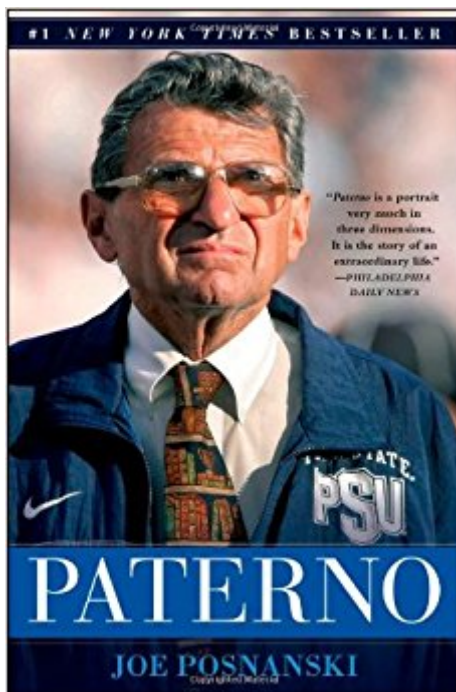


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# Paterno



## Synopsis

From America's premier sportswriter, the definitive, #1 New York Times bestselling biography of Joe Paterno and the story of America's love affair with football. Joe Paterno believed that football was a way to teach young men how to live. He coached at Penn State for 62 years. In the course of his years as a head coach, his teams won 409 games, a Division I record. At the end of his life, more than 100 of those wins were invalidated by the NCAA because of the crimes of a longtime assistant coach, Jerry Sandusky, and Paterno's alleged knowledge of those crimes. Knowledge Paterno denied until his death. In the process, the name Paterno—the name he had spent a lifetime building—came to represent scandal and controversy. Joe Posnanski lived in State College, Pennsylvania, through the turbulent final months of Paterno's life and was with him and his family as the scandal that eventually consumed him unfolded. Now with a new afterword, Posnanski's book delves deep into the life of Joe Paterno, going back to his childhood days in Brooklyn and his college days at Brown, and looks at him through the eyes of the young men he coached. It is a portrait that goes beyond the daily headlines and into the life of a stubborn idealist, a teacher, and a flawed but principled man who, to the very end, loved to coach.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Joe Paterno was the head football coach at Penn State for 45 years. He built a legacy of success, integrity, and honor, but it all came crashing down when it was revealed that he did virtually nothing after learning a former assistant coach, Jerry Sandusky, was a probable child molester. In the

decade that followed Paterno's inaction, Sandusky molested many other children and was subsequently convicted of more than 40 counts of child molestation. Posnanski, an award-winning journalist formerly with Sports Illustrated, had virtually unfettered access to Paterno, his family, and Paterno's papers during the last year of Paterno's life, as the scandal rolled out. Sadly, there are no answers in the book. Posnanski instead chooses to write mostly of the good deeds in Paterno's life. No one is denying the positives in Paterno's life, The question that remains unanswered - at least in this book - is what combination of hubris, greed, and self-aggrandizement led Paterno and the Penn State administration to look the other way for more than a decade. There have been millions of words written about the scandal and subsequent trial of Sandusky. Posnanski has added to the total without offering much substance.

--Wes Lukowsky --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Paterno is a portrait very much in three dimensions. It is the story of an extraordinary life." (Philadelphia Daily News)"Paterno adds grain and texture to the historical record.... makes a cogent case for absorbing Paterno's entire legacy." (Dwight Garner The New York Times)"I urge you to read [Paterno]. . . A life is never defined entirely by a man's good, or by his bad." (Mike Vaccaro New York Post)"It is exhilarating to read of Paterno the man and gripping to read of his downfall." (ESPN.com)The truth is that [Paterno] is a portrait very much in three dimensions. In that sense, Posnanski succeeds|We are left with this book as the final record of the final days. It is more than that, obviously - it is the story of an extraordinary life - but it is most compelling as a chronicle of the end. (Philadelphia Daily News)

Posnanski gives us a good outline of a life well lived. As many others have noted, if you simply want a book about the scandal, this is not it. Of course, it is addressed, but as a part of a greater whole. Posnanski's position seems to be that Paterno certainly made a moral failing in 2002, but talk of a "cover up", particularly on his end, displays an ignorance of contextual evidence. My main gripe with the biography was that it didn't spend too much time discussing his life outside of coaching during the heart of his tenure. I want to know stories about him going to watch Jay play for State College High (or if he even did in the first place). Posnanski constantly references his interest in politics, I want to know more about the causes he championed, the people he supported, etc. And of course, as someone who has "honored Joe" by frequenting it throughout my college years, I want to know more about his vision and involvement in the library addition on campus. Interesting topics that would better paint a portrait of Coach Paterno would have been greatly appreciated. Having said

that, the book draws from a wealth of sources and gets Joe's personal insights and/or recollections on most of the major moments throughout his life, to an extent that we will not see again this side of paradise. For anybody who wants to know more about the mold of student athletes, the man behind the Grand Experiment, "Paterno" is the place to begin.

IF you are looking for a book on Joe Paterno and Penn State that fans the flames and feeds the madness of public opinion, this is not your book. Instead Joe Posnanski has taken the time to sift through most of Joe Paterno's life and find the reality of the man behind the broken legend. The book winds through the streets of Brooklyn through Brown University and onto a State College that few of us would recognize. The stories and people lay the foundation for the Paterno who rose to legend only to stumble and fall in the end. For those of us who had the honor of knowing Joe this book fills in the gaps both in the days before he came into our lives and in those days when the madness arrived and swallowed up all of us. It confirms the good Joe was capable of as well as the shortcomings that were heightened by the ravages of age. Come to this book with an open mind and you will be rewarded for the experience.

As a sports fan and a non-PSU fan, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I have followed the scandal since the indictment was released. I believe the author was very objective in getting inside the Penn State and Joe Paterno story. He pointed out his apparent flaws along with his greatest strengths. It is truly sad to have one clear mistake in judgement taint the legacy of such a long career that had such positive results for so many players, alumni and fans. Even former players who hated Joe Paterno in their playing days, often ended up giving him credit for giving them direction that they didn't appreciate until years later. It is a modern day classic tragedy. The players, fans and most everyone affiliated with the University did nothing wrong. Some key personnel including the University Board of Trustees clearly dropped the ball. The only criticism I have about the book is the fact that Joe Paterno denied knowing anything about the 1998 incident in a well publicized interview with the Washington Post. This was contradicted by several e-mails that were noted in the Freeh Report when several of the key personnel refer to Paterno's concern about the incident. I believe the author should have pursued this topic and apparent conflict in more detail.

Having casually followed US college football for a number of years -- including my time playing in Canada during the early 80's -- I was a semi-informed but highly motivated reader. I had a vague notion of Paterno's characteristics but few details, so this fascinating portrait really filled in the gaps

for me. And it was done in a well paced, approachable and intelligent manner. Overall, an excellent read. On the matter of Paterno's culpability, with respect to properly reporting his knowledge of Sandusky, I found myself flipping back and forth emotionally. At one point my reaction was the author was cutting Joe Pa the maximum allowable slack -- but then as I read more closely I found maybe that bias was more of my own as I was tainted going in by the press stories which expressed unfettered outrage. In addition, I must say I appreciated the fact the author took a risk and briefly include his personal response to Paterno's question about "what do you think of all this?". It was appropriate and illuminated other aspects of the text nicely. Paterno lived a rich and authentic life. While his blind spots unfortunately led to his downfall, I believe, as the emotion subsides, the everyday fan will have a more balanced view of his entire legacy.

I'm no literary expert but this book is well written besides being an excellent summary of his whole life and views/beliefs. Probably doesn't excel in regards to the Sandusky situation although this was not his main mission. What a man/icon but everyone has some warts. When attending a training course in fall of 1984 at State College, I was amazed at how high a high percentage of people thought he was great, great. Granted that he was a giant, but come on. Excellent history of the Penn State Football. I still remember him appearing to the crowd early in the breaking story, and basically saying "\_\_\_\_\_, but pray for the Football Team." Maybe my recollection of the timing of this is wrong but don't think so. I know he did a lot of good and noteworthy things both in Football and Life Lessons, helping people, etc, But I'm not buying that he didn't know or he did the "right" things. No Way - of course he or all the others didn't know how massive it was, but they still blew it. But back again to just the book (95% + on other things) it was really good and hard to put down. Well done.

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