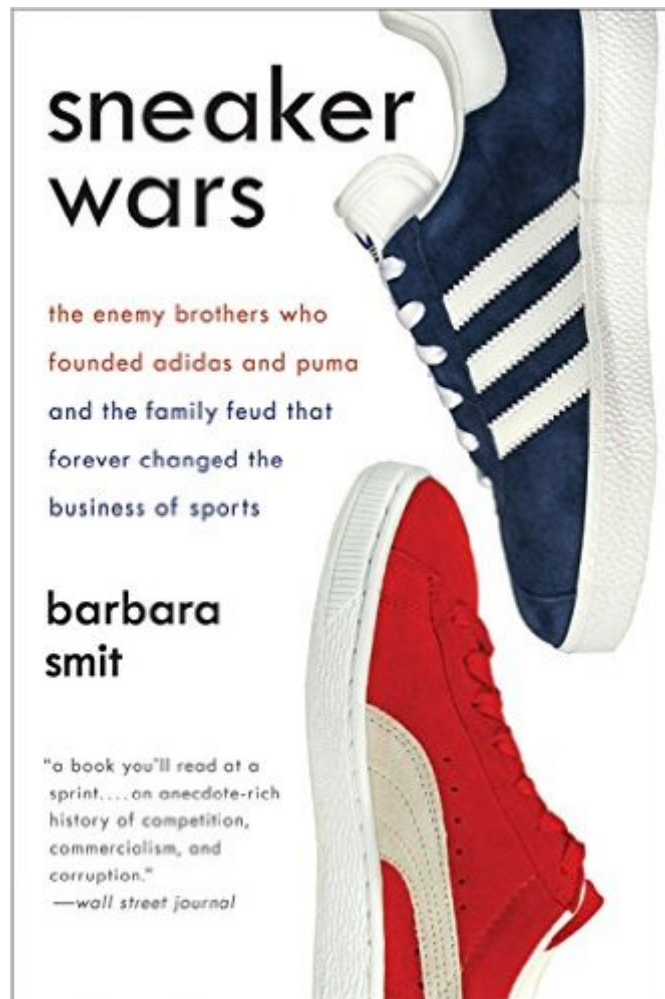


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# Sneaker Wars: The Enemy Brothers Who Founded Adidas And Puma And The Family Feud That Forever Changed The Business Of Sports



## Synopsis

Sneaker Wars is the fascinating true story of the enemy brothers behind Adidas and Puma, two of the biggest global brands of athletic footwear. Adi and Rudi Dassler started their shoe business in their mother's laundry room and achieved almost instantaneous success. But by the end of World War II a vicious feud had torn the Dasslers apart, dividing their company and their family and launching them down separate, often contentious paths. Out of the fires of their animosity, two rival sneaker brands were born, brands that would revolutionize the world of professional sports, sparking astonishing behind-the-scenes deals, fabulous ad campaigns, and multimillion-dollar contracts for pro athletes, from Joe Namath to Muhammad Ali to David Beckham.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Three stripes. Three stars. Smit bills her book, "Sneaker Wars," as the story of the family and corporate competition behind Puma and Adidas, but this is an Adidas book and the story of the legendary footwear house divided. Brother versus brother. Father versus son. France versus Germany. Old World versus New World. Smit begins with skeletal biographies of the founding Dassler brothers: Adolf (Adidas) and Rudolf (Puma). The brothers worked and lived together, but after a World War II falling out, Rudolf struck out across the river on his own, and a rivalry was born. It was a rivalry that would play out over 50 years and three generations; but, one that was dominated by the Adidas corporation and the Adidas personalities, and they equally dominate Smit's work. The book follows the Adi/Rudolf split and then move on to the division that emerges

within Adidas as Adi's son, Horst, sets up a subsidiary - if often antagonistic - France-based branch. Horst cuts his own deals, sets up his own side businesses to inflate his bottom line, and provides the hustle that takes Adidas from a European sporting goods outfitter to a global fashion empire. But, remaining closely-held for many years by some combination of Dassler family members and confidantes, Adidas is a multi-million dollar conglomerate often operating on a shoestring. The family dynamic provides the arc of conflict that sustains Smit's narrative, and her gracious portrayal of Horst Dassler as a visionary 21st century kind of global businessman in a still-flat world is the center of gravity that grounds the meat of the book's middle portion. Horst emerges as an almost surreal character: gifted and tireless, but perhaps less than ideal in his moral approach to family and business.

High school and college often found me in the three stripes. I realised the brand had reached some very high standing when it was picked up by the Yankees, and when the band Korn offered their own take on the name "Adidas". It wasn't until I researched the company, though, that I realised it was named after its founder, ADI DASsler, and as part of that research, I picked up a book entitled "Sneaker Wars" by Barbara Smit. Yogi Berra might say "You're never impressed with the things you don't know until you know you know them" and this book was certainly an eye-opener. Far more than just a book about sneakers, it details not only the history of Adi Dassler's company for almost seventy years, it also provides a history of his brother Rudi's company, Puma, for the same time. It also takes a look at the sports and sports-marketing industries as they've grown from their beginnings over the last half-century. Starting in World War II Germany with Adi and his brother, the book details their early beginnings and the rift that eventually caused Puma to form in competition with Adidas. This rift was never healed, and the two brothers remained competitors for their entire lives. Their families continued the tradition well into the early 2000s, and the book chronicles this through the successes and failures of the particular companies. Adidas is well-known to have been the more successful (though it certainly had its share of failures), but the book does conclude with the recent successes that both companies have enjoyed, including the significant turn-around that Puma has achieved after it was all but gone in the 70s. It's stunning to learn the details behind the various deals that went on in the sports world of the last fifty years.

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