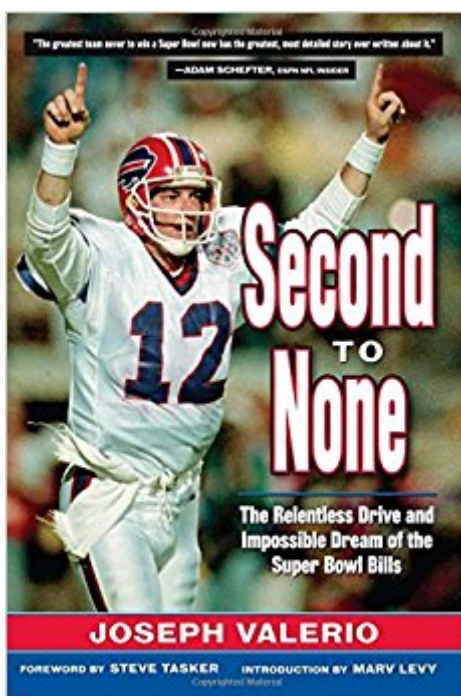


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Second To None: The Relentless Drive And The Impossible Dream Of The Super Bowl Bills



Synopsis

In *Second to None*, author Joe Valerio tells the incredible story of the Buffalo Bills: the perpetual almost-champions and their indomitable fans. The Bills' incredible skill and teamwork on the field was matched only by their single-minded determination as, in the four years spanning 1991 to 1994, the team won four consecutive conference championships, and lost four consecutive Super Bowls. The peaks and nadirs of their record reflect a fascinatingly dynamic, uneven, and at times uncontrollable array of talents. Valerio renders in sharp detail how the Bills' unique culture was formed by an unlikely ecosystem of world-class athletes hunkered down in bleak western New York, far away from the celebrity playgrounds of other pro teams. Meticulously researched and carefully crafted, this one-of-a-kind look inside the Super Bowl era Buffalo Bills is based on extensive interviews with the key players, coaches, and management, including Hall of Famers Jim Kelly, Thurman Thomas, Bruce Smith, as well as coach Marv Levy, general manager Bill Polian, and many others, including players and coaches from opposing teams, and the reporters who covered them.

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Customer Reviews

Joe Valerio is a sportswriter and producer who covered sports for *People* and *Sport* magazines, among others. For more than 10 years, he was a producer with ABC News and CBS Sports, where he won multiple Emmy awards for writing and producing. He has produced the *Sports Reporters* numerous other programs for ESPN for 23 years. He lives in Westport, Connecticut. Steve Tasker is a former NFL player who played for the Buffalo Bills for 12 seasons. He currently works as an

analyst for CBS sports. He lives in Buffalo, New York. Inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2001, Marv Levy coached the Buffalo Bills from 1986 to 1997, leading the team to four straight Super Bowl appearances. He resides in Chicago, Illinois.

I grew up 2 miles from Rich Stadium. I've thought for a long time that the story of the Buffalo Bills for those four Superbowls was a story that ought to be told. It is a story about perseverance and a city that identified with a sports team. I admit, I was thinking of a great DVD by NFL Films, not a book. I'm halfway though and admit I am disappointed. So here are some of the pros and cons of the book:

PROS

1. The book is largely a collection of interviews of Jim Kelly, Bill Polian and other key members of the Bills, as well as some fans. The interviews are very extensive.
2. There is a smattering of interviews from others, like Bill Parcells, to add perspective.
3. For those of us who know the story, it is fun to relive it.
4. You'll be happy with the book if all you want is a very casual read down memory lane.

CONS

1. For those who do not know the story already, it is simply not told well enough for them to enjoy it.
2. The story is not told chronologically. After a chapter on Scott Norwood and the most famous missed field goal in NFL history, he then has a chapter on that famous Superbowl with the Giants. That takes away all of the emotion and narrative force from the story. The constant going back and forth from present to past to future is aggravating.
3. Valerio does not put much effort at putting the 1990's Bills into perspective. Why the K-gun was innovative and successful? Why were the Bills, who had so much success in the AFC, unable to win any Superbowls?
4. Valerio does not attempt to build any suspense into the story or add much of his own perspective.
5. There are too few interviews with others outside the Bills organization to give perspective.

I was an elementary school kid and football nut during the period when the Buffalo Bills went to four-straight Super Bowls. And even as just a kid back then, I felt so bad for the Bills after every Super Bowl loss after the 1990, 1991, 1992, and 1993 seasons. I felt bad for the Bills losing all those Super Bowls like I said, but I can just imagine how Buffalo Bills fans felt back then. In this book, author Joseph Valerio gave you many accounts of Bills fans and some Bill players who suffered through that bittersweet period of Bills history. Reading this book, it just made you wonder and agonize over how it would have been nice if the Bills would have won even just ONE of those Super Bowls. To this day I still feel that the best Bills team in their history was that 1990 team, and the Giants were super fortunate that they won Super Bowl XXV. Super Bowls XXVI (1991 season), XXVII (1992 season), and XXVIII (1993 season), the Bills had no business winning those games.

The 1991 Washington Redskins were red-hot that year and the Bills were just in their way. The 1992 and 1993 Dallas Cowboys were in the midst of a dynasty and the Bills again, were in front of a Cowboys run-away train that ran over the Bills. Overall this was a good book that I enjoyed. But it would have been nice if there were player testimonials from players other than Jim Kelly, Bruce Smith, and Thurman Thomas or other well known Bills players in that period. A lot of times when you read or hear about the 1990 through 1993 Bills, the main players you hear from or about are Kelly, Thomas and Smith. What about interviews from linebacker Carlton Bailey, defensive lineman Leon Seals, linebacker Ray Bentley, safety Leonard Smith, tight end Butch Rolle, defensive tackle Mike Lodish, cornerback Nate Odomes, linebacker Marcus Patton, safety Kurt Schulz, punter Chris Mohr, tackle John Fina, safety Henry Jones, and other lesser known players? Meanwhile, if you want a trip down memory lane from a magical Bills period, then get this book.

Having been a Bills fan for over 25 years, I was amazed at all the information I garnered from this book. There is so much more to a team than what one sees watching a Sunday game. Second to none showed the strength of team off the field and how they bonded, not only as players, but as friends. I wish every player that becomes a Buffalo Bill would have this book given to him.

If you are a die hard Bills fan, you will enjoy this book...we will never see this happen again...four consecutive Super Bowls with a tremendous team full of all stars...so read it and enjoy it and remember when the Bills were the talk of the sports world! Unfortunately, the Bills still lost all four games...so it still has an unhappy ending...but a good read nonetheless.

Great book for Bills fans that tells the story of their unprecedented 4 year Super Bowl run. Their tenacity will still put a smile on your face. Is it a perfectly crafted tale? For some maybe not. The inside the inner circle insight is great.

As a die hard Bills fan this book brought back so many memoir and so much heartache. But I did love the book.

memories and good ones notwithstanding --wide right-- they really were great team for 4 super bowls

This book gives credit to one of the most astonishing runs any NFL team has ever enjoyed, plus it

provides the backdrop of the devotion and loyalty of Buffalo Bills' fans. It brought back many memories for me.

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