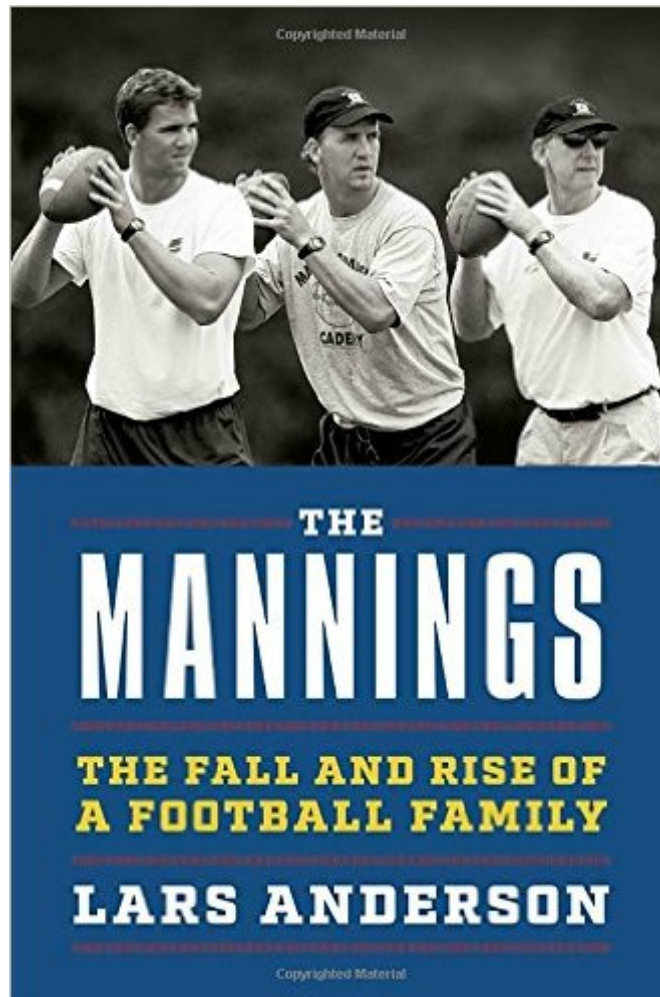


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The Mannings: The Fall And Rise Of A Football Family



Synopsis

From New York Times bestselling author Lars Anderson comes a revealing portrait of the first family of American sports. What the Kennedys are to politics, the Mannings are to football. Two generations have produced three NFL superstars: Archie Manning, the Ole Miss hero who turned New Orleans Saint; his son Peyton, widely considered one of the greatest quarterbacks ever to play the game; and Peyton's younger brother, Eli, who won two Super Bowl rings of his own. And the oldest Manning child, Cooper, who was forced to quit playing sports after he was diagnosed at age eighteen with a rare spinal condition, might have been the most talented of them all. In *The Mannings*, longtime *Sports Illustrated* writer Lars Anderson gives us, for the first time, the never-before-told story of this singular athletic dynasty—a story that shows us how finding strength in the face of catastrophe can be the key to success on and off the playing field. Growing up, the three Manning brothers dream of playing side by side on the gridiron at Ole Miss. But with Cooper forced to the bench before his prime, Peyton must fight to win glory for them both. Meanwhile, Eli is challenged by his college coach to stop trailing in the footsteps of others and forge his own path. With Archie's achievements looming over them, the brothers begin the climb to football history. From the Manning family backyard to the bright lights of Super Bowl 50, *The Mannings* is an epic, inspiring saga of a family of tenacious competitors who have transfixed a nation. Praise for *The Mannings*—Anderson, an accomplished storyteller, writes about the Manning football legacy with style and verve, backed by an abundance of research and scholarship. Publishers Weekly: "An expertly written impressionistic account of the first family of football." Library Journal: "This is one of the most beautifully written and memorable books I've read in years—stunningly spectacular. I couldn't put it down. Once again, Lars Anderson has shown why he is one of the seminal sportswriters of this generation. *The Mannings* is an absolute masterpiece." Paul Finebaum, ESPN college football analyst and New York Times bestselling author of *My Conference Can Beat Your Conference*: "Lars Anderson drills to the core of the Manning family. I love this book because it's not just about football; it's about how to raise a family." Bruce Arians, head coach of the Arizona Cardinals: "Anderson's yarn never wobbles. . . . A winner for fans of modern football." Kirkus Reviews: "Anyone who has paid attention to the NFL over the last five decades understands the significance of the Mannings. They are to America's best-loved game what the Holbeins are to portraiture, what the Bachs are to classical music, what the Kardashians are to mindless reality television, an unsurpassed dynasty. In *The Mannings*, Lars Anderson delivers an incisive, honest, and thorough chronicle of the first family of football." Jeremy Schaap, New York

Times's bestselling author of *Triumph: The Untold Story of Jesse Owens and Hitler's Olympics*

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Customer Reviews

The story of the Mannings ebbs and flows around the football pursuits of father Archie and sons Cooper, Peyton and Eli; however, the book reveals much more than a football family. The Mannings definitely shows three paths to the NFL and 4 super bowls, MVP's and All-Pro awards. Readers see the incredible dedication of all three Mannings who played in the NFL that complemented their athletic abilities. We also see the grief and acceptance when the oldest son Cooper realized he could no longer play football after accepting a football scholarship with great expectations. The story begins with Archie's family and shares much about his dad and mom. This reveals much about the roots and foundations of the Manning family that becomes the focus of the book. In addition to being sports fanatics, including mom Olivia, they are fanatics about their family. As readers suffer through hearing about Archie's difficult decade on the field with the New Orleans Saints, we wonder like so many others why such a talented player stayed at such a miserable team. We learn that it was for his family who were all happy in New Orleans. We hear about Archie telling his sons every night how much he loved them. This love and encouragement spills over into the relationships between the sons. Prior to reading this book, I knew as much about the Mannings as any average football fan not following any of the Manning teams in particular. I enjoyed reading about Archie and his family and the way he played the game and approached it and all things with his family. I'm sure there are gaps in the details but for a book this wide in scope I think it was wisely selective in its depth and scope of story. Of course, the writing about football games and victories and losses is thrilling, too.

There is not much more that can be said about Peyton Manning's accomplishments: all-time leading passer, most touchdowns, most wins, most comeback wins, and most game-winning drives. Eli, in his own right, is a two-time Super Bowl champion just like his brother. Their father, Archie, was an Ole Miss legend turned pro in the 1970s. Their mother, Olivia, has always been there for support, as is their eldest brother Cooper, who plays a bigger role than most know. For the Mannings, football is a family affair. When a spinal condition ended Cooper's future in football before he could play his first game at his father's imposing athletic alma mater Ole Miss, the big brother passed on to Peyton a handwritten letter saying, "I would like to live my dream of playing football through you." The rest is history. *THE MANNINGS* speaks of the struggles they went through as a close-knit family, and how they persevered beyond the highest expectations. Taking the time to get to know this modest family off the field is a core part of understanding the durable foundation that placed them on the track to eventual greatness. Author Lars Anderson gathers family stories and memories that one would think might have been faded past memory, and properly assembles them in all the right places. Though a traditional family, the dynamics of the Mannings are worth examining. People want to know the relationship among the brothers, and how Archie groomed the boys for success to create the most successful football family ever. Though Anderson spends much of the time talking about everything Archie, and perhaps the audience might want to hear more about his children, he does give a further view into the mechanisms of the family than is available elsewhere.

If you want to know Peyton and Eli Manning, you need to know their father and mother, Archie and Olivia, and their oldest brother, Cooper. Once you know them, you'll know why they are great players in the NFL and nice people to boot. Although the book is titled "The Mannings," it really is about Archie. Author Lars Andersen spends the first 175 pages on the family patriarch. Archie was a better quarterback than most people realize. Although he was often injured in high school and his team went 7-21-2, he became a star at Ole Miss, one of the most celebrated quarterbacks in college history. He had a fantastic junior season for Ole Miss, but broke his arm during his senior year. Still, he was drafted No. 2 in the 1970 draft by the New Orleans Saints, described as "the cesspool of the NFL." Archie, always polite and non-boastful, was the product of his father, Buddy, who instilled in him principles of never quitting, always being respectful and never boasting. His father was a workaholic, who struggled with financial problems (due mainly to not collecting money owed to his business by his friends and neighbors) and suffered from health problems.

Unfortunately, he committed suicide at age 59, when Archie was 20. His father's suicide had a profound impact on him. In 1971, Archie signed a 5-year, \$410,000 contract with the New Orleans Saints, the richest rookie deal in the NFL, at the time. During his 10 years with the hapless Saints, the club compiled a dismal 41-102-3 record. Archie was sacked a record 340 times. The Saints never had a winning season, but Archie never demanded a trade because he was devoted to the city and his family liked it there.

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