



First in Thirst: How Gatorade Turned the Science of Sweat Into a Cultural Phenomenon

Darren Rovell

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"Remember the Cola Wars, with Coke and Pepsi battling it out year after year for supremacy in the soft drink market? Or what about the Burger Wars, the legendary slugfests between McDonald's and Burger King? Then of course, there were the Sports Drink Wars. If you blinked, you might have missed them, because Gatorade has swiftly and decisively fended off every would-be rival. Although a few other brands hold slim market shares, the fact is that Gatorade single-handedly created the sports drink industry 40 years ago and has absolutely ruled it ever since. But Gatorade is more than just a triumph of branding. First, it's a trusted product that has been scientifically proven to do what it claims to do. Second, Gatorade is an enthralling story, brought to life in bright color and sharp detail in *First in Thirst*. Author Darren Rovell, a skilled, objective, and passionate journalist, chronicles every astonishing milestone of the company's history. With unprecedented access to the inventors, the marketers, the analysts and observers, and key company figures past and present, Rovell recounts the sweat-drenched University of Florida football practices, the first (unpalatable) prototypes, and the commercial and financial interest that quickly took hold following the drink's first on-field successes. Then came the advertising, sponsorships, product placements (many of them fortuitous), and finally the two milestones that cemented Gatorade's iconic status once and for all -- the ubiquitous Gatorade bath and the Michael Jordan "Be Like Mike" endorsement deal. With refreshing candor, *First in Thirst* also offers an inside look at the negotiations, battles, lawsuits, mergers and acquisitions, product strategies, lucky breaks, and even the missteps (there have not been many) that have attended Gatorade's reign as the 800-pound gorilla of the sports-drink scene. Rovell places the reader inside labs and brainstorming sessions, at board meetings and ad shoots, on the sidelines and in the dugouts, even in the winner's circle at NASCAR events -- where Gatorade manages maximum exposure even at tracks whose official sponsors include chief rival POWERade. The book identifies the nine Gatorade Rules, business principles that have helped Gatorade become one of the most dominant brands ever. By adhering to these principles, businesses in other industries may achieve greater brand recognition and market share. Long before America knew what "deep-down body thirst" was, a team of university scientists had already invented something to quench it. *First in Thirst* is the story of the product and the company, and of America's fascination with the one and only Gatorade."

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