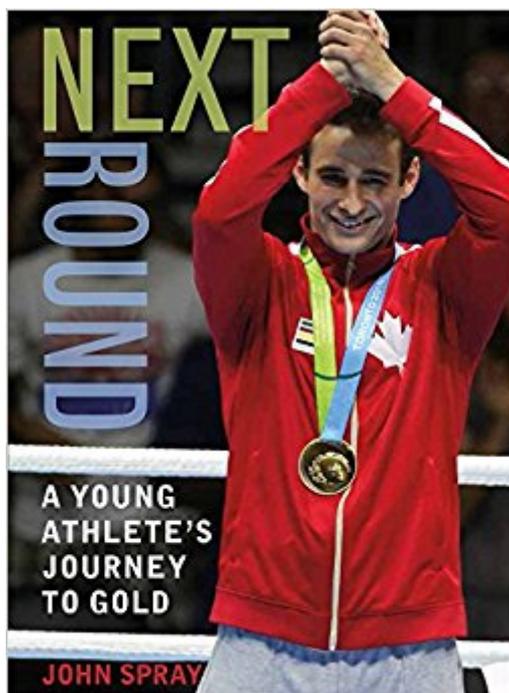


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# Next Round: A Young Athlete's Journey To Gold



## Synopsis

Arthur Biyarlanov's journey to competitive boxing has not been easy. As a small child he fled Chechnya with his family, dodging bullets and rocket fire and fording a freezing river. As a young Muslim refugee he faced hardships and hostility in his new homes in Azerbaijan and Toronto. Soccer became his refuge, and he learned two languages by playing the game with his new friends. In Toronto, he joined a league and quickly became their star player. A broken leg left him weakened and he turned to boxing to keep his strength up. Soon it became his new love. After many hours of hard work, he started to win his bouts. And by the age of twenty the "Chechen Wolf" was a champion amateur boxer, winning gold for Canada, his new homeland, at the 2015 Pan Am Games. That medal earned him a shot at the 2016 Summer Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro the next round for this talented boxer and determined survivor.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Gr 4 "An intense opening scene: on one side of a bridge, hardened Russian soldiers, on the other, a young Arthur Biyarlanov with his family and 120 other Chechen refugees, hoping to cross through Dagestan to reach Azerbaijan. This biography follows the future Pan-Am Gold Medalist and Olympic hopeful as he fled Chechnya; sought refuge in Baku, Azerbaijan; and finally settled in Toronto, Canada. A gifted athlete, Biyarlanov helped to settle this tumultuous childhood by focusing on sports—first soccer, then boxing. This title has the same emphasis, telling the stories of his athletic achievements in simple, easy to read prose. Spray does well to provide context for young Biyarlanov's reputation as the "Chechen Wolf," a fearless fighter (his at-times aggressive

behavior is attributed to his father's death, his experience with the Russian soldiers, and being forced into poverty). Larger, outside conflicts (such as why he, his family, and others were forced to leave Chechnya) are glossed over. Ending chapters explore Biyarlanov's rivalry with Zsolt Daranyi Jr., his decision to pursue boxing full-time, and his performance in the Pan-Am Games, with a look toward the upcoming Olympics and the future. VERDICT This selection holds a lot of appeal for young sports fans, and its accessible and straightforward storytelling will make it especially tempting to reluctant readers.âBobbi Parry, East Baton Rouge Parish School System, LA --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

This is a true story, and also a very exciting one. My favourite character in this book is...Arthur, of course! And my favourite part of this book is when Arthur faced Zsolt, another boxing champion, for the first time. That was a really exciting part...I give this book FIVE STARS â cause it was entertaining the whole entire time. I recommend this book to kids who want to be athletes and boxers when theyâre older, and kids who like action stories and sports. (Super Book Boy for Kids' Book Buzz) Readers will marvel at Biyarlanov's resilience and pluck. (Kirkus Reviews) This selection holds a lot of appeal for young sports fans, and its accessible and straightforward storytelling will make it especially tempting to reluctant readers. (School Library Journal) Opening with the Biyarlanov familyâs flight from Chechnya in a sequence that could be straight out of a movie, the book draws the readerâs attention almost immediately....A sure hit for readers looking for a sports biography or a story of triumphing over difficulties. (Booklist) John Spray writes an engaging story that pulls us in from the first page...Readers will find themselves cheering for Arthur as he faces one obstacle after another and will enjoy the personal photos that give us an even closer glimpse into the life of this young, ambitious athlete. The book also contains a glossary of soccer and boxing terms...[A] must read for youngsters who are looking for inspiration... (Canadian Children's Book News)â John Sprayâs writing that will capture Arthur Biyarlanovâs story better than any colour commentator could ever hope to relay as the boxer reaches for gold at this yearâs Olympics. John Sprayâs tells Biyarlanovâs story as the harrowing action story that it is.â a gripping story whose next chapter is still untold. (CanLit for LittleCanadians) John Spray...tells the story of 20-year-old boxer Arthur Biyarlanov, who overcame a turbulent childhood, fleeing war-torn Chechnya when he was three, spending years as a refugee in Azerbaijan before arriving in Canada when he was nine, learning two new languages along the way. (Quill & Quire) As we look forward to the opening of the Summer Olympics I wanted to share this story of one of our young athletes, whose journey has been a most difficult oneâ John Spray writes the story of the

Chechen Wolf, a young Muslim refugee from Chechnya, whose grit and determination won him a gold medal in the 2015 Pan Am Games as a member of Canada's boxing team. It was Canada's first gold medal in boxing in forty years. In interviews with Arthur Biyarlanov, Mr. Spray heard stories of his early life, their escape from Russia, the family's life in a refugee camp in Azerbaijan, and finally a new life in Canada ... all before he was nine years old (Sal's Fiction Addiction)

This book is about a Canadian athlete named Arthur Biyarlanov who, after he broke his leg during soccer practice, tried out boxing. Arthur is from Chechnya and was only three years old during the First Chechen War. He and his family had to escape from Chechnya as refugees to find a better place to live. This is a true story, and also a very exciting one. My favorite character in this book is ARTHUR, or course! My favorite part of this book was when Arthur faced Zsolt, another boxing champion, for the first time. Will Arthur defeat Zsolt? Read the book and you'll find out. I give the book 5 stars because it was entertaining the whole time. I recommend this book to kids who want to be athletes or boxers when they are older, and kids who like sports and exciting stories.

John Spray has written an exciting fast paced novel that is engaging and accessible for young readers. Young readers will become immersed in Arthur's narrow escape from Chechnya. The author's knowledge for Arthur's sport makes for an engrossing read. The font and design of this book is very appealing for reluctant readers. Every chapter has snapshots of Arthur on his journey to gold. The full colour glossy insert of photos is lovely too. The fonts and overall design really set this book apart. The paperback edition stands up nicely with its French flaps on the cover. A must have for every school library. A refreshing tale about a Muslim refugee who strives, succeeds and is a welcome role model for teens and tweens. We need more books like this for young North Americans!

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