



Real Football: Conversations on America's Game

Stephen H. Norwood

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Since the 1960s, professional football has been America's most popular sport. This book explores the culture of football from the inside—from the players' perspective—the game the fans never see.

Conversations are with eight top athletes, men who played in the National Football League for at least ten years, and with another who coached football for forty-five years. The players analyze the mental, physical and emotional experience of the game at the high school, college, and professional levels, and at nearly every gridiron position.

The author chooses his subjects carefully and finds articulate interpreters of this hard-edged experience. The author and the players discuss in depth a wide range of topics, including masculinity, injury, and pain, big-time college recruiting, college athletes and academics, relations with fathers and coaches, encounters with Jim Crow and desegregation, strikes and labor relations in the NFL. Yielding full pictures of their lives and careers, these athletes go on to explore aging and their adjustments to retirement.

Stephen H. Norwood, professor of history at the University of Oklahoma, is the author of *Strikebreaking and Intimidation* (2002) and *Labor's Flaming Youth* (1990). He is the winner of the Herbert Gutman Award in American social history and the Macmillan/SABR Award in baseball history.

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