



Prelude to Greatness: Sooner Football in the 1990's

Jay Smith, William James Willis, David L. Boren

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Prelude to Greatness is an insider's story of life on a major college football team, focusing on the University of Oklahoma Sooners from 1994 to 1999. A rare source of insight for younger players who dream of playing college football, this book shows what they are in for: the range of experiences between failure and success, the elusive nature of any individual's dreams of glory, and the variety of motivations--good, bad, and ugly--prevalent in college football.

Jay Smith is the only NCAA Division I football player to have played under four head coaches: Gary Gibbs, Howard Schnellenberger, John Blake, and Bob Stoops. A blue-chip offensive lineman from Arlington, Texas, he declined scholarships from virtually every other top team in the country to play with the Sooners in 1994 and follow a national championship dream. The dream did not materialize, and things went from bad to worse before the team showed progress in 1999 and the promise of a national championship to come in 2000. By that time, Smith had graduated and had to witness the victories from the sidelines. Instead of a national championship ring, Smith settled for knowing he had helped the team climb out of a deep hole.

A compelling story that goes beyond headlines, outcomes, statistics, and recaps, this is a cautionary tale of how a young man's dreams can founder on the hard realities of big-time college football, where winning and losing sometimes has little to do with a player's dedication.

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