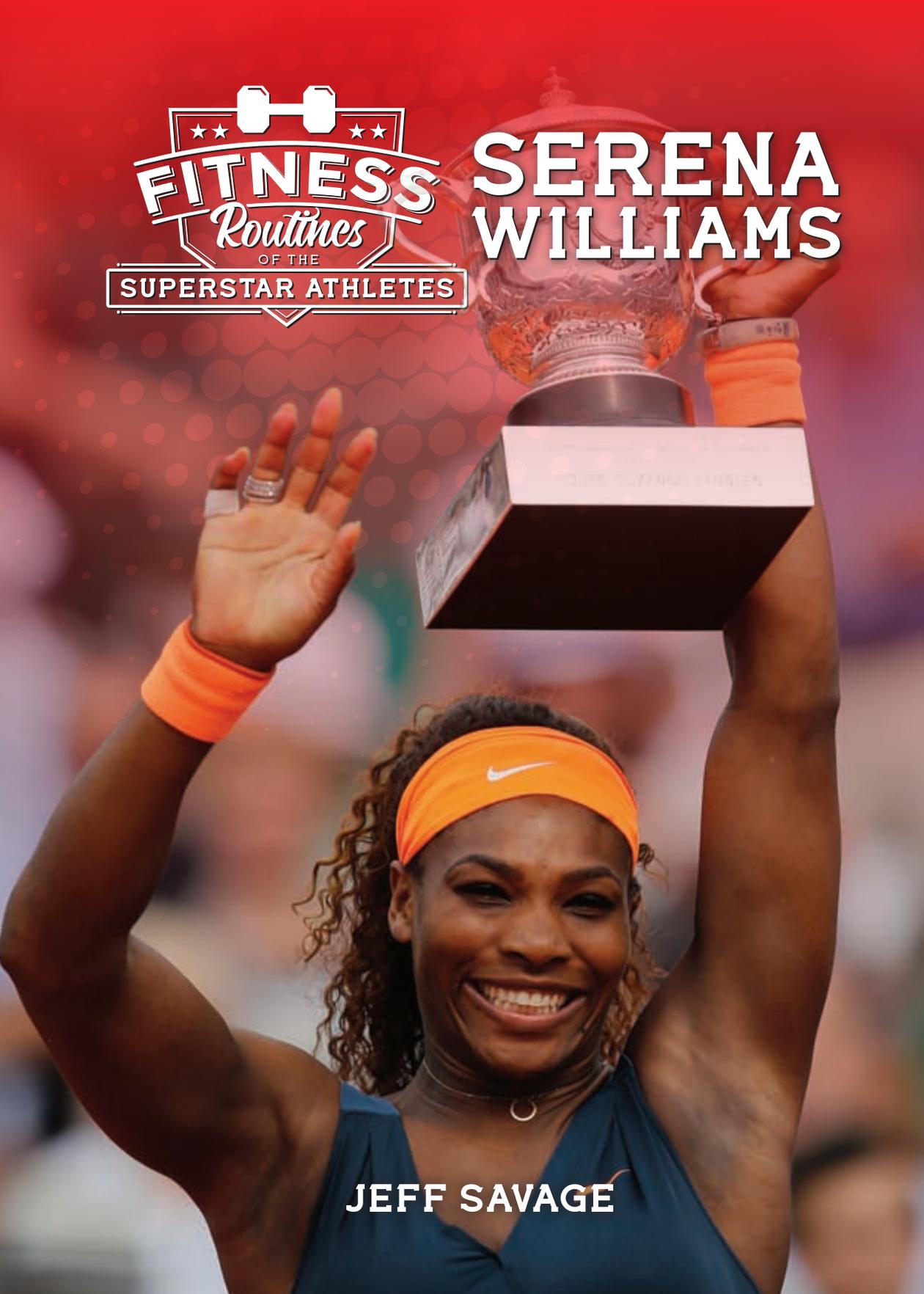


FITNESS
Routines
OF THE
SUPERSTAR ATHLETES

**SERENA
WILLIAMS**



JEFF SAVAGE

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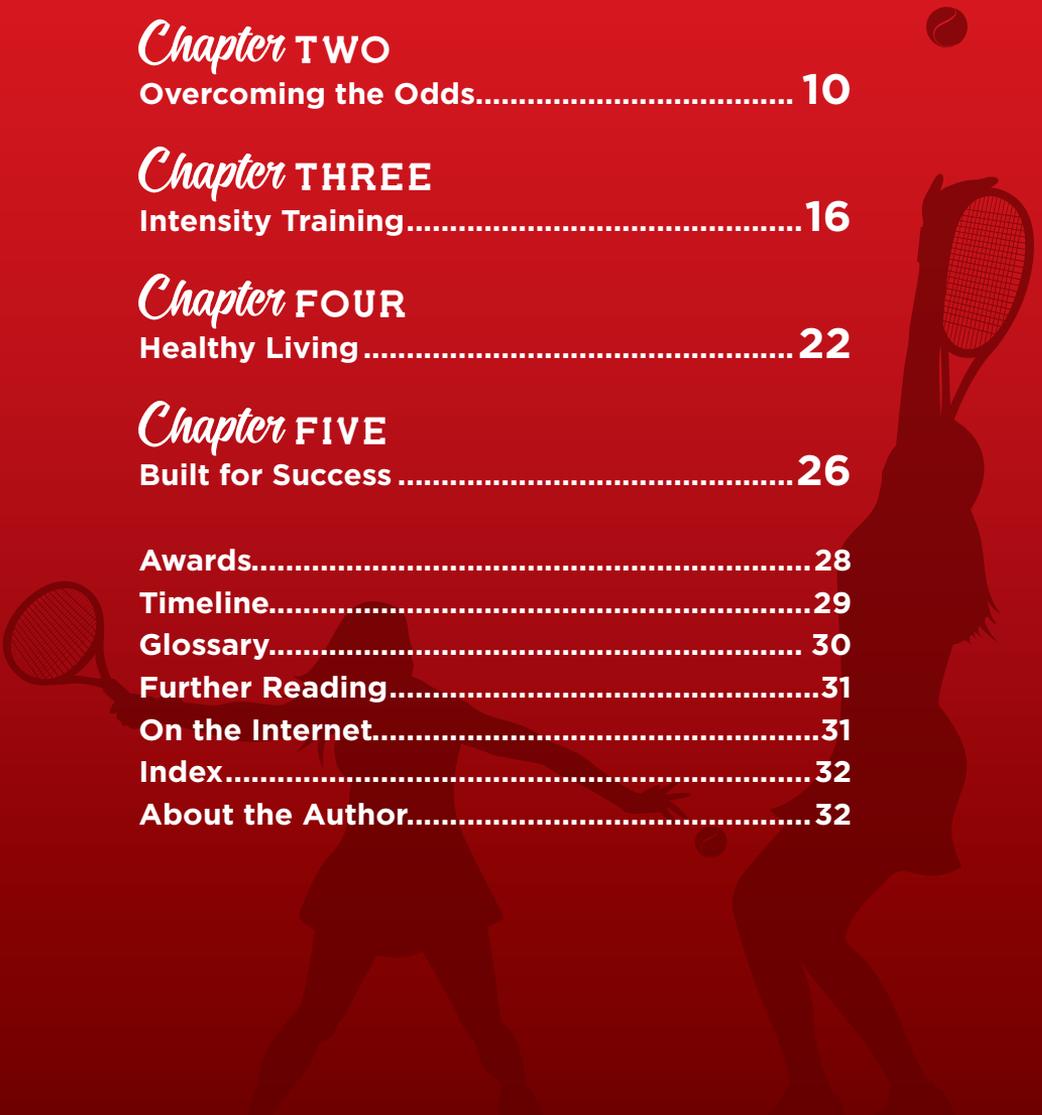
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CHAPTER
One

RECORD *Breaker*

Serena Williams walked into the arena in Melbourne Park carrying her racket bag and a secret. She removed her headphones to hear the cheers from the crowd. Williams was about to play in the 2017 Australian Open final. She was hoping to make history. Williams was trying to win her 23rd **Grand Slam** singles title. No tennis player had won more major tournaments in the **Open Era**.



Serena Williams (*right*) and Venus before the women's singles final at the Australian Open tennis championships in January 2017.

Serena faced a familiar opponent—her sister Venus. The Williams sisters had played in tournaments against each other dozens of times. In fact, when Serena first visited Melbourne in 1998 at age 16, with braces on her teeth and braids in her hair, she lost in the second round—to Venus. The sisters knew each other's strengths and weaknesses. This match would be a challenge.

Chapter ONE

Serena and her sister traded serves and **groundstrokes**. The first set was close, with Serena winning, 6-4. The truth is, Serena expected to win. She had already won the Australian Open six times. (Venus had never won it.) Serena was playing at the top of her game. In this year's tournament, for the first time ever, Serena hadn't even lost a set. If she won this match she would be ranked No. 1 in the world—by far the oldest woman ever.

At age 35, Serena was considered an “old” player. Tennis careers are normally over by then. Steffi Graf, the player whose record Serena was hoping to break, retired at age 30. Venus is one year older than Serena, and she was still playing, but she hadn't reached a Grand Slam final in eight years. Serena had won 10 of her 22 Grand Slams after age 30. It seemed that the older she got, the *better* she got.



RECORD BREAKER



Serena Williams hits a ball against Venus Williams in the final of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne, Australia.

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