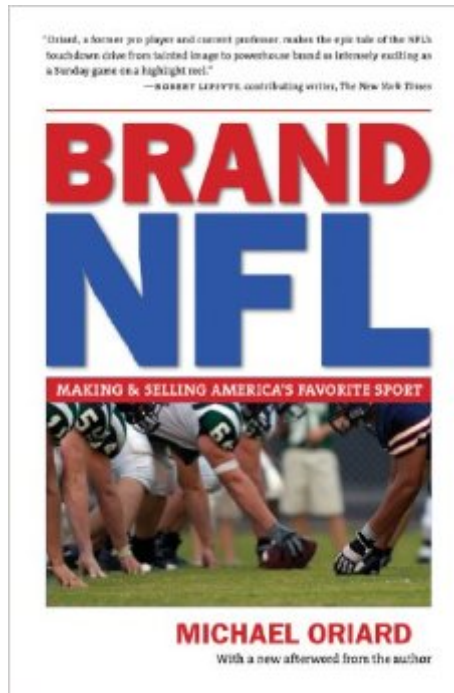


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Brand NFL: Making And Selling America's Favorite Sport



Synopsis

Professional football today is an \$8 billion sports entertainment industry--and the most popular spectator sport in America, with designs on expansion across the globe. In this astute field-level view of the National Football League since 1960, Michael Oriard looks closely at the development of the sport and at the image of the NFL and its unique place in American life. New to the paperback edition is Oriard's analysis of the offseason labor negotiations and their potential effects on the future of the sport, and his account of how the NFL is dealing with the latest research on concussions and head injuries.

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Customer Reviews

Michael Oriard explores an area relatively uncovered in the vast flow of information about football. And that is the establishment of the NFL as a business, especially a media and entertainment enterprise instead of a simple sport played by romanticized warriors. Oriard is first-rate on the history of the game and its development from a minor sport to the top tier starting in the late 1950s and 1960s. He nicely balanced football and its personalities, such as Lombardi, with the awakening of football as a business, primarily under the timely leadership of Pete Rozelle. People who remember the 1960s should enjoy the history, and young fans could find much to learn. The author is informative and concise. He then moves into the next wave, with Joe Namath as one of the anchors, with his free spirit and large contract as indicators that, in retrospect, were seminal that seem almost quaint by now. Wow, long hair and white shoes! Here again, the personalities and the business

evolved as parallel trends, influencing each other. Pete Rozelle began to lose his grip and the stakes got too high as football became America's #1 sport and the media coverage meant problems became public. Financial visionaries such as Jerry Jones of Dallas were about to open another whole dimension. Oriard writes extensively about the beginning of the labor movement within football, all the way to the current relative peace. This is possibly both one of the strongest and weakest parts of the book. The strength is that the topic is relatively unfamiliar and normally underestimated in its importance, plus Oriard the ex-player has that insider's perspective. The weakness may be that it may be more than many fans wanted to know, and Oriard certainly is not impartial.

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