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Don't Flinch - Barry Alvarez: The Autobiography The Story Of Wisconsin's All-Time Winningest Coach



Synopsis

Despite inheriting a moribund college football program, and half-empty stadium, Barry Alvarez never compromised his values, never flinched — even after a 1-10 first season — and never stopped believing in his blue print for success at the University of Wisconsin. By establishing a solid foundation, adhering to fundamentals and demanding an uncommon toughness from his players, Alvarez became the architect of three Rose Bowl triumphs in the 1990s and became the school's all-time winningest football coach. While changing the culture of the sport on the Madison campus, raising expectations to heretofore unthinkable levels, Alvarez left an indelible mark on the Badgers during his 16 seasons on the sidelines. Not only did Alvarez take over a Big Ten footwipe and build the program into national prominence, but he sustained the success by sticking to a plan rooted to his upbringing in Western Pennsylvania and his exposure to three legendary coaches, Nebraska's Bob Devaney, Iowa's Hayden Fry and Notre Dame's Lou Holtz. In his autobiography — Don't Flinch — Alvarez talks about the lessons that he learned from his mentors, the hurdles that he had to overcome as a young assistant and high school coach, and the challenge of taking over his own college program while living in a fishbowl, especially from his family's perspective. Alvarez maps out a strategy and game plan for young coaches who are seeking to achieve similar goals, and he also talks about his future as Wisconsin athletics director, and the future of college football.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I like reading coach's books. If you're reading a coach's autobiography you can be sure that he was

successful. Reading stories about successful people won't make you successful in itself, but you certainly can learn a lot from them. Some coach's stories, like Mack Brown's "One Heartbeat II" are smarmy, folksy stories about the coach's life philosophy containing stories about overcoming adversity or getting a team to come together to experience that championship season. A lot of coach's stories wind up in those business-motivational books, but I don't typically read those. Normally the messages they're delivering gets thinned out to the point that they become a manager's catch phrase. Executives buy them, then put them on the bookshelf in their office. Makes them look well-read. I've worked with a lot of executives. I usually make the point of pulling a book or two off out of their library and open it. 90% of them make that cracking sound a hardcover book makes the first time you open it. But I digress. Coach's stories tend to fall prey to a fair amount of sugar-coating. Not so with "Don't Flinch - Barry Alvarez: The Autobiography". The book starts (after forewards by Lou Holtz and author James Patterson) with Wisconsin's 2006 Capital One Bowl against Auburn. Going into the game, no one gave Wisconsin a chance to win. Alvarez starts by talking about how he would have rather played Alabama. Alvarez played for Nebraska when Alabama beat the Cornhuskers in the 1966 Orange Bowl, 39-28, and relates how Paul "Bear" Bryant arrogantly humiliated the Huskers later at an awards banquet. Alvarez makes it clear that this isn't how he's spent his career. Beating people is one thing. Rubbing their noses in it is another thing entirely, and something that Alvarez doesn't condone.

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