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Blitzed: Why NFL Teams Gamble On Starting Rookie Quarterbacks



Synopsis

In today's NFL, every team has a "win now" mentality. There's no time for rebuilding or down years. You need to compete each and every day, or else you're out; and that goes for the players, coaches, and front office. You either win today or you're gone tomorrow. Because of this trend, struggling teams have foregone the training of old and slowly building from the ground up for the immediate payoff. And when it comes to gaining the interest of the fans and media, there's one go-to decision for every struggling team: the rookie quarterback. *Blitzed* is an in-depth study as to the reason why teams choose to hand the keys of their franchise over to an unproven rookie. But there are multiple layers as to the odds of success for these athletes. While much has to do with their mental and physical toughness, the coaching, front office, and state of an organization all play a crucial role. In the last two NFL drafts, quarterbacks have been taken as the first two picks (Jameis Winston and Marcus Mariota in 2015; Jared Goff and Carson Wentz in 2016). The face of the franchise can't grow a beard, but is expected to lead his team on the gridiron. Covering the history of this trend with a running timeline of the 2016 NFL season and top draft picks Goff and Wentz, as well as interviews with numerous current and former quarterbacks, coaches, and executives, distinguished journalist Thomas George breaks down how teams decide on starting a rookie quarterback and why the chances of an immediate payoff are such a mixed bag.

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Customer Reviews

"Quarterback is the most popular position in football, and football the most popular sport in

America. In *Blitzed*, Thomas George takes readers on a fascinating inside journey of the high-stakes risks and rewards of that job, and how far teams will go to ride a young gunslinger to success. A terrific insider's view from a long-time football insider himself.

—Mitch Albom, New York Times bestselling author and sports columnist for the Detroit Free Press "The biggest mystery in modern football is not what team will finally dethrone the Patriots for NFL supremacy, but rather which hotshot college quarterback will become a professional star. Thomas George rationally and methodically puts a microscope on this conundrum, from what happens when a coach realizes his bonus baby doesn't have the goods ("Devastating," Dick Vermeil calls that feeling) to enlightening chapter and verse on the Eagles' pursuit of new great quarterback hope Carson Wentz. I'm glad George doesn't advance a theorem that will guarantee success for a young quarterback, because as he lays out, there simply isn't one."

—Peter King, editor in chief, *The Monday Morning Quarterback* "Blitzed by Thomas George is a thorough, complete, and riveting study of the challenge faced by teams trying to find and develop a franchise quarterback. As one who has lived it, I can tell you that *Blitzed* is a must-read for every NFL fan."

—Bill Polian, former general manager of the Indianapolis Colts, NFL analyst with ESPN, and Hall of Fame executive "A franchise quarterback is the NFL's most important asset, and *Blitzed* is the most important work on this subject. Thomas George delves into the subject of franchise quarterbacks, trying to explain the riddle that baffles and bewilders the worst teams, and rewards and stabilizes the best ones. It is educating, enlightening, and highly enjoyable."

—Adam Schefter, ESPN NFL Insider "I've known Thomas George for a long time and have always respected the quality of his work. He puts years of experience and expertise covering the NFL to excellent use in *Blitzed*. With particular focus on Carson Wentz, Jared Goff, and Dak Prescott, George dissects the trickiest task in sports—finding and developing the franchise quarterback. How do you know when a quarterback has that "it" factor? Thomas knows."

—Jim Thomas, NFL writer, St. Louis Post-Dispatch "Thomas George has written one of the most important books about the NFL in years. *Blitzed* is a provocative first-hand look at how NFL teams thrust very young men into the most difficult position in professional sports and demand they succeed now. I could not put this book down."

—Sal Paolantonio, National Correspondent, ESPN "Thomas George has spent thirty-five years seeking answers to what makes some NFL quarterbacks great while others fail. In *Blitzed: Why NFL Teams Gamble On Starting Rookie Quarterbacks*, he uses his wealth of experience and lifetime of NFL contacts to explore what has become the central issue of successful team building in the NFL. Why are more rookie quarterbacks being handed the ball and

why do so few succeed? What determines success or failure? Thomas George set out to find the answers and succeeded like Tom Brady. By the time you finish *Blitzed* you'll understand why more and more teams risk the future on rookie quarterbacks and why all but a handful are doomed from the start.

—Ron Borges, writer for the Boston Herald and author of *Present at the Creation: My Life in the NFL and the Rise of America's Game*

“Thomas George knows the ins and outs of the NFL and, in particular, NFL quarterbacking. He dives into the age-old issue of finding a franchise quarterback in an insightful way. George's interviews with coaches who have found and failed to find that star quarterback provide deep analysis of the biggest challenge for pro football teams. And his examination of the flops is especially enlightening.”

—Barry Wilner, pro football writer, Associated Press

“Ever wonder why some early-round quarterbacks thrive and others fail? Thomas George goes behind the scenes to give you the answers from the coaches and decision-makers whose livelihoods depend on making the right choice at the game's most important position.”

—Alex Marvez, writer for The Sporting News and host of SiriusXM NFL Radio

Thomas George is a distinguished journalist with over thirty-five years of experience. Known for his in-depth research, he has won numerous honors for his writing. Currently the national columnist at SBNation, he has been a columnist/writer at the Detroit Free Press, New York Times, Denver Post, AOL, NFL.com, NFL Magazine, and was the NFL Network's first managing editor. George lives in Fort Lee, New Jersey, with his wife Tamara and sons Anthony and Ely.

Warren Moon is the only quarterback in both the Pro Football Hall of Fame and Canadian Football Hall of Fame. Undrafted out of college, Warren took the CFL by storm with five consecutive Grey Cup victories. He joined the NFL in 1984 and made 9 Pro Bowl appearances, eventually becoming the first undrafted quarterback as well as the first African American quarterback to be elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He is the founder of the Crescent Moon Foundation and President/Co-founder of Sports 1 Marketing. Warren lives in Seattle, Washington, where he is currently the radio color analyst for the Seattle Seahawks.

Tony Dungy is a retired football coach, most known for leading the Indianapolis Colts to victory in Super Bowl XLI. He was the first African American head coach to win a Super Bowl, and was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2016. Dungy's memoir, *Quiet Strength*, was a New York Times bestseller, and he is currently a studio color analyst for NBC's pregame show, *Football Night in America*.

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