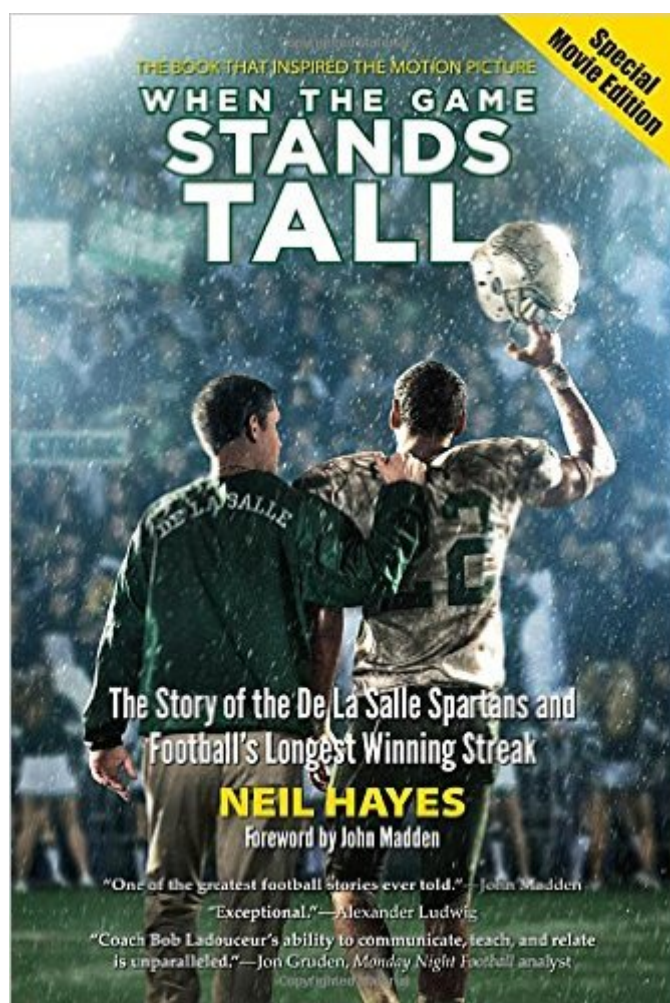


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When The Game Stands Tall, Special Movie Edition: The Story Of The De La Salle Spartans And Football's Longest Winning Streak



Synopsis

Revised and updated edition of the book to accompany the major motion picture directed by Thomas Carter and starring Jim Caviezel, Alexander Ludwig, Laura Dern, and Clancy Brown. This insider's account of the greatest winning streak in sports history brings to life the tragedies, triumphs, and unforgettable characters that inspired the major motion picture. Neil Hayes takes readers behind the scenes at De La Salle High School, where coaching legend Bob Ladouceur led his football team to a historic 13-year run of consecutive wins. A coming-of-age saga as well as an exciting sports story, *When the Game Stands Tall* provides a deft portrait of the enigmatic and visionary coach who instills in his players a discipline, commitment, and dedication to doing one's best that endure well beyond high school. This latest revised edition takes readers onto the film set for an introduction to the movie-making process, and includes a full-color insert of scenes from the movie, an afterword updating storylines of many of the memorable characters, and details of Ladouceur's final year as head coach. As the story opens, the 2002 team, guardians of The Streak, is shaping up to be the most vulnerable in years. How the coaches and the players pull together throughout a difficult and challenging season to ultimately triumph is the thread of the book, with alternating chapters providing historical background on the school, past teams, stand-out players, and the dedicated coaching staff. Known and respected throughout the ranks of American football, the quiet and unassuming Ladouceur is among this country's all-time coaching greats, a man who has helped to define excellence in sports and mentorship. The book affords an inside look at the training techniques, off-season conditioning programs, scouting habits, and practice plans that produced such an outstanding team. It also introduces a cast of unforgettable characters such as Dan Shaughnessy of Salesian HS, "a fierce competitor who stormed up and down the sideline and swore more than a Catholic school coach should"; Brother Laurence, a much-loved teacher at De La Salle; Coach Eidson, a.k.a. "Cobra," and others. The weaving in of these characters illuminates the nature of the competition and says much about the spirit of De La Salle and the culture Lad has created.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"When the Game Stands Tall" by sports reporter and author Neil Hayes traces the storied football program at De LaSalle (DLS) High School (Concord, CA) from its roots to becoming one of today's most highly regarded in the U.S. Hayes interweaves three stories - the school's football program which won 151 consecutive games ("The Streak") over twelve seasons, the life and maturation of DLS's head football coach Bob Ladouceur, and an intimate view of the 2002 game-by-game preparation and execution which led to the 11th consecutive undefeated season. Ladouceur, who played college football at Utah State then San Jose State, was an unlikely candidate for establishing himself as one of the premier high school coaches in the U.S. He left college football with a sour taste for football, feeling that it "used him up then spit him out." He played high school football under the legendary Fred Houston at Danville, CA.'s San Ramon High. Houston was a blood and guts coach that forced players to make a choice... "those who remained were dedicated and believed in what they were doing." Houston taught discipline, fundamentals, and that the game was hard and had to be played aggressively - attributes that would become hallmarks of Ladouceur's programs. Ladouceur's arrival at the Christian Brother's De LaSalle High School in Concord, CA. (35 miles northeast of San Francisco) at the age 25 with one year of coaching experience was not popular. Nevertheless, the school's principal who wanted a teacher first and someone who put the students first, and Ladouceur who worked part-time as a probation officer and wanted to help troubled kids, found one another...and the building of a legacy was underway.

"Win some, lose some." Right? Not if you're De La Salle High School of Concord, California. From 1992 to 2004, the football team from this parochial boys' school won every single game they played - 151 games in all. Not only is that the longest streak on record for a high school team (and more than twice the length of the previous record-holder), it's the longest streak on record for any team, playing any sport, at any level, ever. By the early 2000s, head coach Bob Ladouceur had a standard answer ready for the question people never stopped asking: How do you do it? "Spend a year with

us," he'd say. Sportswriter Neil Hayes decided to take him up on it. Hayes joined the De La Salle Spartans at practice, in the locker room, and at team meetings over the course of the 2002 season, and he came to understand - at least as well as anyone can who's never suited up in Spartan green himself - exactly how they do it. The secret? Dedication, accountability, a hardcore off-season training regime - and a solid bond of brotherhood. As a writer, Hayes came in at just the right time to capture the De La Salle experience at its most dramatic. Most of the school's strongest players had graduated with the class of 2002, and no obvious student leaders had yet emerged among the incoming seniors. After ten undefeated years, it was perhaps inevitable that players would come to think of victory as an entitlement, a foregone conclusion, and start to slack off a bit. With De La Salle scheduled to play some of the highest-ranked teams in the country over the next few weeks, Ladouceur and his assistant coaches knew their celebrated Streak was in jeopardy unless these kids could pull it together - fast.

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