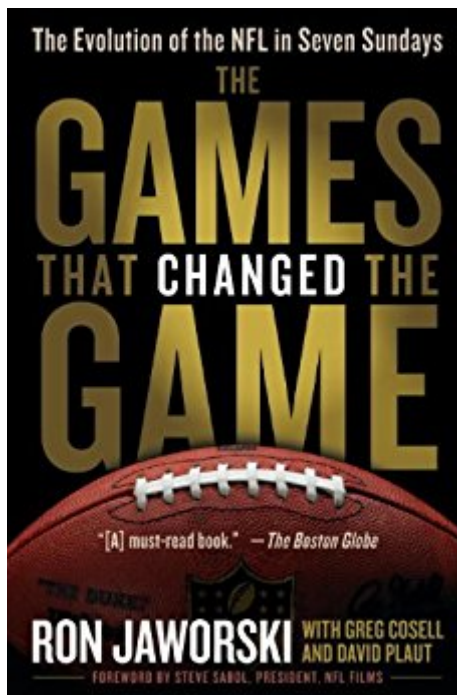




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The Games That Changed The Game: The Evolution Of The NFL In Seven Sundays



Synopsis

Professional football in the last half century has been a sport marked by relentless innovation. For fans determined to keep up with the changes that have transformed the game, close examination of the coachingÃ footage is a must. InÃ The Games That Changed the Game,Ã Ron JaworskiÃâpro footballÃâs #1 game-tape guruÃâbreaks down the film from seven of the most momentous contests of the last fifty years, giving readers a drive-by-drive, play-by-play guide to the evolutionary leaps that define the modern NFL.Ã From Sid GillmanÃâs development of the Vertical Stretch, which launched the era of wide-open passing offenses, to Bill BelichickÃâs daring defensive game plan in Super Bowl XXXVI, which enabled his outgunned squad to upset the heavily favored St. Louis Rams and usher in the New England Patriots dynasty, the most cutting-edge concepts come alive again through the recollections of nearly seventy coaches and players. YouÃâll never watch NFL football the same way again.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Useful history of the modern NFL. Jaworski explores the strategies that shaped the Super Bowl era. The writing is easy to understand and interesting. There is something here for every NFL fan. This book is the answer to every fan (or owner) that thinks one more star player is all that is needed to build a winning team.

Being a huge fan of the game itself, I truly enjoyed this book. "Jaws" takes you through 7 historic NFL games that had a lasting impact on the way the professional game was/is played - because these games introduced new coaching schemes or even ideologies that can still be felt in today's game: the grandfathers of the modern passing game, Gillman, Coryell and Walsh; defensive contributions like the Cover-2 and Dick LeBeau's Zone Blitz. Each of these schemes or concepts is demonstrated by analysis of a specific game. The reader is taken through each game quarter by quarter describing in detail relevant plays, their impact on the game specifically and in general, including a few play diagrams. Now, if this sounds very geeky to you - then you're right. Don't get me wrong - the book is no play-by-play box score compilation. Jaworski and his co-authors focus exclusively on one team and the decisions made by that team's coach or coordinator and how each play figured into the overall scheme of that coach. The book is fun and easy to read, a huge ensemble cast of former and current players and coaches get to have their say, and depending on your age, you either get to gain some insights of the NFL before you were born (Sid Gillman's Chargers and the Steel Curtain were before my time), too young (I only knew about Don Coryell, Dan Fouts and Kellen Winslow Sr. from highlight reels), or you get to re-experience great games that you may have seen but not thought about for some time. What I really like was the back and forth between offensive and defensive innovations - it demonstrates the arms race in the NFL very well. The offense starts to air it out - the defense catches up. The offense creates ever more complex formations and plays - the defense overloads and blitzes unexpectedly, and so on. The book also offers some refreshingly raw language that you'd expect from players and coaches in football, instead of the highly polished "speaking but not saying anything" in today's media-centric league. The reason that I'm giving it only 4 stars is that the chapter titles are somewhat confusing sometimes - Sid Gillman's Vertical Stretch, for example is showcased in a game where the Chargers won by relying on their running attack. Which they could do only because the defense expected them to air it out, but still. The Air Coryell chapter is actually more about Winslow's

breakout game, and the begin of the receiving tight ends of the modern era. But these minor inconsistencies didn't really bother me. The price did. Now, unless you're a die-hard NFL geek looking for something meaningful to do while ESPN is showing skateboarding or oval car races, wait until the price drops. Otherwise - read this book.

I picked this up because I always want to know more about football, and I've always enjoyed watching Jaws on TV. If you're a fan of his, you'll enjoy this book. His personality shines through just about every page, and the tone is as warm, enthusiastic and knowledgeable as you'd expect. The only reason I gave this 4 stars instead of 5 is that it's not always as user-friendly as it could be. First off, if you don't already know all the positions on the field and how to read a basic play in diagram form, you're going to have a hard time following some of this. My problem with the diagrams is that it wasn't always clear to what play they were supposed to be linked because there is no "see figure 1" kind of thing (this seems a bit more problematic in the early chapters; by the later chapters the labeling seems a bit clearer, though there are still no pointers to the diagrams in the text). One of the other problems with the diagrams is that they often just use players' numbers to show their position in a certain alignment. There's nothing unusual about this per se, but because the book doesn't tell you the players' numbers, so you either have to know who wore what number or go looked it up. This use of numbers doesn't always get in the way, but it did make a couple diagrams more difficult to follow than they needed to be. Another related criticism is that, presumably for the sake of variation, Jaws indiscriminately uses players' first names, last names and even nicknames as he goes through plays. In general, his down-by-down coverage of his selected plays is enjoyable and pretty easy to follow, but parts gave me pause because I don't know the names of all the players in the games (especially the older ones). All told, though, if you already have some working knowledge of football, you can learn a ton from this book, and it's an enjoyable read. I'd love to see a second edition with some of the unnecessary weaknesses addressed and perhaps another game added. Maybe the subtitle could be changed to 'The Evolution of the NFL in Seven Sundays and a Monday'?

I don't write many reviews - but I enjoyed this book so much - I had to chime in. It was a fast read that delivered exactly what was promised in the table of contents. I'm not new to football, but I've always been more interested in the offensive side, so for me the chapters on the Cover-2, Zone Blitz, and 46 were awesome. I learned a lot. For instance, the 46 is not a 4-6 like the 4-3, or 3-4. The 46 is actually named after a player's number and if you read the chapter on it you will

understand how it works. And I finally understand what is meant by a zone exchange and zone blitz. For instance, the exchange concept of dropping a D-Lineman into coverage and rushing a linebacker so that you are actually rushing the same number of players, the idea of "safe" blitzes, etc. make sense to me now. Another highlight for me was the play diagrams - there were only a handful, but they were all really nice - I'll be going back to them. Finally, Jaws avoided the dryness that frequently comes with technical books. He sprinkled in just enough anecdotes and interview excerpts from the players and coaches involved in each game he was explaining to keep things moving.

Superb book, incredible background, although I would have chosen different games. Jaworski's choices I did not like, but his back-, back- background to each game, play calling, coaching history gives it teeth.

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