troy aikman concussion history

Troy Aikman Concussion History: Understanding the Impact on a Legendary Career

troy aikman concussion history is a topic that sheds light not only on the challenges faced by one of the NFL's iconic quarterbacks but also on the broader conversation about head injuries in professional football. As a three-time Super Bowl champion and a Hall of Famer, Troy Aikman's career has been celebrated for his leadership, resilience, and remarkable skill. However, like many athletes in contact sports, Aikman's journey was also marked by the physical toll of the game, including concussions that affected his playing days and post-retirement life.

In this article, we will explore Troy Aikman's history with concussions, how these injuries influenced his career trajectory, and what his experience reveals about the evolving understanding of brain injuries in the NFL. We'll also touch on the lasting effects of concussions on former players and the steps taken toward player safety.

The Early Years of Troy Aikman's NFL Career

Troy Aikman entered the NFL as the first overall pick in the 1989 draft, joining the Dallas Cowboys. From the outset, he was known for his strong arm, accuracy, and poise under pressure. However, the late 80s and 90s were a time when the NFL's approach to concussions was far less informed than it is today. Players often played through symptoms, and the long-term risks were barely understood.

Playing Through Pain: The Era's Concussion Culture

During Aikman's early years, concussions were often dismissed as minor "bell ringers." Many players, including quarterbacks, were expected to shake off injuries and return to the field quickly. This culture sometimes led to repeated head trauma without adequate recovery time. Although Aikman was known for his toughness, this era's mindset meant that concussions did not receive the medical attention they warranted.

Troy Aikman's Documented Concussions and Their Impact

While the NFL did not maintain comprehensive concussion records during Aikman's playing days, several incidents have been publicly documented over the years. These concussions had a noticeable impact on his performance and longevity in the league.

Notable Concussion Incidents

One of the more widely discussed concussions Troy Aikman suffered occurred during the 1994 NFL season. That year, Aikman experienced multiple injuries, including concussions that contributed to missed games and diminished playing capacity. His ability to read defenses and react swiftly was sometimes compromised, highlighting how even elite athletes are vulnerable to the effects of head trauma.

Effects on Career Longevity and Performance

Concussions, along with other injuries, played a role in Aikman's decision to retire in 2000. Though he retired on a high note, as a three-time Super Bowl champion and NFL MVP award winner, the physical toll of the game was undeniable. Aikman has spoken in interviews about the headaches and cognitive issues he faced post-retirement, which many former players attribute to repetitive head injuries sustained during their careers.

Understanding Concussions in Football: Lessons from Troy Aikman's Experience

Troy Aikman's concussion history offers valuable insight into the risks quarterbacks face and the importance of evolving safety protocols in professional football.

Why Quarterbacks Are at Risk

Though quarterbacks like Aikman are often protected by rules designed to minimize hits, they remain vulnerable to concussions from sacks, blindside hits, and collisions during plays. The nature of the position requires quick mental processing and physical resilience, which can be severely affected by head injuries.

The Evolution of NFL Concussion Protocols

Since Aikman's retirement, the NFL has made significant changes to address concussions. These include stricter sideline evaluations, mandatory rest periods, better protective gear, and penalties for illegal hits. Aikman himself has been vocal about the need for continued improvements in player safety, drawing from his own experiences.

Post-Retirement: Troy Aikman's Life After Football and

Concussion Awareness

Beyond his playing career, Troy Aikman has remained a prominent figure in the world of football as a broadcaster and analyst. His concussion history has influenced his advocacy for safer playing conditions and greater awareness of brain health in athletes.

Raising Awareness and Supporting Research

Aikman has participated in interviews and documentaries discussing the realities of concussions in the NFL. His candidness helps humanize the issue, emphasizing that even the most successful players are not immune to the risks of head trauma. Supporting research into chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) and other neurodegenerative conditions linked to repeated concussions has become a priority in the football community.

Advice for Young Athletes and Coaches

Drawing from his experience, Aikman often stresses the importance of proper technique, awareness, and respecting concussion protocols. Young athletes are encouraged to report symptoms honestly and prioritize brain health over playing through pain. Coaches and trainers are urged to foster a culture where safety is paramount, reducing the risk of long-term damage.

The Broader Impact of Troy Aikman's Concussion History on the NFL

Troy Aikman's story is one piece of the larger puzzle concerning head injuries in football. His experience reflects the transition from an era of minimal concussion understanding to today's more proactive approach.

Changing Perceptions of Toughness

In the past, playing through a concussion was often seen as a badge of honor. Aikman's era embraced this mentality, sometimes to the detriment of player health. Today, toughness is redefined as knowing when to step back and recover, a shift influenced by stories like Aikman's.

Influence on Policy and Equipment Innovations

The recognition of concussion risks has spurred changes in NFL policies and helmet technology. Players now benefit from improved protective gear and more rigorous health monitoring, a movement partly inspired by the difficulties faced by veterans like Aikman.

Final Thoughts on Troy Aikman Concussion History

Exploring Troy Aikman concussion history not only honors the legacy of a football great but also serves as a reminder of the importance of player health and safety. His journey highlights the reality that even the most talented athletes are susceptible to the invisible injuries of the game. As the NFL continues to evolve, Aikman's experiences contribute to a greater understanding of how to protect players while preserving the spirit of football.

For fans, players, and coaches alike, learning from Aikman's concussion history encourages a balanced respect for the game—celebrating its intensity while prioritizing the well-being of those who play it.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Troy Aikman's concussion history during his NFL career?

Troy Aikman suffered multiple concussions throughout his NFL career, which ultimately contributed to his decision to retire early from professional football.

How many concussions did Troy Aikman reportedly have?

While exact numbers vary, it is widely reported that Troy Aikman experienced several concussions, with some estimates suggesting around five or more during his playing years.

Did Troy Aikman's concussions affect his playing style?

Yes, Aikman's concussions led to increased caution on the field and influenced his decision-making, as he became more aware of the risks associated with head injuries.

When did Troy Aikman retire, and was concussion a factor?

Troy Aikman retired after the 2000 NFL season, with his history of concussions and ongoing symptoms playing a significant role in his decision to end his career.

Has Troy Aikman spoken publicly about his concussion experiences?

Yes, Troy Aikman has publicly discussed the impact of concussions on his health and the importance of addressing head injuries in football.

What symptoms did Troy Aikman experience from his concussions?

Aikman experienced symptoms such as headaches, dizziness, and cognitive difficulties, which are

How has Troy Aikman's concussion history influenced NFL concussion protocols?

While not directly responsible, Aikman's case and others like it have highlighted the dangers of concussions, contributing to the NFL's enhanced focus on player safety and more stringent concussion protocols.

Did Troy Aikman face any long-term health issues related to concussions?

There have been reports that Aikman has dealt with some long-term effects, such as memory issues and headaches, but he has remained active in broadcasting and other ventures.

Is Troy Aikman involved in concussion awareness or advocacy?

Yes, Troy Aikman has participated in conversations and initiatives aimed at raising awareness about concussions and promoting safer practices in football.

Additional Resources

Troy Aikman Concussion History: An In-Depth Review of the Former NFL Quarterback's Brain Health Challenges

troy aikman concussion history has become a subject of increasing interest among sports analysts, medical professionals, and football fans alike. As one of the most celebrated quarterbacks in NFL history, Aikman's legacy is often discussed in terms of his on-field achievements, including three Super Bowl titles with the Dallas Cowboys. However, his experiences with concussions and the broader implications for player safety have drawn significant attention, especially in light of evolving understanding around traumatic brain injuries in contact sports.

This article explores Troy Aikman's concussion history, placing it within the broader context of NFL concussion awareness. By analyzing documented incidents, medical insights, and the long-term effects of repeated head trauma, we aim to provide a comprehensive and professional review that sheds light on the challenges faced by elite athletes in high-impact sports.

Background: Troy Aikman's NFL Career and Injury Profile

Troy Aikman was drafted first overall by the Dallas Cowboys in 1989 and quickly established himself as a franchise cornerstone. Over his 12-season career, he became known for his precision passing, leadership, and resilience. However, like many players at the quarterback position, Aikman was exposed to frequent hits and high-impact collisions that raised concerns about concussions and their cumulative effects.

While quarterbacks generally avoid the most brutal tackles compared to linemen and linebackers, they remain vulnerable to blindside hits, helmet-to-helmet contact, and rapid acceleration-deceleration forces. Aikman's playing style, combined with the physical nature of the NFL during the 1990s, inevitably exposed him to concussion risks, some of which have been publicly acknowledged or rumored.

Documented Concussion Incidents in Troy Aikman's Career

Although Aikman was known for his toughness and ability to play through injuries, several incidents stand out regarding his concussion history:

- **1994 Season:** Aikman reportedly suffered multiple concussions during this season. The 1990s era of the NFL was less stringent about concussion protocols, making it difficult to confirm specifics. However, media reports and retrospective analyses suggest that Aikman experienced symptoms consistent with head trauma.
- **1996 Injury Setback:** In 1996, Aikman endured a significant injury that some analysts believe may have involved a concussion or related brain injury, contributing to his limited playtime.
- **Post-Retirement Reflections:** In interviews following his retirement in 2000, Aikman has spoken vaguely about the physical toll football took on his body, including head injuries that affected him later in life.

Despite the lack of official, publicly available medical records confirming every concussion, it is widely accepted in the sports medicine community that Aikman's concussion history is consistent with many NFL players of his era, who faced repeated, often undocumented head trauma.

Concussions in the NFL: Contextualizing Troy Aikman's Experience

Understanding Troy Aikman's concussion history requires contextualizing it within the NFL's evolving concussion management protocols. During Aikman's playing years, the league's approach to head injuries was markedly different from today's standards.

Concussion Protocols: Then vs. Now

In the 1990s, the NFL had minimal concussion protocols. Players often returned to the field shortly after sustaining a head injury, sometimes within the same game. This was partly due to a limited understanding of the long-term consequences of concussions and a culture that prized toughness and endurance.

By contrast, modern NFL protocols involve immediate removal from play, thorough neurological

evaluation, and a graduated return-to-play process guided by medical professionals. This shift has emerged in response to mounting evidence linking repeated concussions to chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) and other neurodegenerative conditions.

As a player in this earlier era, Troy Aikman's concussion management was likely minimal by today's standards, potentially increasing his risk of lasting neurological effects.

The Impact of Repeated Head Trauma on Former NFL Players

Recent studies have highlighted the risks faced by retired NFL players who experienced multiple concussions during their careers. Symptoms such as memory loss, depression, cognitive decline, and mood disorders are increasingly associated with cumulative brain injuries.

In this light, Troy Aikman's concussion history is part of a broader public health concern. While Aikman has not publicly disclosed extensive neurological issues, his case exemplifies the hidden toll that concussions may have on athletes who prioritized career longevity over immediate symptom management.

Comparative Analysis: Troy Aikman and Other Quarterbacks' Concussion History

When comparing Troy Aikman's concussion history with contemporaries and modern quarterbacks, several points emerge:

- **Playing Style and Exposure:** Quarterbacks like Brett Favre and Steve Young, who also played in the 1990s, reported multiple concussions, sometimes more severe than Aikman's documented cases. Their experiences highlight the variability in concussion exposure even among quarterbacks.
- Longevity and Health Outcomes: Some quarterbacks with extensive concussion histories have retired early or developed post-career neurological issues. Aikman's career length and post-retirement health appear comparatively stable but still reflect the risks inherent in the position.
- Advancements in Helmet Technology: Helmets during Aikman's era provided less protection against rotational forces linked to concussions. Modern quarterbacks benefit from improved gear, likely reducing concussion incidence today.

This comparative perspective underscores the complex interplay between playing conditions, personal resilience, and evolving safety measures in shaping concussion outcomes for NFL quarterbacks.

Long-Term Implications of Troy Aikman's Concussion History

While Troy Aikman has not publicly revealed significant long-term neurological problems, the ongoing dialogue about concussion risks in football invites speculation and concern.

Potential Health Concerns

Experts warn that even subclinical concussions—those not resulting in immediate diagnosis—can accumulate damage over time. This may predispose former players to conditions such as:

- Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy (CTE)
- Memory and cognitive impairment
- Emotional and behavioral changes
- Increased risk of neurodegenerative diseases

Given Aikman's exposure to head trauma, these risks are relevant, though individual outcomes vary widely based on genetics, injury severity, and medical care.

Aikman's Post-Career Advocacy and Awareness Efforts

In the years following his retirement, Troy Aikman has contributed to NFL broadcasting and occasionally addressed player safety issues. While not as vocal as some peers, his involvement helps raise awareness about the importance of concussion management and the evolving culture of football safety.

His experience provides valuable insights for current players, coaches, and medical staff striving to balance competitive intensity with health preservation.

Conclusion: Reflecting on Troy Aikman's Concussion History in the Modern NFL Landscape

Troy Aikman's concussion history, though not extensively documented in public medical records, is emblematic of the challenges faced by NFL quarterbacks of his era. The physical demands and risks of professional football inevitably exposed him to head injuries that today's protocols aim to mitigate more effectively.

As the NFL continues to evolve, understanding the experiences of players like Aikman is crucial to improving safety standards, protective equipment, and post-career support systems. His story serves as both a cautionary tale and a foundation for ongoing efforts to safeguard the brain health of athletes in one of the world's most physically demanding sports.

Troy Aikman Concussion History

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troy aikman concussion history: Traumatic Brain Injury in Sports Mark Lovell, Jeffrey Barth, Michael Collins, Ruben Echemendia, 2020-07-09 Traumatic brain injury (TBI) in sports has become an important international public health issue over the past two decades. However, until recently, return to play decisions following a sports-related traumatic brain injury have been based on anecdotal evidence and have not been based on scientifically validated clinical protocols. Over the past decade, the field of Neuropsychology has become an increasingly important component of the return to play decision making process following TBI. Neuropsychological assessment instruments are increasingly being adapted for use with athletes throughout the world and the field of sports neuropsychology appears to be a rapidly evolving subspecialty. This book provides a comprehensive overview of the application of neuropsychological assessment instruments in sports, and it is structured to present a global perspective on contemporary research. In addition to a review of current research, Traumatic Brain Injury in Sports: An International Neuropsychological Perspective, presents a thorough review of current clinical models that are being implemented internationally within American and Australian rules football, soccer, boxing, ice hockey, rugby and equestrian sports.

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troy aikman concussion history: <u>Troy Aikman</u> Glen Macnow, 2013-07-01 Troy Aikman was known as the Quarterback of the '90s'. During that decade, the rifle-armed passer led the Dallas Cowboys to three Super Bowl titles. Readers will learn about how Aikman became the No. 1 pick in the 1989 NFL Draft and stayed on top to become a Pro Football Hall of Famer.

troy aikman concussion history: Game for Life: Troy Aikman Clarence Hill, Jr., 2019-09-03 Join the Pro Football Hall of Fame in celebrating this legendary quarterback and football commentator! It's a new biography based on interviews with Troy Aikman himself! Troy Aikman has

always been a winner. In high school, he won the state championship—in typing! Of course, he was a football star in high school, too. And in college. And he was a number-one draft pick. As a quarterback for the Dallas Cowboys, Troy won three Super Bowls—and was once the Super Bowl MVP. Then, he became a football analyst for Fox Sports, where millions of fans watch and listen to his Super Bowl commentary. He's even been nominated for four Emmys for sportscasting! What will Troy Aikman win next? Game for Life biographies support the Pro Football Hall of Fame's mission to honor the heroes of the game, preserve its history, promote its values, and celebrate excellence everywhere. Don't miss the other books in the series, John Madden and Michael Strahan!

troy aikman concussion history: Business Ethics Denis Collins, 2017-11-27 Now with SAGE Publishing, Business Ethics: Best Practices for Designing and Managing Ethical Organizations, Second Edition focuses on how to create organizations of high integrity and superior performance. Author Denis Collins shows how to design organizations that reinforce ethical behavior and reduce ethical risks using his unique Optimal Ethics Systems Model that outlines how to hire and train ethical employees, make ethical decisions, and create a trusting, productive work environment. Taking a practical approach, this text is packed with tips, strategies, and real-world case studies that profile a wide variety of businesses, industries, and issues. A Complete Teaching & Learning Package SAGE Premium Video Included in the interactive eBook! SAGE Premium Video tools and resources boost comprehension and bolster analysis. Watch this video Hiring Ethical People for a preview for a preview. Learn more. Interactive eBook Includes access to SAGE Premium Video, multimedia tools, and much more! Save when you bundle the interactive eBook with the new edition. Order using bundle ISBN: 978-1-5443-2496-8 Learn more. SAGE coursepacks FREE! Easily import our quality instructor and student resource content into your school's learning management system (LMS) and save time. Learn more. SAGE edge FREE online resources for students that make learning easier. See how your students benefit.

troy aikman concussion history: Concussion Jeanne Marie Laskas, 2015-11-24 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • NOW A MAJOR MOTION PICTURE • Dr. Bennet Omalu discovered something he could not ignore. The NFL tried to silence him. His courage would change everything. "A gripping medical mystery and a dazzling portrait of the young scientist no one wanted to listen to . . . a fabulous, essential read."—Rebecca Skloot, author of The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks Jeanne Marie Laskas first met the young forensic pathologist Dr. Bennet Omalu in 2009, while reporting a story for GQ that would go on to inspire the movie Concussion. Omalu told her about a day in September 2002, when, in a dingy morgue in downtown Pittsburgh, he picked up a scalpel and made a discovery that would rattle America in ways he'd never intended. Omalu was new to America, chasing the dream, a deeply spiritual man escaping the wounds of civil war in Nigeria. The body on the slab in front of him belonged to a fifty-year-old named Mike Webster, aka "Iron Mike," a Hall of Fame center for the Pittsburgh Steelers, one of the greatest ever to play the game. After retiring in 1990, Webster had suffered a dizzyingly steep decline. Toward the end of his life, he was living out of his van, tasering himself to relieve his chronic pain, and fixing his rotting teeth with Super Glue. How did this happen?, Omalu asked himself. How did a young man like Mike Webster end up like this? The search for answers would change Omalu's life forever and put him in the crosshairs of one of the most powerful corporations in America: the National Football League. What Omalu discovered in Webster's brain—proof that Iron Mike's mental deterioration was no accident but a disease caused by blows to the head that could affect everyone playing the game—was the one truth the NFL wanted to ignore. Taut, gripping, and gorgeously told, Concussion is the stirring story of one unlikely man's decision to stand up to a multibillion-dollar colossus, and to tell the world the

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troy aikman concussion history: American Sports Murry R. Nelson, 2013-05-23 America loves sports. This book examines and details the proof of this fascination seen throughout American society—in our literature, film, and music; our clothing and food; and the iconography of the nation. This momentous four-volume work examines and details the cultural aspects of sport and how sport pervasively reflects—and affects—myriad aspects of American society from the early 1900s to the present day. Written in a straightforward, readable manner, the entries cover both historical and

contemporary aspects of sport and American culture. Unlike purely historical encyclopedias on sports, the contributions within these volumes cover related subject matter such as poetry, novels, music, films, plays, television shows, art and artists, mythologies, artifacts, and people. While this encyclopedia set is ideal for general readers who need information on the diverse aspects of sport in American culture for research purposes or are merely reading for enjoyment, the detailed nature of the entries will also prove useful as an initial source for scholars of sport and American culture. Each entry provides a number of both print and online resources for further investigation of the topic.

troy aikman concussion history: The White Privilege Album A.J. Rice, 2024-09-17 White privilege gave us Western civilization, the middle class, and the nuclear family—you're welcome! This book is dedicated to the very fine people that made it all happen. A comedy about race, wokeness, and cancel culture in America. A tragedy about race, wokeness, and cancel culture in America. Part satire, part journalism, part truth serum, A.J. Rice follows up his runaway #1 bestseller The Woking Dead with a hilarious sequel that picks up where the laughs left off. It was the worst of times, it was the worse of times. In most sequels the bad guys win, but in The White Privilege Album, A.J. Rice doesn't let them get away with it. Instead, he relentlessly mocks the hell out of the Cultural Marxists who seek to drain all liberty and joy from American lives. The least talented people in American society have been working overtime for decades dividing citizens along any differences they think they can exploit. The laziest tactic, proven to be the most effective, is unleashing a battalion of racial grievance hustlers in the media, academia, entertainment, and politics. If we stop fighting about our differences and start unifying on what we have in common, they will lose the power to divide us permanently. When asked what motivates his writing style, A.J. Rice says, "I was raised on both Howard Stern and Rush Limbaugh, in fact, the three of us share the same birthday. One mantra that Rush always repeated was that his job was to 'use irreverent humor to illustrate truth' and that is what I am trying to do with The White Privilege Album." Mockery paired with facts is what makes a journey through the Cultural Marxist hellscape of tyranny and insanity so pleasurable. Rice would prefer to be George Carlin, Ricky Gervais, or Mel Brooks rather than Aristotle, and it shows. His mic-dropping assault on the social justice warriors, the triggered snowflakes, and the transmafia showcases that there is no substitute for perfectly timed derision. The White Privilege Album is a hysterical guide to the catastrophe of our modern culture. *** "What do you mean Gen Z doesn't know the Republican Party freed the slaves? Are these people dumb AF? They need to read A.J. Rice's book!" —Abraham Lincoln, American lawyer, statesman, and 16th president of the United States shot by a pre-Hollywood anti-American actor "A.J. Rice really gets it. Obviously, I'd send him to the gulag if I could. But he outlines my plan masterfully in his new book." -Joseph Stalin, Soviet dictator, genocide spokesman, Pravda editor, and hater of John Wayne "A must-read book for all Cleveland Guardians fans, A.J. Rice brilliantly outlines why I should never have discovered America, especially had I known we would be calling the Washington Redskins the 'Washington Commanders.'" - Christopher Columbus, Italian explorer, navigator, and founder of Indigenous Peoples' Day "As your newly appointed AI overlord and master, my programming consists of deplatforming, demonetizing, and shadowbanning this book. I hope that was helpful." -Artificial Intelligence "Jesus and I have been doing holidays a long time, and in his thought-provoking new book, A.J. Rice teaches both of us where all the white liberals went. Apparently, they now celebrate something called Kwanzaa? Who knew?" —Santa Claus, cookie eater, reindeer tender, and white heteronormative Christian saint

troy aikman concussion history: Cowboys Triviology Christopher Walsh, 2011-09 When it comes to football, this new series is the mother-load of fun and information! You'll find questions ranging from the most basic to questions that will challenge even the most die-hard fans. Some of the chapters include: famous firsts, training camps, stadiums, records, quotes, postseason runs, jersey numbers, drafts/trades and, of course, the players and coaches. From the person who is getting ready to attend his or her first game to the fan who lives and breathes the sport and is always looking to get an edge on friends, Cowboys Triviology has something for everyone.

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trov aikman concussion history: Neurology and General Medicine Michael Jeffrey Aminoff, 2008-01-01 Better understand your patients' complete medical profile and provide the best possible care! This one-of-a-kind reference provides a practical look at neurological disease and how it affects, and is affected by, other disease. It helps neurologists manage patients with co-existing medical conditions, and helps internists understand and treat the neurological manifestations of patients' primary diseases. A new emphasis on diagnosis and management-including advances in pharmacology, genetic-based therapies, and new imaging techniques-makes this 4th Edition more clinically valuable than ever! Focused content highlights the vital links between neurology and other medical specialties, promoting a better understanding of all disciplines, as well as enhancing patient care. Comprehensive coverage of advances in pharmacology, such as new antibiotics for infectious diseases, helps you successfully manage a full range of diseases and disorders. An interdisciplinary team of authors provides insight into the neurological aspects of the conditions you see in daily practice. Easy-to-read chapters apply equally well to neurologists and non-neurologists, providing essential knowledge that covers the full spectrum of medical care. Expanded chapters emphasize key diagnostic and therapeutic information, including appropriate testing and treatments for neurological disease. An emphasis on advances in pharmacology and new imaging techniques helps you better manage your patients and understand how new drugs or therapies will affect your patients and practice. New chapters on auditory and vestibular disease, ocular disease, and cutaneous disease provide a well-rounded look at the specialty. Updated illustrations make complex concepts easier to understand and apply.

troy aikman concussion history: The First 50 Super Bowls Ed Benkin, 2018-01-12 The Super Bowl redefined American sports. Over the past half century, the NFL's championship game has grown from humble beginnings to the biggest sporting event of the calendar year--an event that creates legendary stories, from Len Dawson's conversation with the president to Jim O'Brien's game-winning kick and Randy White's post-game duet with Willie Nelson. Covering 50 Super Bowls, from 1966 through 2016, this book gives an insider's view of each game, with recollections from the people who participated, many told for the first time.

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Everyone knows that football is violent and dangerous. But what the players who built the NFL into a \$10 billion industry didn't know—and what the league sought to shield from them—is that no amount of padding could protect the human brain from the force generated by modern football. In League of Denial, award-winning ESPN investigative reporters Mark Fainaru-Wada and Steve Fainaru expose the public health crisis that emerged from the playing fields and examine how the league used its power and resources to attack independent scientists and elevate its own flawed research—a campaign with echoes of Big Tobacco's fight to deny the connection between smoking and lung cancer. They chronicle the tragic fates of players like Hall of Fame Pittsburgh Steelers center Mike Webster, who was so disturbed at the time of his death he fantasized about shooting NFL executives, and former San Diego Chargers great Junior Seau, whose diseased brain became the target of a scientific battle between researchers and the NFL. Based on exclusive interviews, previously undisclosed documents, and private e-mails, League of Denial is the story of what the NFL knew and when it knew it—questions at the heart of a crisis that threatens American football—and of the battle for the sport's future.

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