

# [PDF] The Big Scrum: How Teddy Roosevelt Saved Football

John J. Miller - pdf download free book

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## Books Details:

Title: The Big Scrum: How Teddy Roos

Author: John J. Miller

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## Description:

**From Publishers Weekly** Though it is now an autumn distraction for millions every weekend, football was on the verge of extinction in the early 20th century. Its participants, who did not benefit from padding or helmets, frequently suffered severe injuries or died. States considered banning the sport—including, of all places, Georgia—while colleges fervently endorsed its demise. But President Theodore Roosevelt always defended the game. According to Miller, Roosevelt's 1905 meeting with football coaches at Yale, Princeton, and Harvard, urging the popular teams to play clean, began the game's ascent to legitimacy. Miller offers full glimpses into the lives of the men who nurtured or nearly destroyed the game, like cantankerous Harvard president Charles W. Eliot (who compared football to "the ysupreme savagery" of war"), legendary Yale football coach Walter Camp (who

essentially invented the position of quarterback), and Harvard coach William T. Reid, whose public letter outlining football's commitment to safety kept the sport at the influential school. But Miller, a national correspondent for the National Review, is far too preoccupied with Roosevelt's life as a sportsman. The book feels like a fascinating footnote with biographical padding. (Apr.)

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**From Library Journal** This focused study of Teddy Roosevelt's effect on the growth of football could be called *Mornings on the Gridiron*, reminiscent as it is of David McCullough's *Mornings on Horseback* about TR's youth. Although TR was too small to play college football, he was a fan of the sport. Miller (national correspondent, National Review) draws from published sources to colorfully detail the future President's interest in a vigorous sporting life, while also depicting the early development of football, particularly at the Ivy League schools, with a special spotlight on innovators. As football rules developed in the 19th century, though, the brutality of the game did not subside, and many prominent leaders called for the outlawing of the sport in the early years of the 20th century. TR, then President, intervened by bringing together leaders from several elite schools to form the governing organization that enacted radical rule changes to open up the game. The distance for a first down was increased from five to 10 yards, a neutral zone was established at the line of scrimmage, and, most important, the forward pass was legalized. **VERDICT** There is a timely connection here with today's concerns over football violence. Highly recommended for general readers who love football and/or TR.—John Maxymuk, Rutgers Univ. Lib., Camden, NJ

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