ForeWord Reviews

SPORTS & RECREATION

Scoreboard, Baby: A Story of College Football, Crime, and Complicity
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A winning sports season is marred by the illegal, sometimes violent, behavior of two dozen players on the University of Washington's 2000 football team, resulting in their arrest and/or prosecution. A drug-related shooting, domestic abuse, and rape of a sorority girl make for a page-turning tale that reads like a novel, but is tragically true.

Scoreboard, Baby: A Story of College Football, Crime, and Complicity is about the 2000 Huskies, but it is also a cautionary tale about the underbelly of elite college sports—in this case, football—and how the obsession to win can corrupt not only the athletic program, but an entire university and beyond.

Ken Armstrong and Nick Perry, *Seattle Time*s newspaper reporters, have written a well-researched exposé that spares no one involved, including players, coaches, well-heeled boosters, prosecutors, and judges. The authors found complicity in overlooking or covering up crimes that could cause a key player to be suspended from the team or kicked out of the university. One judge, for example, sentenced a player to thirty days in jail, but delayed the start time until after football season.

One case involved a star tight end, arrested after a freshman reported she was drugged and raped. Despite credible evidence, including a DNA match to the player, he was not prosecuted. Another player repeatedly beat and terrorized his wife, yet after being convicted of a felony and serving time, he was accepted back on the team, despite other pending charges. The judge, a UW graduate and longtime football season ticket holder, shortened a parole officer's recommendation of eight months in jail to just the fifteen days of time already served.

The mentality of winning at all costs and a culture that protects players who bring discredit to a university shows huge problems in the way athletes are recruited and discrepancies in how they are treated compared to the rest of the student body. Scholastic rules are bent; past behavior is ignored, and athletes are accepted into colleges when they are clearly not collegiate material. It's a dismal story that makes a lie out of the term "student-athlete."

Scoreboard, Baby begins with a list of characters that make it easy to follow the story. The authors' research is extensive, largely based on public records, media coverage, and hundreds of interviews. An index and forty-two pages of reference notes follow the text. Authors Ken Armstrong and Nick Perry won two prestigious journalism awards for their investigative work on the 2000 Huskies.

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