



# Sports Illustrated Blood, Sweat and Chalk: The Ultimate Football Playbook: How the Great Coaches Built Today's Game

By Tim Layden

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The modern game of football is filled with plays and formations with names like the Counter Trey, the Wildcat, the Zone Blitz and the Cover Two. They have become part of the sport's vernacular, and yet for many fans they remain just names, often confusing ones. To rectify that, Tim Layden has drilled deep into the core of the game to reveal not only how these chalkboard X's and O's really work on the field, but also where they came from and who dreamed them up.

These playbook schemes, many of them illuminated by diagrams, bear the insignia of some of the game's great innovators, men like Vince Lombardi, Don Coryell, Tom Osborne, Bill Walsh, Tony Dungy and Buddy Ryan. But football has also been radically altered by the ingenious work of men with more obscure names, like Tiger Ellison, Emory Bellard and Mouse Davis.

In *Blood, Sweat and Chalk*, Layden takes readers into the meeting rooms-and in some cases the living rooms-where the game's most significant ideas were hatched. He goes to the coaches and to the players who inspired them, and lets them tell their stories. In candid conversations with some of football's most intriguing characters, Layden provides a fascinating guide to the game, helping fans to better see the subtleties of America's favorite sport.

The game of football is cyclical. Coaches today are getting too much credit for formations and offenses that were dreamed up years ago. Tim Layden does a wonderful job of tracing the origin of those ideas in *Blood, Sweat and Chalk*.

- Urban Meyer, Head Football Coach, University of Florida

Tim Layden explores the minds and ambitions of the game's formative thinkers. Serious students of football must have this on their bookshelves!

- Steve Sabol, President, NFL Films

*Blood, Sweat and Chalk* is a must-read for all football aficionados. I, of course, especially enjoyed reading about the great Don Coryell, a true innovator in the game we all love. His ideas changed football-and this book shows you how.

- Dan Fouts, Hall of Fame Quarterback, San Diego Chargers

Tim has created a playbook that's instructional, a history book that's fascinating and a football bible that's a must-read for anybody who loves the game. All in one.

- Dan Patrick, Host, *NBC's Football Night in America*

Tim Layden does a great job telling the story of the people and the ideas that had a major impact on the game of football as we know it.

- Mack Brown, Head Football Coach, University of Texas

This is one of the most important sports books of our generation-and a lot of fun too. The formations and philosophies that win Super Bowls and national titles are made crystal clear. If you live for fall weekends, this is your book.

- Peter King, Author, *Monday Morning Quarterback*

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### Editorial Review

#### About the Author

Sports Illustrated senior writer Tim Layden, who joined the magazine in March 1994, primarily writes about the NFL, Olympic sports (chiefly track and field in the summer and alpine skiing in the winter) and horse racing, but has written about a wide variety of subjects for the publication and for SI.com.

Before coming to *Sports Illustrated*, Layden spent six years at *Newsday*, three years at the *Albany Times-Union* and nine years at the *Schenectady Gazette*. During his three decades in journalism, Layden has won multiple sportswriting awards, including an Eclipse Award for coverage of thoroughbred horse racing in 1987.

Among Layden's most significant work for the magazine are stories detailing the remarkable recovery of injured NFL player Kevin Everett (Dec. 2007), the phenomenon of Big Hits in the NFL (July 2007), the Triple Crown near-misses by Funny Cide (2003), Smarty Jones (2004) and Big Brown (2008), the tragic career of track star Marion Jones, the subculture of ticket scalping in the pre-Internet world (1997) and during the winter of 1995, the growing problem of gambling by college students.

Born and raised in Whitehall, N.Y., Layden graduated in 1978 from Williams College, where he was an English major and a member of the basketball team. He is a runner-turned-cyclist who regularly battles the hills of northern Connecticut, where he lives with his wife and two children.

### Users Review

#### From reader reviews:

##### Ruben Martin:

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