

# Fall into Football

**By Michael DeVincenzo, Adult Services Librarian**

The most famous, and possibly beloved, football coach of all time, John Madden, once said, “Nothing jazzes me up like football. I’ve acquired more passion over the years, not less. Not to love it wouldn’t make sense.”

While he was speaking for himself, Madden may just as well have been speaking for a large portion of the American public. Football’s predictable autumn cadence of Friday night high school contests, followed by college football Saturdays, and culminating with Sunday afternoon professional NFL contests, has become a ritual for millions of Americans in all corners of the country, and among all ages.

As we begin another football season, let our collections at the Wyckoff library enhance your enjoyment of the upcoming weekends. We have a huge selection of football related media. If you are just beginning your deeper dive into football, a great place to start could be David Maraniss’ classic biography of the legendary Green Bay Packers coach Vince Lombardi (who began his coaching career in nearby Englewood, and whose legacy includes his name affixed to both the Super Bowl championship trophy and a New Jersey Turnpike rest stop!), “When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi.”

Another football classic can be found in “Friday Night Lights” by HG Bissinger, a detailed look at the central importance of high school football in small town Texas life, which was subsequently made into both a movie and a long running show on NBC (both of which are also available here on DVD). The great writer David Halberstam said of “Friday Night Lights”, “By choosing to write about something small...Bissinger has [wrote] about something large: the core values in our society.”

Football is deeply intertwined with American history and culture. “The Game” by George Howe Colt examines one of the most storied games in college football history, the 1968 tie that ended the undefeated seasons of Ivy League stalwarts Harvard and Yale. Colt ties the personal narratives of a number of the players in this game with the larger historical backdrop of the tumultuous year of 1968, including the ongoing war in Vietnam reaching its peak, along with the twin tragic assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy.

The Super Bowl, the NFL's championship game, has had a remarkable journey from almost being cancelled after its first two games (1967-1968) to becoming America's premiere television and sporting event. The history of this evolution is covered in "The Football Game that Changed America: How the NFL Created a National Holiday" by Dennis Deninger.

Among the four major North American professional sports leagues, the NFL is unique in that contracts are non-guaranteed. Players can be cut or waived from their teams with relative ease as compared to the other leagues. This, coupled with the high rate of injury in the league makes for a very precarious and difficult state of affairs for players on the fringes of the NFL. In "53rd Man: Fighting to Make It in the NFL" author John Vampatella furnishes the reader with a detailed and poignant account of the trials and tribulations of borderline NFL players.

Finally, for a broad overview of America's enduring affection and fascination with football, New York Times bestselling author Joe Posnanski's "Why We Love Football" will remind you about what makes the sport's appeal evergreen.

Check out these items and many more this fall at the Wyckoff Public Library and fall in love with football all over again!