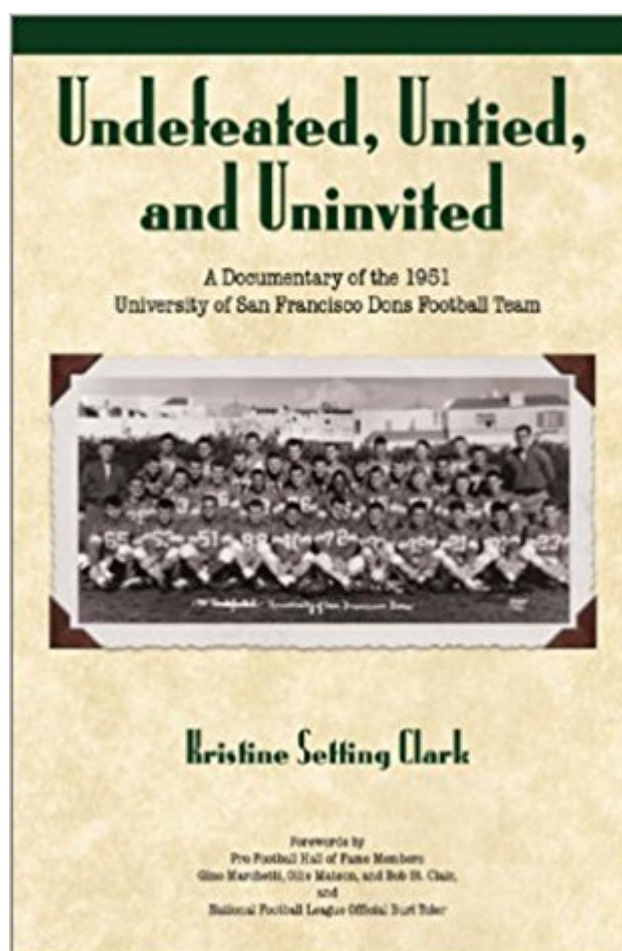


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Undefeated, Untied, And Uninvited



Synopsis

In 1951 the University of San Francisco football team (the Dons) went undefeated and untied. Yet, despite being among the best college football teams of all time, the squad was not invited to play in a post season bowl game because two of its players were African-American. The team was offered the chance to compete without the players, but they unanimously refused on principle. The story of the 1951 University of San Francisco football team is a remarkable tale. I heard Pete Rozelle talk about it many times. It is a story that transcends football into the realm of the human spirit. I know it made a lasting impression on Pete, and the team clearly had a major impact on the NFL. -Paul Tagliabue - NFL Commissioner

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Customer Reviews

I read this book in one sitting. I could not put it down. It covers the end of a forgotten and lightly regarded era of college football. In the 16 years between 1936 and 1951 five independent California colleges (Santa Clara, St. Mary's, College of the Pacific, University of San Francisco, and Loyola University of Los Angeles) ranked in the Associated Press top 20 a total of 11 times. Santa Clara won two Sugar Bowls, an Orange Bowl and was the only team to defeat Bud Wilkinson's 1948 Oklahoma juggernaut. The 1949 COP team had a backfield of 3 future pro players (Eddie Le Baron, Eddie Macon, and Tom McCormick), was undefeated over an 11 game schedule, and averaged 52 points a game. The 1950 Loyola team put 7 players into the pros including Gene Brito (a defensive end for the Redskins, Richard Nixon's favorite football player, and an NFL Hall of Famer). But the crowning achievement of the era was the 1951 USF team. And this book is about

them. No other college team in history even comes close. Ten players made it to the NFL. Three are in the NFL Hall of Fame: Ollie Matson of the Cardinals and Rams and the only man other than Jim Thorpe to achieve All-American in football and win an Olympic Medal in Track and Field, Gino Marchetti of the Colts - the greatest defensive end of all time, and Bob St. Clair the greatest tackle in the history of 49er football. If this team had been named Oklahoma, Notre Dame, or Florida State they would still be singing songs about them. But the real story in the book is about courage and integrity. The football program at USF was in danger of being discontinued because the small Jesuit school could not afford the cost of maintaining a big time football enterprise. A bowl bid might have saved the program.

This book has a "Field of Dreams" and "It's a Wonderful Life" feel to it due to the courageous selflessness and undaunting unity displayed by the players on the unbeaten University of San Francisco gridiron juggernaut. I am also delighted to see a book about some of the great and often unheralded teams of the old Catholic Conference of California. My cousin Fran Hare played three times against USF, including the brilliant 1951 squad led by the running heroics of the incomparable Ollie Matson and the defensive excellence of Gino Marchetti and Bob St. Clair. Fran's older brother, the late Vern Hare, was on the 1948 Santa Clara team which upset Oklahoma in 1948. He was a teammate of the great Hall of Fame end Tom Fears, who played both at Santa Clara and UCLA. When I lived in Los Angeles and was a sports editor I talked to all kinds of people associated with Loyola football, a school which put on the field stellar future pros such as Gene Brito, Skippy Gincanelli and Don Klosterman. Loyola had a great team in 1950 which lost only one game, a 28-26 upset at home in Gilmore Stadium against Santa Clara. Yes, and there was also St. Mary's located in the San Francisco suburb of Moraga. In the thirties the Gaels had one of the nation's premier football coaches in Slip Madigan. In perhaps the school's finest gridiron hour, the Gaels defeated USC in 1931 at the L.A. Coliseum, 13-7, the only blemish on Howard Jones's team's record as the Trojans recovered from that reversal to win the national title with what historians called one of the premier college teams of the early era. The competition was intense and many of the players from these schools went on to National Football League glory.

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