Costas, Mike Royko, George Will, Ted Turner and Tom Brokaw, among others. Three times his columns have been read into the record in the U.S. Congress. An astronaut once took his signed trading card into space.

He is the author of 10 books, including his latest -- *Sports From Hell, My Search for the World's Dumbest Competition* (Doubleday). The book was a finalist for the 2011 Thurber Prize. It's the account of his three-year search for the dumbest sport in the world. Not to give anything away, but a good bet would be either Ferret Legging or the World Sauna Championships. It also includes embarrassing attempts by Reilly to try Nude Bicycle Racing, Zorbing, Chess Boxing, Extreme Ironing, the World Rock Paper Scissors Championships, and an unfortunate week on a women's pro football team.

For two years, he was the host of ESPN's *Homecoming with Rick Reilly*, a one-hour interview show which has featured Michael Phelps, John Elway and Magic Johnson, among many others.

The *New York Daily News* called him "one of the funniest humans on the planet." Publishers Weekly called him, "an indescribable amalgam of Dave Barry, Jim Murray, and Lewis Grizzard, with the timing of Jay Leno and the wit of Johnny Carson."

He has written about everything from ice skater Katarina Witt behind the Iron Curtain to actor Jack Nicholson in the front row, from wrestling priests in Mexico City to mushers at the Iditarod, from playing golf with President Clinton to playing golf with O.J. Simpson and back again. He was once President Obama's fantasy football partner for a week. He has five times had the disagreeable task of accompanying the models on the annual *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. He was once featured in a Miller Lite ad with swimsuit cover girl Rebecca Romijn (Stamos). In July of 2010, he survived running with the bulls of Pamplona, Spain. Twice.

For nearly 23 years -- from 1985 until 2007 -- his breezy, hilarious and yet often emotional style graced the pages of Sports Illustrated. For the last 10 there, he wrote the popular "Life of Reilly" column, which ran on the last page. It was the first signed weekly opinion column in the magazine's long history. He is "the Tiger Woods of sports columnists," says Bloomberg News.

Reilly is the founder of the anti-malaria effort Nothing But Nets (NothingButNets.net), which had raised over \$40 million to hang mosquito nets over kids in Africa, where 3,000 children die every day of the disease. A partnership with the United Nations Foundation, every dollar goes to buying the nets. Wrote the *Denver Post*, "Nothing but Nets is one charity that scores big."

His last collection -- "*Hate Mail from Cheerleaders*" -- included 100 of his best SI columns. The foreword is by Lance Armstrong. It became a *New York Times* bestseller in its first week.

His current novel "Shanks for Nothing" (Doubleday) is a madcap golf romp that cracked the New York Times bestseller list. It's the sequel to Reilly's cult classic "Missing Links" (Doubleday), whose film rights were recently sold to Steve Carell, star of NBC's *The Office*. Both books revolve around regulars at the worst public course in America -- Ponkaquogue Municipal Golf Links and Deli -- and the insane bets, pranks and camaraderie that goes on there. *The New York Times* hailed "Missing Links" as "three laughs per page."

In Reilly's previous book -- "Who's Your Caddy?" (Doubleday) -- he caddies for everyone from Jack Nicklaus to Donald Trump to a \$50,000-a-hole gambler. It rose to No. 3 on the New York Times best-seller list.

His first collection of columns -- "The Life of Reilly: The Best of *Sports Illustrated's* Rick Reilly" -- was also a *New York Times* bestseller.

Slo-Mo: My Untrue Story, (Doubleday) is a farce on the NBA, which the Denver Post called, "a romp that could have been written only by someone who has seen the game from the inside."

Reilly is the co-author of the movie "Leatherheads," the comic romance centered on the 1924 Duluth Eskimos of the fledgling NFL, starring George Clooney, Renee Zellweger and John Krasinski. It opened on April 4, 2008. MTV called it "a small, unassuming jewel." And *USA Today* wrote: "Leatherheads is a real winner."

His ESPN interview show *Homecoming*, is a kind of cross between *This is Your Life* and *Inside the Actor's Studio*, for sports. The show goes deep inside the life of America's greatest athletes. Filmed in front of a live audience, usually at the guest's high school or college, it's full of surprises, with home video, interviews with old teammates and coaches, family, friends and rivals. Jerry Rice, Dwayne Wade, Chris Paul, Emmitt Smith, Billie Jean King, Donovan McNabb and Tony Hawk have been guests, to name a few. "That was the greatest night of my life," soccer star Landon Donovan said of it. Magic Johnson called it, "The most fun interview I've ever done."

Probably too curious for his own good, Reilly has flown upside down at 600 miles per hour in an F-14, faced fastballs from Nolan Ryan, jumped from 14,000 feet with the U.S. Army Parachute Team, driven a stock car 142 miles per hour, piloted the Goodyear blimp, competed against 107 women for a spot in the WNBA, worked three innings of play-by-play for the Colorado Rockies, bicycled with Lance Armstrong, driven a monster truck over six parked cars, worked as a rodeo bullfighter, and found out the hard way how many straight par 3s he'd have to play before he made a hole in one (694).

Reilly has won numerous awards in his 30-year writing career, including the prestigious New York Newspaper Guild's Page One Award for Best Magazine Story. He is the co-author of "The Boz," the best-selling autobiography of bad-boy Oklahoma linebacker Brian Bosworth; "Gretzky," with hockey superstar Wayne Gretzky of the Los Angeles Kings; "I'd Love to but I Have a Game" with NBC announcer Marv Albert, and the "The Wit and Wisdom of Charles Barkley."

Reilly began his career in 1979 taking phoned-in high-school volleyball scores for his hometown *Boulder (Colo.) Daily Camera* while a sophomore at the University of Colorado, from which he was graduated in 1981. He wrote for two years at the Camera, two more at the *Denver Post* and two more at the *Los Angeles Times*, before moving to *Sports Illustrated* in 1985.

Reilly dabbles in magic, piano, mountain biking, SCUBA, back-alley basketball, skiing and snowboarding. He lives in Denver and Hermosa Beach, CA, with his wife -- The Lovely Cynthia -- and a putter he's not currently speaking to.