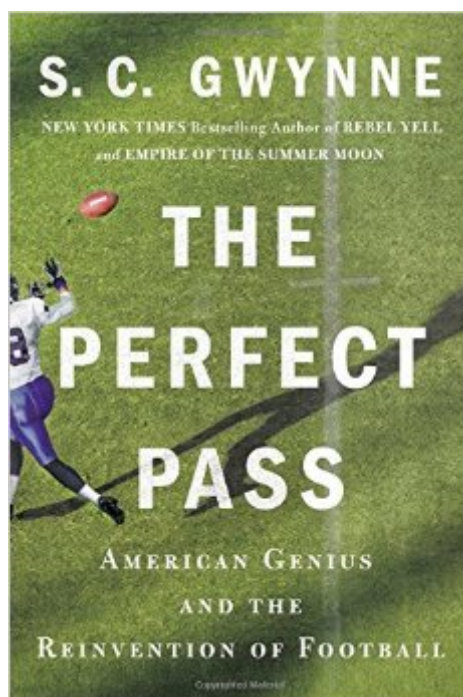


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# The Perfect Pass: American Genius And The Reinvention Of Football



## Synopsis

In the tradition of Michael Lewis's *Moneyball*, award-winning historian S.C. Gwynne tells the incredible story of how two unknown coaches revolutionized American football at every level, from high school to the NFL. Hal Mumme is one of a handful of authentic offensive geniuses in the history of American football. *The Perfect Pass* is the story of how he irreverently destroyed and re-created the game. Mumme spent fourteen mostly losing seasons coaching football before inventing a potent passing offense that would soon shock players, delight fans, and terrify opposing coaches. The revolution he fomented began at a tiny, overlooked college called Iowa Wesleyan, where Mumme was head coach and Mike Leach, a lawyer who had never played college football, was hired as his offensive line coach. In the cornfields of Iowa, while scribbling plays on paper napkins, these two mad inventors, drawn together by a shared disregard for conventionalism and a love for Jimmy Buffett, began to engineer the purest, most extreme passing game in the 145-year history of football. Implementing their "Air Raid" offense, their teams "at Iowa Wesleyan and later at Valdosta State and the University of Kentucky" played blazingly fast "faster than any team ever had before, and they routinely beat teams with far more talented athletes. And Mumme and Leach did it all without even a playbook. Their quarterback once completed sixty-one of eighty-six passes, both collegiate records. In *The Perfect Pass*, S.C. Gwynne explores Mumme's leading role in changing football from a run-dominated sport to a pass-dominated one, the game that tens of millions of Americans now watch every fall weekend. Whether you're a casual or ravenous football fan, this is a truly compelling story of American ingenuity and how a set of revolutionary ideas made their way from the margins into the hot center of the game we celebrate today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is the story of how a college coach, Hal Mumme, developed an "unstoppable" offense that would defeat even the biggest, strongest defenses; and of how that offense gradually spread throughout college football and into the professional leagues, changing the very nature of the game " the Air Raid offense. Sometimes you just have to take the things life throws at you and run with them. When SC Gwynne won my Book of the Year award in 2014 for Rebel Yell, his brilliant biography of Stonewall Jackson, I gave him the usual prize " my promise to read his next book. Of course, I was assuming it would be another biography of a historical soldier or politician. Imagine my... delight when it turned out to be a book about a passing offense in American football! In my life I have watched one full game and a bit of another, and frankly thought it was... ahem... a game one has to have grown up with to fully appreciate. So the question was not so much whether I'd like this book as whether I'd even understand it! Gwynne starts with a great description of Texas Tech putting the Air Raid offense into action in 2008. He then whisks us back in time to meet Hal Mumme at the beginning of his coaching career. He shows the uncertainty of life as a college coach in a nation obsessed with the game " a hero when leading his team to victory, but abused and reviled if they lose. Hal had always wanted to coach, despite the low pay and precariousness of the profession. His big idea was that he was going to make throwing the ball the centre of the game. To explain why this idea was so radical, Gwynne gives a potted history of the rise of football. He shows it as arising out of a nostalgia for war " an opportunity for men to hone their manly aggression in peacetime.

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