

FOOTBALL BREAKDOWN

Christopher R. Slone

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PublishAmerica
Baltimore

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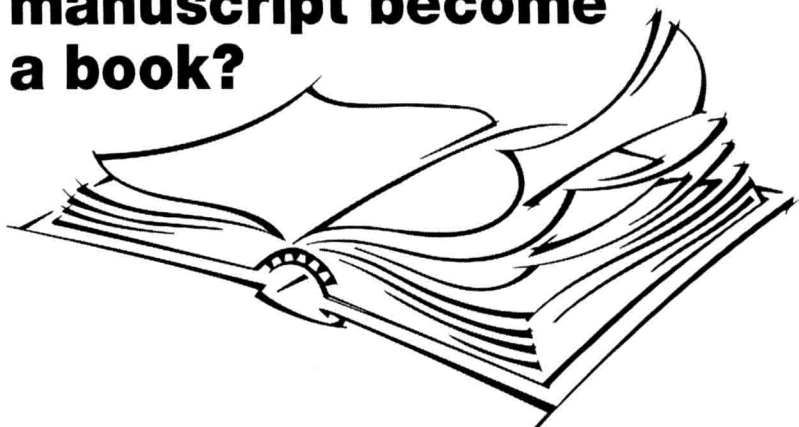
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This book is dedicated to my lovely wife Jessica Slone, who always has a smile on her face as she learns to adapt to my sports dominated world. To my father Robert Slone, who first introduced me to the sport of football and to all the coach's who have helped me along the way.

Again, I'd like to thank my wife, Jessica, for her endless enthusiasm and support. This book wouldn't have been possible without her. I love you and I can not wait to meet our first born child in August.

To my parents, who tolerate my sports obsession and continue to support my wife and I, the last year was difficult and trying but we survived with your continued support.

I'd like to thank Olivia Richards for the endless help along the way and helping me with the publication of this book.

I'd like to thank Jason Cox for introducing me to the coaching world and allowing me to bounce most of my ideas off of him.

I want to thank Cody Evans for editing my book and being the first person to read my book.

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Introduction

Football is just a game, a game that happens to be loved by millions of people. Football impacts the lives of children and adults, it does not matter if it's Pee Wee, JFL (Junior Football League), middle school, high school, college or the NFL. In some parts of the country, football is a way of life. Kids start playing football at an early age and if they are lucky, they will be playing past high school. Football teaches all of us how to love and care about each other, while striving to be a better player and person. Football builds a competitive spirit in all of us that have ever played the game, which gives us the ability to handle the challenges of life. Football lets us know that it's ok to dream, it's ok to cry, it's ok to make winning a priority and it teaches us to lose with grace and dignity.

I began playing football when I was 8 years old. My parents gave me the choice and I jumped at the chance. I didn't know much about the rules or how the sport was played, I just knew that I had fallen in love with a game. Looking back, I realize how special those moments were, when I got to play Pee Wee football, everything just seemed right in the world.

I was lucky enough to play until my sophomore year in

high school, where I suffered two concussions, which forced me to quit playing. It's incredibly tough to suffer an injury and listen to the doctors tell you that you should quit playing a game that you love.

After high school I went to college and earned an Associates degree in computer technology. Although I was happy working with computers, I felt a burning sensation to get back into football, somehow or somehow. I decided to try coaching and the first place I wanted to coach was my old high school. I spent one year as an assistant coach at Russell High School in Ashland Kentucky. Although I enjoyed my year there, I decided that I wanted to try coaching at a college, so I volunteered at Kentucky Christian University. They offered to give me a one-year tryout and couldn't guarantee anything past that point. After my initial year at KCU, they approached me about coming back for a second year, this time as a paid staff member. I agreed and I spent my second year working with the defense and working with the video equipment. After my second season was finished, I decided to walk away from coaching to pursue sports writing.

I enjoyed my three years of coaching but after meeting my future wife at KCU, I knew that coaching was not for me. I still love the game more than ever and could not give it up completely. So with a lot of help and luck, I am going to continue to be involved with football, only this time it will be writing about the game.

When I decided to write this book, I knew that I wanted to include a little bit of everything. I wanted to give the reader a sense of the terminology coaches' use, while giving the reader a chance to see actual diagrams that coaches use everyday. I am extremely blessed to have the opportunity to share this

book with true football fans.

Don't listen to a single person that tries to convince you football is just a game. It is so much more than a game, it's a way of life. If your team wins, go celebrate the big victory, if your team loses, do not worry about feeling miserable. Remember, someone else just watched the same game and they feel exactly like you feel. Do not be afraid to love this game and God willing, do not be afraid to let your kids play football. They will truly reap the benefits one day.

If you are a hardcore football fan or just a casual fan, football can be a tricky sport. The rules and terminology are enough to keep fans confused. If you are interested in learning more about the game and formations, this book is also for you. As you read, keep in mind that this book is designed to simplify the game. After you read this book, if you are interested, then you will be ready to start learning more advanced formations and defenses.

Chapter 1: Officiating and Rules

The first step to understanding football is to learn about the rules of the game. This book focuses mainly on college and the NFL; high school-football, in Kentucky, is a little different. For instance, high-school football features five officials; college and the NFL feature seven officials. Understanding the rules has become more complex than just knowing what a holding call is or what team got penalized. Which official threw the flag, what were his responsibilities? Before you can understand why the flag was thrown, you must first understand the responsibilities of the seven officials.

The referee is the captain of the officiating crew; he has a general control over the game. The referee signals the fouls and has the final decision on the interpretation of the rules. He stands approximately 10 yards behind the offense, to the quarterback's right. The referee watches the quarterback on all pass plays and determines roughing the passer calls. If the quarterback loses the ball during a sack, it's the Referee's job to determine a fumble or an incomplete pass.

The best example of a Referee taking control of the game and knowing the rulebook happened in 2002, in Foxborough

Massachusetts. With less than 2:00 to play in the 4th quarter, New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady apparently fumbled after being sacked by Charles Woodson, an Oakland Raider defensive back coming on a blitz. Since the game was in the final 2:00, any reviews had to come from the video review booth, coaches could not challenge. The replay official, Rex Stuart, called for the play to be reviewed. Referee Walt Coleman, went under the hood. After looking at the replay, Coleman ruled that Brady's arm was going forward, creating an incomplete pass. This game was called "The Tuck Rule" game, which created a lot of controversy.

NFL Rule 3, Section 21, Article 2, Note 2 says "When an offensive player is holding the ball to pass it forward, any intentional forward movement of his arm starts a forward pass, even if the player loses possession of the ball as he is attempting to tuck it toward his body."

Despite all the controversy with the "Tuck" rule, Referee Coleman made the correct call. His understanding of the rulebook was remarkable under the circumstances. The debate is still on going regarding the "Tuck" rule.

The second official to take a look at is the umpire, who has been in the spotlight regarding safety concerns.

The positioning of the umpire has changed within the last year, creating controversy. In College, the umpire stands approximately five yards behind the defensive line, next to the linebackers and is responsible for spotting the ball on every down. This was the same position the umpire took in the NFL until the 2010 preseason. The umpire now lines up approximately 10 yards behind the line of scrimmage, to the left of the quarterback. For hurry-up offenses, after the umpire spots the ball, he only has to get deeper than the deepest