

The Untold Story of Greed, Corruption, and Football at SMU: A Tale of Scandal and Betrayal

It was an era of limitless ambition, soaring dreams, and a relentless pursuit of greatness. Southern Methodist University (SMU), a prestigious institution nestled in the heart of Dallas, Texas, seemed destined for football glory. But behind the scenes, a dark undercurrent of greed and corruption was taking hold, leading to a scandal that would forever tarnish the university's reputation.

A Football Dynasty Driving by Greed

In the early 1980s, SMU's football program was a force to be reckoned with. Their "Pony Express" backfield duo of running backs Eric Dickerson and Craig James was a nightmare for opposing defenses. Under the guidance of head coach Bobby Collins, the team was on the brink of unparalleled success.

But success often breeds greed, and it wasn't long before SMU's football program succumbed to the allure of wealth and power. Enter Bill Clements, the oil magnate who served as SMU's board chairman and later became the governor of Texas. Clements had an insatiable desire to see SMU rise to prominence, whatever the cost.

A Payroll to Meet: A Story of Greed, Corruption, and Football at SMU by David Whitford (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

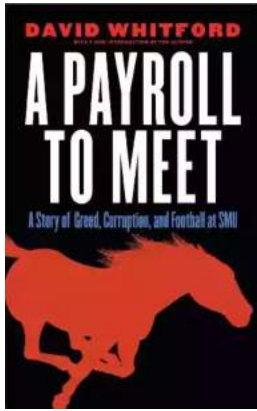
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The SMU Mustangs, fueled by Clements' deep pockets, began to offer financial incentives to recruits that were far beyond what was allowed by the NCAA. Boosters and influential alumni would shower potential players with illicit funds, luxury cars, and even promises of high-paying no-show jobs after graduation.

As the money flowed, so did the talent. SMU's roster grew increasingly star-studded, attracting some of the best high school prospects in the nation. The team's success reached unprecedented heights, with multiple bowl appearances and a number one national ranking in the Associated Press polls. But little did they know, a storm was brewing, and the truth was about to be unveiled.

The Corruption Unveiled

The details of SMU's shady dealings came to light during an unrelated investigation into the university's finances. A brewing scandal surrounding slush funds and hidden payments to administrators caught the attention of the NCAA, and they began digging deeper into SMU's affairs. To their astonishment, what they found was far worse than they could have ever imagined.

An extensive investigation by the NCAA revealed a web of deceit and illegal activity that implicated coaches, boosters, and even high-ranking university officials. The evidence was damning and showed a coordinated effort to flout NCAA rules, using under-the-table payments to secure top talent and maintain the team's dominance.

With the truth exposed, the NCAA handed down one of the harshest penalties in college football history. SMU was hit with the "death penalty," effectively shutting down the football program for the entire 1987 season and severely limiting scholarships and recruiting for the following years.

The Fallout and Legacy

The repercussions of the SMU scandal were far-reaching and left an indelible mark on the university and college football as a whole. SMU's once-promising football program was left in ruins, with talented players transferring to other schools and fans disillusioned by the betrayal of trust.

While SMU eventually revived its football program, the road to redemption was long and arduous. It took years for the school to regain its reputation and credibility. The impact of the scandal extended beyond the gridiron, casting a shadow over the university's academic endeavors and staining the integrity of the institution.

But perhaps the most significant legacy of the SMU scandal was the wake-up call it provided for college athletics. The scandal forced the NCAA to reevaluate and strengthen its enforcement protocols, pushing for stricter regulations and harsher penalties for those who attempted to cheat the system.

The Lessons Learned

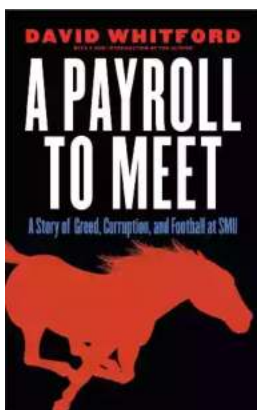
The story of greed, corruption, and football at SMU serves as a cautionary tale for the world of college athletics. It highlights the dangers of unchecked ambition and the lengths some individuals will go to see their dreams come true.

It is a reminder that the pursuit of greatness should never come at the expense of integrity. The SMU scandal acted as a catalyst for change in college sports, serving as a stark reminder that the values of fair play, honesty, and ethical conduct must always be upheld.

The story of greed, corruption, and football at SMU is a tale of shattered dreams and lost innocence. It is a reminder that the allure of success can sometimes lead people down a dark and treacherous path.

SMU's fall from grace serves as a constant reminder that the true essence of sports lies in the values we uphold both on and off the field. The scandal may have rocked the university to its core, but it also became a catalyst for change, ultimately leading to a stronger and more vigilant NCAA.

Let the story of SMU serve as a cautionary tale, a reminder that the pursuit of glory must always be guided by principles of integrity and fairness, for without them, even the mightiest empires can crumble.



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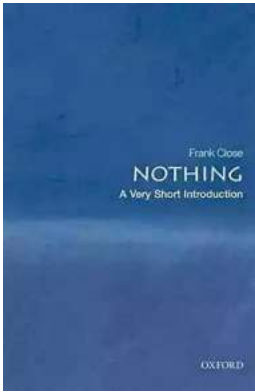
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Southern Methodist University in Dallas is one of numerous prestigious universities in Texas. The school's football team was the pride of the university and the city. Before the late 1970s, however, the relatively small school had trouble recruiting and struggled to keep up with the big-time football universities that were often more than double its size. Under pressure to compete, the SMU football program engaged in ethics, rules, and recruiting violations for years. When the corruption came to light, the NCAA handed out its most serious punishment in the history of college sports—the “death penalty”—which cancelled the team's entire 1987 schedule.

In *A Payroll to Meet*, author David Whitford details the Mustangs' descent into corruption and the fallout when it was discovered. Most egregiously, the football program ran a huge slush fund that was used to pay players from the mid-1970s through 1986. Bill Clements, chairman of the SMU board and soon to be reelected governor of Texas, knew all about the slush fund before the NCAA did. He opted, however, to phase out the payments rather than stop them immediately, for fear that angry players might go public and create still more problems for SMU. Clements and the athletic director Bob Hitch decided that the football program had “a payroll to meet.”



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