

MY FAVORITE TEACHER  
**BROKE MY NOSE**  
—TWICE!



How high school football has helped  
to connect and unite everyone who has ever  
played, coached, or been a fan of the game

## Jerry Hocutt

"This book is a must read for coaches, players, fellow students, parents, and educators to fully understand the benefits of our great game. This book reinforced the things I have preached daily to our players for over 40 years of coaching...17 state championships and 486 wins later." - Gary Rankin, Head Football Coach, Boyd-Buchanan School, Chattanooga, Tennessee, 2024 National High School Hall of Fame, Winningest High School Football Coach in Tennessee History

This book is a must read for coaches, players, fellow students, parents, and educators to fully understand the benefits of our great game. This book reinforced the things I have preached daily to our players for over 40 years of coaching: Leadership, resilience, teamwork, and my favorite – mental toughness. All are key life skills that transfer from the playing field to our daily lives. From the 17 state championships and 486 wins later, these lessons are as true today as they were 40 years ago. Congratulations Jerry on a great read!

*Gary Rankin  
Head Football Coach  
2024 National High School Hall of Fame  
2011 TSSAA Hall of Fame and Winningest High School Football  
Coach in Tennessee History  
Boyd-Buchanan School  
Chattanooga, Tennessee*

Through humor, great stories, and quotes, Jerry has created a book that helps me reflect on why I went into education and the coaching profession over 40 years ago. This book helps remind me of the great people in my life that helped develop my character, my passion to help others, my integrity to do the right thing all the time, and to continue to learn and grow throughout life.

*37 Years Head Football Coach  
Oregon's All-Time Winningest High School Football Coach  
Four State Championships with Over 350 Wins  
Jesuit High School  
Portland, Oregon*

Outstanding book with tons of stuff related to learning, character development and doing things the right way. The benefits of sports and specifically football, like "Every game is a challenge of will, stress, belief, courage, decision-making, change, discipline, success, failure, disappointment, frustration and hope." Doing things the right way has helped us win 14 state titles.

*Jim Roth  
40 Years Head Coach  
Pennsylvania's All-Time Winningest Football Coach  
2022 Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame  
2023 PIAA District IV Hall of Fame  
2020 Max-Preps Small School National Coach of the Year  
2020 Max-Preps Small School National Champions  
Southern Columbia High School  
Catawissa, Pennsylvania*

I have been a coach for 51 years. The legacy will not be how many games I have won, but that the players and coaches will be better people for being involved in the game. Everyone wants to win, but everyone doesn't want to do what it takes to win. I have never worked a day – hope you can say the same.

*Terry Curtis  
Athletic Director/Head Football Coach  
Alabama High School Sports Hall of Fame  
2023 National High School Football Coach of the Year  
Winningest High School Football Coach in Alabama History  
Eight Times State Champions  
UMS-Wright Preparatory School  
Mobile, Alabama*

A great read for any Coach, educator or parent to understand that Sports is more than a scholarship!

*Gary Joseph  
Athletic Coordinator/Head Coach  
Texas High School Football Hall of Fame  
Five Times 6A State Champions  
2012 National Champions  
2012 National High School Football Coach of the Year  
Katy High School  
Katy, Texas*

Your book's stories and quotes should be read by every player (and their parents) who play the greatest team game in the world...football. Football teaches/demands what every Fortune 500 company in the world desires: Toughness. Team work. Loyalty. Competition. Family. Faith.

*John Hart  
Head Coach  
IHSFCA Hall of Fame  
Brownsburg High School  
Brownsburg, Indiana*

Football is much more than just a game! Instilling perseverance, accountability, work ethic, discipline & confidence are a few of the characteristics that players will carry with them long after their playing days are over. These are traits that we discuss daily.

*Richard Barrett  
Athletic Director/Head Coach  
Kennedale High School  
Kennedale, Texas*

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# My Favorite Teacher Broke My Nose – Twice!

How High School Football  
Has Helped to Connect and Unite  
Everyone Who Has Ever Played, Coached,  
or Been a Fan of the Game

Jerry Hocutt



Chugwater Publishing

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[www.OurChallengesOurTeachers.com](http://www.OurChallengesOurTeachers.com)

Knowing most people would rather slice the tip of their thumb off on the razor-sharp kitchen mandoline\* than read a book. I've removed as many words as I can.

The ones left have lots of white space around them to keep the ideas and benchwarmer humor from colliding with each other.

Therefore, this book should take less than an hour to read. Two if you move your lips while reading.

- Jerry Hocutt

\*(Yep, did that too.)

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# Dog Catches Car

Now what?

Like the triumphant car-chasing dog, what do you do once you've reached your goal?

If the dog could talk he would tell you why he wanted to catch the car, what he did to catch the car, what he learned from catching it, what he understands now about catching cars, and what he will tell his pals who can only dream of catching cars.

(This dog is, of course, a male. The female of the species is too smart to chase cars. Her only thought is, "Idiot! What are you thinking?")

*Women can do anything me can do, but are smart enough not to.*

– Cal FitzSimmons

When you reach one goal do you mindlessly start chasing the next without taking the time to discover and apply the lessons you learned along the way? Without sharing those lessons to help others?

In football you make the team. You letter. Win some games. Maybe you're a starter. The BMOOC. The captain. You win accolades.

You've accomplished your goals. Now what? What have you learned? What do you understand about what you've learned?

What did you take from those grueling, summer two-a-days? What about the practice's one-on-one challenges? The

bruising scrimmages? The injuries you suffered? Your parents' concerns? The friendships made?

What did you learn about yourself, your teammates, your coaches, and your competitors with each game you won or lost?

Every coach has told me and my teammates that someday we "can use what the game has taught us" to make our lives better.

But they never told us *how* to find or use what we were learning.

How do we figure it out? When will we figure it out? Today? Tomorrow? Next week? Next year? Decades from now? Will it be by accident? Luck? Necessity?

This book is not about X's and O's and tackle football. Everything here applies to flag football, baseball, basketball, volleyball, tennis, swimming, golf, gymnastics, track and field, soccer, wrestling, lacrosse, cheerleading – any sport.

This book is about the game. The *game* is the teacher, just as the *chase* teaches the dog.

This is a book about *understanding* and applying what you learn in the moment to make your life richer.

Here are three steps you can use to understand what the game is teaching you:

1. Recall an event, a situation, or a goal.
2. What did you learn as you were playing?
3. What do you understand now; and how can you apply it to improve your life?

Here are some of the lessons the game teaches that are covered in this book.

*The elephant in the room...should I allow my kids to play? • How taking risks makes you the most interesting person in the room. • How to get your competitors to reveal their secrets. • How to escalate the learning experience without saying a word. • How fear increases your chances for survival. • A magician's one sentence command helps you get what you want. • Imagine if you will...how to give instructions to your subconscious mind. • A 2000-year old Chinese tactic helps you to reach your goals. • How to change someone's mind who doesn't "give a rip". • Where you fit in the four levels of competence. • Why what you wear determines your attitude and how you talk, think, and act and how you're perceived by others.*

You don't have to play football, sports, or even like sports to use the lessons in this book.

They're quick, simple, fun, and they work. They are intended for all people of all ages.

**THIS**   
**IS WHAT HAPPENS**  
*WHEN YOU PLAY WITHOUT A HELMET*

When I played pro football,  
I never set out to *hurt* anyone  
deliberately –

unless it was,  
you know,  
*important*,  
like a league game  
or something.

– *Dick Butkus*

# The Elephant in the Room

*It's always better to like doing something than to be instantly good at it. If you're successful but hate the process, you'll stop doing it. If you suck, but the work intrigues you, you'll keep at it and get better.*

– Nell Scovell

## ***My parents thought I was a crash test dummy***

Six concussions, five teeth kicked out or broken, two broken noses requiring surgeries by plastic surgeons, stitches in my ear, lip, and arm, and twisted ankles, black eyes, dislocated fingers.

*It could be that your sole purpose in life is to simply serve as a warning to others.*

– Unknown

## ***In a heartbeat!***

Would I do it all over again?

*\*These occurred between 1961-1966 before concussions were seriously studied and we were taught to use our heads as a weapon in blocking and tackling. In my sophomore year at Cisco Junior College when I had my sixth concussion, in our homecoming game, our team doctor met with me the next day while I was still recovering in the hospital. He said that “there is little research into concussion studies at this time. But this one, on top of your other five, plus the head injury you had when younger that put you in a 3-day coma, is too dangerous for you to ever play again. I’ve told your coach I’ve revoked your medical clearance to play.” I was devastated. But looking back decades later, and after seeing all the research on concussions and seeing all the rule changes to increase player safety, I will be forever grateful to Dr. Addy for his foresight and decision until the unknown became better known.*

### ***The situation***

Every parents' elephant-in-the-room angst: Should I let my kids play football?

### ***What I learned then***

Playing is a family's decision as they continue gathering safety information and talking with their athlete to determine their desire to play, because sports is more than having talent, size, and speed.

The critical question to answer is "*Why* do you want to play?"

If it's anything other than you *love* the *process* of playing the game, then you have your answer.

*Do they love playing the game?*

- New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick's first question he asks a college coach when considering drafting one of his players

### ***What I understand now***

Researcher Malcolm Gladwell found that to be an expert in your calling generally takes about 10,000 hours of practice and work in that field.

No singer or band fills stadiums full of adoring fans without having put in the countless hours and years mastering their performances and traveling the world. No surgeon is at the top of their profession without years spent in study and operating rooms.

Athletes, actors, artists, educators, writers, engineers, architects, software developers, and scientists agree that you have to be dedicated to the grinding practice if you want to be among the best.

If you don't love the process for acquiring the skills you need, if you can't bear the failures and disappointments, if you can't endure the pain, then you'll never be happy and you'll fail to reach the level of expertise your profession demands.

### ***What football teaches***

Love the process. That's the "it" factor that separates those who excel in any activity.

*If I can write and sing, I'll make records, even if just for myself.*

– Paul Simon



## *the* PLAYBOOK

*coin toss*: To determine first possession to start the game. Instead of leaving it to a 50-50 chance of a coin flip, why not depend upon the players' skills to determine the team that controls the call? For example, the winner of Rock, Paper, Scissors?

**THIS**  
**IS WHAT HAPPENS**  
*WHEN YOU PLAY WITHOUT A HELMET*



Watching her is like watching a moose  
on roller skates:

Never particularly graceful, but certainly  
riveting to watch.

*- Mark McKinnon*

# Risk

*“Write an example of a risk.”*

“This.”

- Elementary student’s answer to a test question

### ***Buckle up!***

Three things as you strap in on Diablo's Bloodcurdling Revenge Roller Coaster ride:

1. There's a 50-50 chance you'll barf.
2. There's a 100% chance you're going to scream.
3. You know you can deal with whatever comes next.

### ***Playing it safe sucks the fun out of it***

Go into the unknown with confidence. It's full of excitement and surprises. It never disappoints.

You can handle it. Always have. Otherwise, you wouldn't be here today.

### ***The situation***

“You might not make the team.

“You might make the team but sit on the bench and never play.

“You can get hurt.

“You can lose games.”

My parents’ words of discouragement to stop me from wanting to play football.

### ***What I learned then***

My parents were right every time.

I didn’t make the team in the seventh grade.

I made the team in the eighth grade but sat on the bench all year and never got into a game.

When I finally made the starting teams in the ninth grade, high school, and college I had multiple injuries, several landing me in the hospital.

And our teams came in in second place in more games than I wanted.

But I’d do it all over again.

### ***What I understand now***

Living is a risk.

So is sports, work, flying, driving, white water rafting, friends, dating, family, skiing, eating a blowfish.

But that's where the fun is.

Unless the blowfish's deadly toxins haven't been removed by a licensed chef.

"9-1-1, what's your emergency?"

### ***What football teaches***

Risk management.

Teams provide proper uniforms, equipment, and training to increase safety.

Rules are continually evolving to protect from injuries.

Soft-shell medical grade helmets protect against head injuries during practice.

Concussion protocols are mandatory in practices and games to protect the health of the players.

Zebras yellow-flag and penalize illegal and harmful actions in games.

Oh, and those who take risks? Talk with them. They have stories. They are the most interesting people in the room.

## *the* PLAYBOOK

*quarterback scramble:* When defensive players become as excited in capturing their prey as lions are when cornering theirs on the Serengeti Plain.

**THIS**   
**IS WHAT HAPPENS**  
*WHEN YOU PLAY WITHOUT A HELMET*

*"What do you think of your team's execution?" the reporter asked.*

"I'm all for it."

- Tampa Bay Buccaneers coach John McKay's response to the question about his team's dismal showing



# Don't Give a Rip

*Sports is the language of business. Like it or not, a 30-second sports conversation can open more doors and connect you with a larger audience than your résumé. Talent and skill are important, but the ability to communicate and connect with others plays a significant role in your success.*

– Jen Mueller, *Talk Sporty to Me*

***“No, what happened?” is a good response too***

“See that game last night?”

***The ground shook! He was Beast mode on that run!***

Sports, like music, is a universal language. It exists in every country in the world. Your ability to talk sports, even if superficially, breaks down barriers and opens doors.

Sports is a colorful language of analogies, metaphors, and similes. It’s never dull. Always emotional. Always exciting.

Understanding how to talk sports helps you to compare the challenges of sports to the ups and downs of business and real life.

*Baseball is a game of failure. You fail 7 out of 10 times and you’re considered great.*

– Derek Jeter

### ***The situation***

“Watching football is such a waste of time. I don’t know what people see in it,” my branch manager said. “I’ll never watch it. I don’t give a rip about it!”

### ***What I learned then***

People who think football is just a game don’t understand the sport.

The game is a teacher. Every game is a challenge of will, belief, stress, fear, courage, decision-making, change, discipline, success, failure, disappointment, frustration – and hope.

Every game, every challenge, has something to teach you.

### ***What I understand now***

I didn't think I could change my manager's mind, but if I can show her how business and football are similar she might see the sport differently.

"Look," I said, "football is like the company we work for."

Companies have a CEO. High schools have the principal. Companies have a president. Football teams have a head coach. Companies have middle managers. Football teams have assistant coaches. Companies have employees. Football teams have players.

Both have identical goals: Give your people a sense of purpose. Produce services and products that people want. Find and train the best people. Have management that people want to work for. Know how to motivate your people. Learn how to solve problems, failures, and mistakes while coming up with creative solutions. Learn how to deal with the competition. Work as a team.

She never became a die-hard fan. But she began to watch it as not just as a game but, in her case, as a business model. She understands it's an important bridge people can use to connect.

### ***What football teaches***

When talking sports, you learn how others approach their challenges and may find how some of their viewpoints can change your perspectives.

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# *the* PLAYBOOK

*fumble*: When players are first schooled in legal matters. Possession is nine-tenths of the law.

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**THIS**   
**IS WHAT HAPPENS**  
*WHEN YOU PLAY WITHOUT A HELMET*

My **unstable** and *bitchy* personality is  
part of my mystique.

– *Unknown*

# Pigskin Mystery

*“How will it end?”*

“I don’t know. It’s a mystery.”

– “Shakespeare in Love”

## ***The call is coming from within the house***

Michael Myers. Leatherface. Hannibal Lecter. Freddy Krueger. Samara Morgan. Norman Bates. Jason Voorhees. Pennywise the Dancing Clown.

*Always make the audience suffer as much as possible.*

– Alfred Hitchcock

## ***Quit being so boring***

Scary movies are popular because the audiences like heart-stopping surprises, misdirection, and chills up the spine.

Repetition is boring. Lack of challenges is boring. Playing it safe is boring. You weren't born into a boring life. You were born into a life of mystery. Who knows who's living next door?

Every day has a twist. People surprise you. Clues are to be found. The unexpected sneaks up on you. Outcomes are uncertain.

Whodunit? Why did it happen? How was it done? What happens next? Who else knows?

Who doesn't love a mystery?

*You must have a boring life if you never get lost.*

– "Deadwind"



### ***The situation***

Every time the offense came to the line of scrimmage, our guessing game on defense began. Pass? Run? Option? Screen? Sneak? Trick play?

They, in turn, started their guessing game. Would our tackles stunt? Would a linebacker blitz? Would we double-team their receivers? Would our defensive backs drop off into zone or stay man-to-man?

### ***What I learned then***

“We don’t start with the answers,” said Martin Baron, the former executive editor of the Washington Post. “It’s not that we know nothing. It’s that we don’t know everything.”

When you admit you don’t know for certain, only then do you start searching for answers, asking questions. It’s when you get others involved. You’re open to change. You’re sensitive to the choices you have to make. It’s when new discoveries are made.

Admit it, going into the unknown gets the juices flowing.

### ***What I understand now***

One thing that makes football fun for the players, coaches, and spectators is that each person becomes a detective working to solve the mysteries of what just happened and what's coming next.

With twenty-two players on the field, with the head coach sending in plays and assistant coaches signaling assignments from the sidelines, everyone's strategizing on the fly.

Teams deceive to fool. Assignments are broken. Referees miss calls. Lucky choices are made. Time management is crucial. Confusion reigns.

It's sixty minutes of nail-biting suspense and chaos until the last play is run.

### ***What football teaches***

Ask any former athlete, "When did you have the most fun in life? When were you most alive?" and the answer is almost always, "When I played the game."

Why?

Because risks are taken. Practices are hard. Injuries are suffered. Losses hurt. Wins celebrated. Honors won. Parents are proud, yet anxious. The fans are loud. Friends are made. The years fly by.

It's your life. You make the choices and decisions. Surrender some control. Let the adventure in.

## *the* PLAYBOOK

*go for it:* It's the offensive team's last-ditch desperation play hoping to keep the drive alive. It's your best friend egging you on to ask the star player's recent "ex" out for a date.

**THIS**   
**IS WHAT HAPPENS**  
*WHEN YOU PLAY WITHOUT A HELMET*

I have always believed that writing  
***ADVERTISEMENTS*** is the second  
most profitable form of writing.

The first, of course, is

**r@n\$om** notes.

– *Philip Dusenberry*

# Pep Talk

*You'll remember the next thirty minutes for the rest of your life.*

- Coach Joe Golding's message on the team's chalkboard at halftime (as reported in the Ft. Worth Star-Telegram)

***He still thought he was too wordy***

“Show me,” coach Joe Angell said.

I think that was the longest sentence I ever heard him utter in the three years I played for him.

***Words matter***

Fewer words matter most.

### ***The situation***

The 1961 Wichita Falls Coyotes were the original *Friday Night Lights* dynasty.

The Coyotes were in our Haltom district and were going for their fourth state title. Their state championship game with Houston's Galena Park would be their closest game of the season.

Trailing at halftime, Coach Golding left his message in the team's locker room and returned to the field without saying a word to the players.

Coming out in the second half, the Coyotes' Mike Kelly threw a long pass to tie the game, then ran fifty yards up the middle to seal the win at 21-14.

Wichita Falls finished with an unblemished 14-0 season and that '61 team is still considered to be the best team in Texas's storied history of high school football.

### ***What I learned then***

You don't need to say *everything* to inspire people to act.

### ***What I understand now***

When everyone knows the score, you have to trust your people to know the importance of the situation, and you have to trust that they can and will do their jobs.

*As a man grows wiser, he talks less and says more.*

– Unknown

### ***What football teaches***

Accountability. Responsibility. Trust.



## *the* PLAYBOOK

*scrimmage*: Intrasquad practices where teammates challenge teammates. There will be name-calling, threats, deception, taunting, innuendos, rumors, and occasional fist-cuffs. You know, like family gatherings during the holidays.

**THIS**   
**IS WHAT HAPPENS**  
*WHEN YOU PLAY WITHOUT A HELMET*

**COACH PETE CARROLL  
DECLARES ALL POSITIONS  
OPEN TO COMPETITION.**

**SEAHAWKS  
FLOODED WITH  
UNEMPLOYED COACHES'  
APPLICATIONS.**

– Ray Wilson

# Winning

*I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.*

– Michael Jordan

## ***The rose***

I played because it was fun. I loved the game. It made me happy.

*What's money? A man is a success if he gets up in the morning and gets to bed at night and in between does what he wants to do.*

– Bob Dylan

## ***Roses can't exist without their thorns***

The sweat. The disappointments. The hardships. The failures. The difficulties. The injuries. The losses. The fears. The adversities.

*The greatest moments of your life are the most difficult ones. That's the only time you learn.*

– Mandy Patinkin

***The situation***

We had too many close games that we lost by a handful of points.

***What I learned then***

We were disappointed in the outcomes, but we were never disappointed in playing the game.

## ***What I understand now***

This poem by Chinese philosopher Chaung Tzu has been on my wall for four decades.

*When an archer is shooting for nothing, he has all  
his skills,  
If he shoots for a brass buckle, he is already nervous...  
The prize divides him.  
He cares.  
He thinks more of winning than of shooting – and  
the need to win  
Drains him of power.*

The archer's goal is not to hit the bulls-eye with every shot. The goal is to *become the archer* who can hit the bulls-eye with every shot. There's only pressure when he feels he needs to control the outcome.

By shooting for the love of it, the archer becomes better because he learns more about himself and more about what it takes to master the skill. The target is a measurement of growth; how far he has come and how much further he has to go.

## ***What football teaches***

Winners are winners because they *love what they do*. They don't let the score define them.

## About Jerry Hocutt

Jerry is an author and a retired national speaker and business owner living with his wife in Kent, Washington.

BTW and FYI: This really is what happens when you play without a helmet.

Senior year 1963, I broke my left nasal bone and cartilages in a scrimmage game against Paschal High School in Ft. Worth. Actually, I was wearing my helmet with face mask while making a tackle. Think this is bad, you should see the guy I tackled! Second time I broke it.

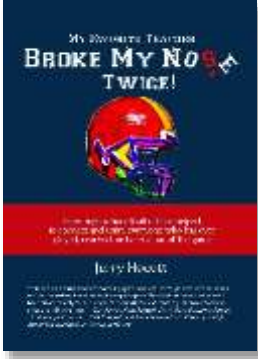


The first time was my sophomore year 1961 (same identical look, pain, and surgery by plastic surgeon with what must have been ten yards of gauze rammed up my nose!), but right nasal bone and cartilages broken this time as we were practicing in the gym without our helmets.

Thought of putting a recent photo here, but the family said, "Nah, that's about the best you'll ever look."

## ***It's Your Call***

Share with others what coaches want players, students, parents, and educators to know: Why players play, coaches coach, and how their experiences can help their fans.



***My Favorite Teacher Broke My Nose – Twice!*** is available in paperback at *special wholesale prices* for bulk purchases. Give them as gifts. Great for fundraising. Sell them in your school store or at your football camps.

*Through humor, great stories, and quotes, Jerry has created a book that helps me reflect on why I went into education and the coaching profession over 40 years ago.* – **Ken Potter**, Oregon's All-Time Winningest High School Football Coach with over 350 wins, 4 State Championships, Jesuit High School, Portland, Oregon

*Outstanding book with tons of stuff related to learning, character development, and doing things the right way. Doing things the right way has helped us win 14 state titles.* – **Jim Roth**, 40 Years Head Coach, Pennsylvania's All-Time Winningest Football Coach, Southern Columbia High School, Catawissa, Pennsylvania

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