



Newton's Football: The Science Behind America's Game

Allen St. John, Ainissa G. Phd Ramirez

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In the bestselling tradition of *Freakonomics* and *Scorecasting* comes a clever and accessible look at the big ideas underlying the science of football.

Did you hear the one about the MacArthur genius physicist and the NFL coach? It's not a joke. It's actually an innovative way to understand chaos theory, and the remarkable complexity of modern professional football.

In *Newton's Football*, journalist and *New York Times* bestselling author Allen St. John and TED talker and former Yale professor Ainissa Ramirez explore the unexpected science behind America's Game. Whether it's Jerry Rice finding the common ground between quantum physics and the West Coast offense or an Ivy League biologist explaining--at a granular level--exactly how a Big Mac morphs into an outside linebacker, *Newton's Football* illuminates football--and science--through funny, insightful stories told by some of the world's sharpest minds.

With a clear-eyed empirical approach--and an exuberant affection for the game--St. John and Ramirez address topics that have long beguiled scientists and football fans alike, including:

- * the unlikely evolution of the football (or, as they put it, "The Divinely Random Bounce of the Prolate Spheroid")
- * what Vince Lombardi has in common with Isaac Newton
- * how the hardwired behavior of monkeys can explain a head coach's reluctance to go for it on fourth-down
- * why a gruesome elevator accident jump-started the evolution of placekicking
- * how Teddy Roosevelt saved football using the same behavioral science concept that Dreamworks would use to save *Shrek*
- * why woodpeckers don't get concussions
- * how better helmets actually made the game more dangerous

Every Sunday the NFL shares a secret with only its savviest fans: The game isn't just a clash of bodies, it's a clash of ideas. The greatest minds in football have always possessed an instinctual grasp of science, understanding the big ideas and gritty realities that inform the game's rich past, as well as its increasingly uncertain future.

Blending smart reporting, counterintuitive creativity, and compelling narrative, *Newton's Football* takes gridiron analysis to the next level, giving fans a book that entertains, enlightens, and explains the game anew.

From the Hardcover edition.

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