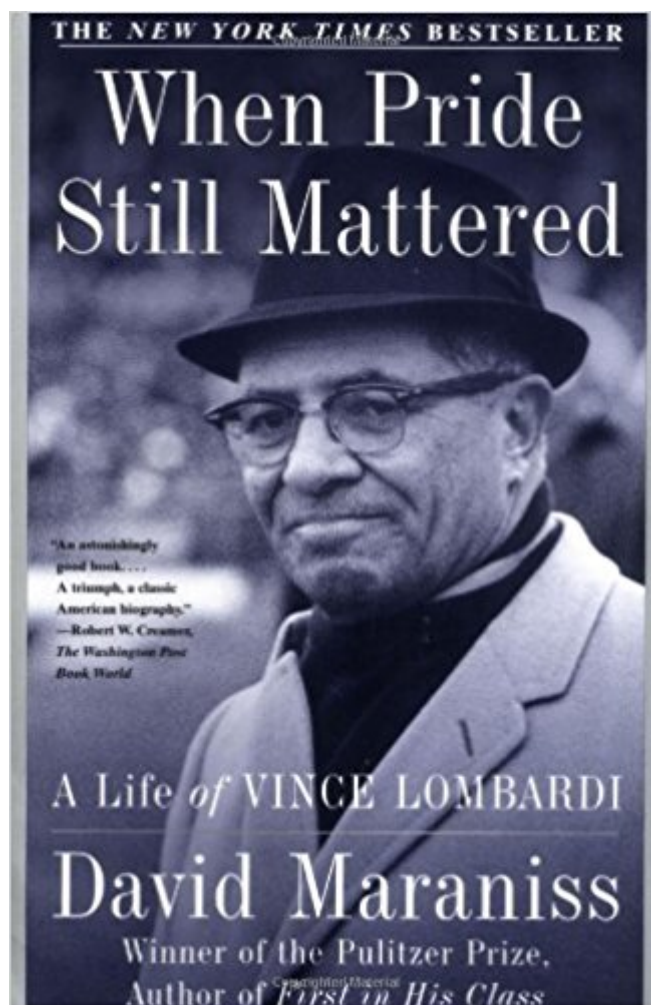


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# When Pride Still Mattered : A Life Of Vince Lombardi



## Synopsis

In this groundbreaking biography, David Maraniss captures all of football great Vince Lombardi: the myth, the man, his game, and his God. More than any other sports figure, Vince Lombardi transformed football into a metaphor of the American experience. The son of an Italian immigrant butcher, Lombardi toiled for twenty frustrating years as a high school coach and then as an assistant at Fordham, West Point, and the New York Giants before his big break came at age forty-six with the chance to coach a struggling team in snowbound Wisconsin. His leadership of the Green Bay Packers to five world championships in nine seasons is the most storied period in NFL history. Lombardi became a living legend, a symbol to many of leadership, discipline, perseverance, and teamwork, and to others of an obsession with winning. In *When Pride Still Mattered*, Pulitzer Prize-winning author David Maraniss captures the myth and the man, football, God, and country in a thrilling biography destined to become an American classic.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As coach of the Green Bay Packers from 1959 to 1967, Vince Lombardi turned perennial losers into a juggernaut, winning back-to-back NFL titles in 1961 and 1962, and Superbowls I and II in 1966 and 1967. Stern, severe, sentimental, and paternal, he stood revered, reviled, respected, and mocked--a touchstone for the '60s all in one person. Which adds up to the myth we've been left with. But who was the man? That's the question Pulitzer Prize-winner David Maraniss tackles. It begins with Lombardi's looming father, a man as colorful as his son would be conservative. Still, from his father Vince Lombardi learned a sense of presence and authority that could impress itself

with just a look. If a moment can sum up and embrace a man's life--and capture the breadth of Maraniss's thoroughness--it is one that takes place off the field when the Packers organization decides to redecorate their offices in advance of the new head coach's arrival: "During an earlier visit," Maraniss reports, "he had examined the quarters--peeling walls, creaky floor, old leather chairs with holes in them, discarded newspapers and magazines piled on chairs and in the corners--and pronounced the setting unworthy of a National Football League club. 'This is a disgrace!' he had remarked." In one moment, one comment, Lombardi announced his intentions, made his vision and professionalism clear, and began to shake up a stale organization. It reveals far more about the man than wins and losses, and is the kind of moment Maraniss uses again and again in this superb resurrection of a figure who so symbolized a sporting era and sensibility. --Jeff Silverman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In the history of American sports, no coach has been mythologized as much as the Green Bay Packers' Vince Lombardi (who has been immortalized with, among other tributes, a rest station on the New Jersey Turnpike). Yet this fine biography from a Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter for the Washington Post is a blast of cool air among the usually overheated roster of sports biographies. From Lombardi's formative years as a player and coach at Fordham University through assistantships with West Point and the Giants and, finally, to his tenure as head coach of the Packers, Maraniss presents a portrait of a complicated human being who was a great teacher but a mediocre listener, an effective psychologist despite being rife with flaws. Though he often got hurt as a college athlete, Lombardi, as a coach, scorned players who couldn't withstand injury. His relationship with his wife and children was less than ideal. But Maraniss doesn't succumb to any reductive assessments of Lombardi as "tragic" or "heroic." As legend suggests, Lombardi was indeed a great motivator, but his success also derived from a cerebral approach to the game. The book's true punch comes from its myriad subplots: a hero from one small town (early 20th-century Brooklyn) revitalizing another in the Upper Midwest, or professional football and Lombardi coming into their own at roughly the same time. Maraniss spends far too much time on people and events whose influence on Lombardi isn't made apparent, and he relies too much on other sportswriters' descriptions of games. Yet like its subject, the book, for all its flaws, is intricate, ambitious and satisfying. First serial to Vanity Fair. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

David Maraniss wrote a moving, heart-rending book about one of the greatest leaders of all time.

Vince Lombardi was deeply admired and despised as the biggest S.O.B., many times by the same person. I was captivated by the circumstances of his life coming together at just the right time to build one of the greatest sports dynasties of all time. But so often, up to that point, he wondered when his chance would come and "why not me?" I was moved by his commitment to excellence and his concern that the abuse of freedom would one-day lead to the decay of our great country. But the part of the book that most moved me was his strained relationship with his son, Vincent. I can relate to being the son of a father who rarely showed affection as I was growing up. It's not any fault of his own, rather a cultural influence passed from generations of men before him. He did what they taught. Is it good or bad? That becomes a judgement and a trap. My dad's parenting tactics were perfectly what they were. Maraniss does an excellent job painting the picture of what it's like growing up in home where the father is dedicated to his life outside the home, but is missing in action inside the home. The pain and the sadness of being the spouse and children of a 60's era father is expertly woven into the retelling of the interaction between Vince and Vincent. Ultimately, the question is resolved by Vincent as one of forgiveness, not approval. I was moved by the tale of building the Green Bay Packers into a powerhouse. The play by play narrative is compelling and engaging without being overly dramatic or drawn out. Maraniss avoids the trap of most sports books and movies with a re-telling of the plays and championship moments while avoiding excessive detail. But my favorite part of the book was Maraniss' walk through the dying process of Vince Lombardi. I could see him lying in the hospital with uncharacteristically long hair and bushy eyebrows. I could hear his non-sensical yammering to players who were not there in the room with him. I could feel the air of desperation that accompanies a terminal diagnosis held against the will to live and "whip this thing." Maraniss walked me through the process of saying goodbye that I went through recently with my mother and one of my best friends from graduate school. I was brought back to the confusion of seeing someone you know well and love that only somewhat resembles who you knew. Sons and fathers, this is a must read about life, relationships and the perspective of growing up from each side. It's about celebrating the winners and the doers of great things. It's about life, excellence, and doing what you can, where you are with what you have. It's about doubt and perseverance. It's about resisting the unpleasantness of dying and the regret of unfinished business. Men, get this book. It's that good.

This man was driven to succeed, and did it in a very public way. However, the author reveals the private side of Mr Lombardi's life, and shows us that the man was in reality a manic depressive. This affected his family immensely, but we know him as a coaching legend, and his legend is not

tarnished but rather given a full view in this book. His path to greatness was a struggle, given the racial stereotypes and prejudices of the times. One thing that comes to the fore is that Vincent Thomas Lombardi was an even-handed man when it came to racial tolerance, and only things that mattered to him was a man's performance on the football field and how he behaved in his own life. Furthermore, the man was a teacher, both in football and in the keys to success in life. Dave Maraniss does not magnify the man nor denigrates him, but simply gives an honest appraisal of his life and what he meant to the legacy of the NFL and the people he influenced. This is worthwhile biography that is a great read.

Tremendous book about possibly the biggest influence on the game of football at a time when College football was king. Vince Lombardi exemplifies so much about not only the game of football in the infancy of the NFL, he was a man that transcended football and had a leadership style that many in the Corporate World of the Greatest Nation in the World embraced. I was too young to witness the legend of Vince Lombardi, I was born in 1967. His influence and leadership is something that is of a bygone era as many players today are pampered and spoiled in the Sports world. I cannot imagine what Mr Lombardi would think about this era of pampered stars that seem to have more power and sway than their coaches now. Players today wilt at leadership, you need to go no farther than the Jim Harbaugh at San Francisco to see what I mean. As a country we need leadership like this and football needs someone like Vince Lombardi, I greatly appreciate reading this book and trying to appreciate what he meant to a sport that would be unrecognizable to so many of the pioneers that made it what it is today.

Though I'm strictly a baseball fan, I did follow Lombardi's Packers in the 1960's. This is not only the best of the Packer books, including the classic "Instant Replay", it is one of the very best books I have ever read on any subject. I liked it so much I ordered four extra copies for friends who are Packer fans. David Maraniss does a thorough job of research on Lombardi and portrays him as a human being, warts and all, instead of the icon that some make him out to be. Parts that stood out for me was how hard he personally took the suspension of Paul Hornung, which reminded him of Red Blaik's experience with cheating players at West Point. The continued demand of excellence took its toll on Lombardi, and he really left the Packer coaching job an exhausted man. The often told Jim Ringo story of his trade to Philadelphia didn't happen the way many books have told it. Lombardi often stressed the importance of God, family, and the Green Bay Packers in that order, but reality showed the order to be God, the Green Bay Packers, and family last. His immediate

family suffered and his own children felt he was more affectionate with children of his players than he was with them. One also gets the feeling that he wasn't really disappointed with the showing of the Phil Bengston Packers, feeling that the slippage of the Packers was due to his not being there. Anecdotes of others notables such as Otto Graham, Packer announcers Ray Scott and Tony Canadeo, George Wilson, in addition to the Packer players make this a simply outstanding book to add to your library. Want to know how the Super Bowl got its name? It's an interesting story and it's here in the book. You can order the book here from for half the price you would pay in a book store. This book is one for your permanent library.

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