



HALF THE BATTLE

Don Henderson

Sales points:

- It's about footy, and it's hilariously funny, with a nice mix of dry wit and gross-out humour. This makes it the perfect book for boys aged 13 and up.
- It's a first novel by a talented new writer.
- In schools the book could be used as a springboard for the study of several themes, including adolescence, friendship, families, and multiculturalism.

OMNIBUS BOOKS

Category	Fiction
Title	Half the Battle
Author	Don Henderson
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We ran on to the ground to the screams of 'Down the guts, boys!' from Clacker and his mates. The Barton Lakes players were already in their positions, waiting impatiently.

'You should have started already, fellas. Give yerselves a chance!' yelled Donger, sitting himself down confidently alongside Clacker and the other members of the Port Road brains trust.

I remember what followed as clearly as the Apollo astronauts must remember the day they landed on the moon.

The narrator, Sean Watson, has moved from the country to become a student at Port Road High School, a tough multicultural school in a poor industrial part of the city. He lives with his father, who went bankrupt and had to sell the farm, while his mother and baby sister remain in the country. Sean resents the loss of the farm and focuses his anger on his dad, whom he blames for the disintegration of their once happy family.

When Port Road High decides to take part in a Year Nine schools football competition, things start to change both for Sean and for the boys in his class. Their team (the Battlers) is largely composed of misfits and is constantly and humiliatingly thrashed. Ultimately the coach, a frothing psychopath named Clacker, is taken off the job, and the boys are coached by Merlin, an ex-AFL great. Slowly the Battlers' fortunes begin to improve.

Author Don Henderson was born at Minlaton on South Australia's Yorke Peninsula and educated at country high schools. He completed a BA and Dip Ed in Adelaide. As an English teacher for many years – and a football coach – Don has long felt that there was a need for high interest books for boys.