



**JUNE 5-21, 2026**

**FOOTBALL**

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# Warehouse Connections Reading List

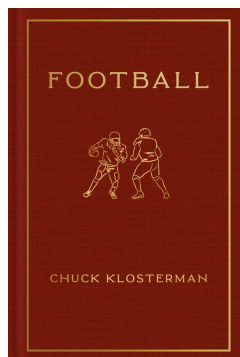
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## Books Like, Literally About Football

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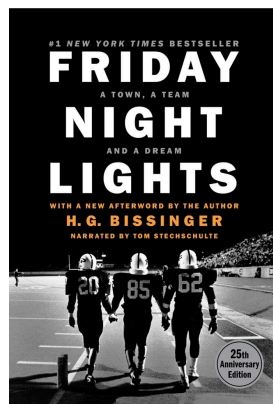


### **Football, by Chuck Klosterman**

In 2023, 93 of the 100 most-watched programs on U.S. television were NFL football games. This is not an anomaly. This is how society is best understood. Football is not merely the country's most popular sport; it is engrained in almost everything that explains what America is, even for those who barely pay attention.

Chuck Klosterman—*New York Times* bestselling critic, journalist, and, yes, football psychotic—did not write this book to deepen your appreciation of the game. He's not trying to help you become that person at the party, or to teach you how to make better bets, or to validate any preexisting views you might have about the sport (positive or negative). *Football* does, in fact, do all of those things. But not in the way such things have been done in the past, and never in a way any normal person would expect.

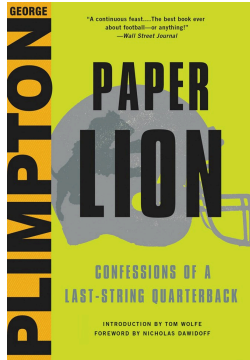
**Why we love it:** It's Chuck Klosterman. We can't look away.



### **Friday Night Lights, by H.G. Bissinger**

Return once again to the timeless account of the Permian Panthers of Odessa -- the winningest high-school football team in Texas history. Socially and racially divided, Odessa isn't known to be a place big on dreams, but every Friday night from September to December, when the Panthers play football, dreams can come true. With frankness and compassion, Pulitzer Prize winner H. G. Bissinger unforgettably captures a season in the life of Odessa and shows how single-minded devotion to the team shapes the community and inspires -- and sometimes shatters -- the teenagers who wear the Panthers' uniforms.

**Why we love it:** Bissinger writes with empathy and compassion about how a community's obsession with winning shapes their town and the teenagers on the field.



### ***Paper Lion*, by George Plimpton**

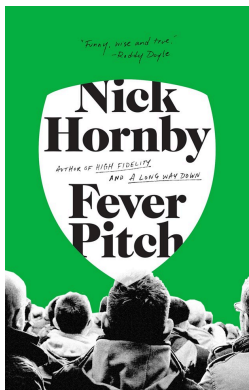
With his characteristic wit, Plimpton recounts his experiences in talking his way into training camp with the Detroit Lions, practicing with the team, and taking snaps behind center. His breezy style captures the pressures and tensions rookies confront, the hijinks that pervade when sixty high-strung guys live together in close quarters, and a host of football rites and rituals.

**Why we love it:** This is probably the funniest book about football, and a book Plimpton is best known for.

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## **Books About Fandom and Obsession**

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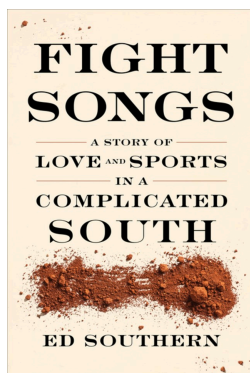
### ***Fever Pitch*, by Nick Hornby**

In America, it is soccer. But in Great Britain, it is the *real* football. No pads, no prayers, no prisoners. And that's before the players even take the field.

Nick Hornby has been a football fan since the moment he was conceived. Call it predestiny. Or call it preschool. *Fever Pitch* is his tribute to a lifelong obsession. Part autobiography, part comedy, part incisive analysis of insanity, Hornby's memoir captures the fever pitch of fandom—its agony and ecstasy, its community, its defining role in thousands of young men's coming-of-age stories. *Fever*

*Pitch* is one for the home team. But above all, it is one for everyone who knows what it *really* means to have a losing season.

**Why we love it:** Nick Hornby is one of those writers that makes us laugh at ourselves (and at him) and then stop and shake our head and say “damn” at the truth at its core.



### ***Fight Songs*, by Ed Southern**

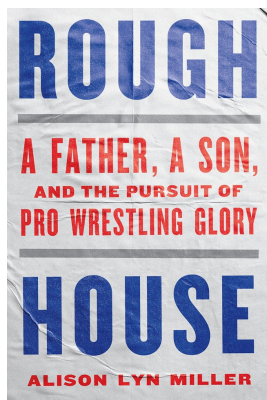
Ed Southern, lifelong fan of the Wake Forest University Demon Deacons, the smallest school in the NCAA's Power 5, set out to tell the story of how he got tangled, in vines of history and happenstance, with the two giants of his favorite sport: the Crimson Tide and the Clemson Tigers. He set out to tell how a North Carolina native crossed the shifty, unmarked border between Tobacco Road and the Deep South. He set out to tell how the legendary Paul “Bear”

Bryant, from beyond the grave, introduced him to his wife, a Birmingham native and die-hard Alabama fan.

While he was writing that story, though, 2020 came along.

Suddenly his questions had a new and urgent focus: Why do sports mean so much that so many will play and watch them in the face of a global pandemic? How have the South's histories shaped its fervor for college sports? How have college sports shaped how southerners construct their identities, priorities, and allegiances? If college sports really do mean so much in the South, then why didn't everyone down south wear masks or recognize that Black Lives Matter, even after the coaches told us to?

**Why we love it:** Ed Southern gets to the root of the complexities and contradictions of football in the American South.

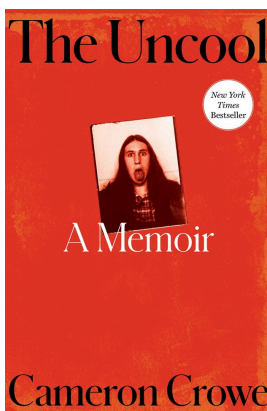


### **Rough House, by Alison Lyn Miller**

In *Rough House*, journalist Alison Lyn Miller introduces Hunter James, an aspiring star born into a family of wrestlers in Georgia. Hunter lifts, runs, and pounds protein, sculpting himself into a human action figure with the goal of being signed by a major promotion and finishing what his father started. Miller's immersive, unforgettable account shows us what happens when Hunter enters the bruising world of indie wrestling—where gymnasiums become arenas, trampolines serve as training grounds, and young men fight for glory.

Rich with drama, humor, and heart, *Rough House* is a ringside seat to a coming-of-age story that reveals the escapism, self-actualization, performance, and violence inherent in one of America's most dismissed pastimes. Whether you're a die-hard fan or new to the spectacle, this true story will leave you cheering for more.

**Why we love it:** Through this reporting, we see the best of America. It's fascinating.



### **The Uncool, by Cameron Crowe**

Cameron Crowe was an unlikely rock and roll insider. Born in 1957 to parents who strictly banned the genre from their house, he dove headfirst into the world of music. By the time he graduated high school at fifteen, Crowe was contributing to *Rolling Stone*. His parents became believers, uneasily allowing him to interview and tour with legends like Led Zeppelin; Lynyrd Skynyrd; Bob Dylan; Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young; and Fleetwood Mac.

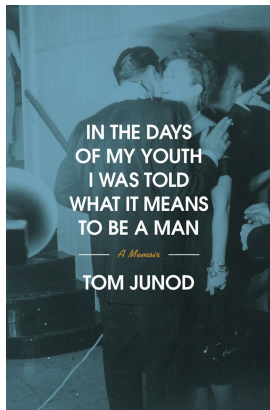
*The Uncool* offers a front-row ticket to the 1970s, a golden era for music and art when rock was young. There's no such thing as a media junket—just the rare chance a young writer might be invited along for an adventure. Crowe spends his teens politely turning down the drugs and turning on his tape recorder.

**Why we love it:** Almost Famous is a favorite movie, and this memoir is for anyone who loves music (and/or this movie)

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## Books for When You Realize You Might Be (or know) A Toxic Male

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### **In the Days of My Youth I Was Told What It Means to Be a Man: A Memoir, by Tom Junco**

Lou could be cruel to Fran, his wife of fifty-nine years, but he loved his youngest son. Tom was a skin-and-bones, nervous boy, devoted to his mother, but Lou sought to turn him into a version of himself. He showered him with advice about how to dress (“A turtleneck is the most flattering thing a man can wear”), how to be an alpha male, and especially, how to attract and bed women.

Tom wrestled with Lou’s imposing presence all his life. When one of Lou’s mistresses stood up at his funeral and announced, “Can we all . . . just agree . . . that *this* . . . was a man,” Tom set off to learn the facts of his father’s life, and why he was the way he was. The stunning secrets he uncovered—about his father, his father’s lovers, and deceptions going back generations—staggered Tom, but in the process allowed him, at last, to become his own man, by his own lights.

**Why we love it:** This reads like an intensely emotional detective story powered by a series of cascading revelations. Intense and hard to put down.



### **The Will to Change, by bell hooks**

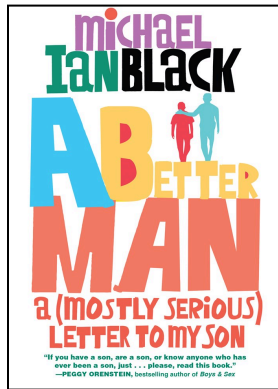
*Feminist writing did not tell us about the deep inner misery of men.*

Everyone needs to love and be loved—including men. But to know love, men must be able to look at the ways in which patriarchal culture keeps them from understanding themselves. In *The Will to Change*, bell hooks provides a compassionate guide for men of all ages and identities to understand how to be in touch with their

feelings, and how to express versus repress the emotions that are a fundamental part of who we are.

With trademark candor and fierce intelligence, hooks addresses the most common concerns of men, such as fear of intimacy and loss of their patriarchal place in society, in new and challenging ways.

**Why we love it:** Some things just need to be required reading.



### **A Better Man, by Michael Ian Black**

With hope and with humor, Michael Ian Black skillfully navigates the complex gender issues of our time and delivers a poignant answer to an urgent question: How can we be, and raise, better men?

Part memoir, part advice book, and written as a heartfelt letter to his college bound son, *A Better Man* offers up a way forward for boys, men, and anyone who loves them. Comedian, writer, and father Black examines his complicated relationship with his own father, explores the damage and rising violence caused by the expectations placed on boys to “man up,” and searches for the best way to help young men be part of the solution, not the problem. “If we cannot allow ourselves vulnerability,” he writes, “how are we supposed to experience wonder, fear, tenderness?”

**Why we love it:** It’s smart and tender, and helpful.