



Stagg vs. Yost: The Birth of Cutthroat Football

John Kryk

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Corruption, scandals, and reports of wrongdoing in college football are constantly in the news. From Penn State's Joe Paterno to Ohio State's Jim Tressel, we have come to learn that some of the most lauded coaches don't always live up to their saintly reputations. Perhaps no era of college football was ever more emblematic of this than the early 1900s, a time when coaches worked the system with merciless flair to recruit the best players and then keep them eligible to play, even while other coaches were trying to steal already-enrolled players from rival universities. Amos Alonzo Stagg of the University of Chicago and Fielding H. Yost of the University of Michigan were no exception, and their bitter rivalry is one for the ages.

In *Stagg vs. Yost: The Birth of Cutthroat Football*, John Kryk brings to life a story that is both timeless and familiar to all football fans, indeed to all sports fans: one man's obsession to end the pain of a long losing streak to a hated rival. This is the story of how Amos Alonzo Stagg covertly punted many of the principles he espoused in order to dismantle one of the most powerful machines the game has known—Fielding Yost's Michigan Wolverines. Kryk reveals the extent to which Stagg schemed to achieve victory against the "Point a Minute" Wolverines and the lengths Yost went to prevent that from happening. In addition, this book provides insight into college athletics' corruption as a whole during this time, from under-the-table payments to recruits to contracted loans from wealthy boosters—and why the current NCAA rulebook contains page after page of recruiting and eligibility regulations.

Featuring never-before-published internal correspondences of UM athletic leaders, Stagg's surviving letters and notes, and reports from newspapers of the day, *Stagg vs. Yost* brings fresh insight into two legends of college football who would do almost anything to win. This book is a noteworthy and fascinating narrative for football fans, historians, and anyone interested in seeing where cutthroat college recruiting and coaching all began.

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