



Fifth Quarter: The Scrimmage of a Football Coach's Daughter

Jennifer Allen

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George Allen was a top-ranked NFL coach throughout the sixties and seventies, coaching in turn the Chicago Bears, the Los Angeles Rams, and the Washington Redskins. Raised in a home dominated by her three football-obsessed older brothers and her father's relentless schedule, Jennifer Allen came of age in a cauldron of testosterone and win-at-all-costs mentality.

Buffeted by the coach's tumultuous firings and hirings, the Allen family was periodically propelled to new teams in new cities. And while her French-Tunisian mother attempted to teach Jennifer proper feminine etiquette, the author dreamed of being the first female quarterback in the NFL. But as she grew up, she yearned mostly to be someone her father would notice. In a macho world where only foot-ball mattered, what could she strive for? Who could she become?

Allen has written a poignant memoir of the father she tried so hard to know, about a family life that was willfully sacrificed to his endless fanatical pursuit of the Super Bowl. What emerges is a fascinating and singular behind-the-scenes look at professional football, and a memorable, bittersweet portrait of a father and his daughter, written in a fresh and perceptive voice.

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