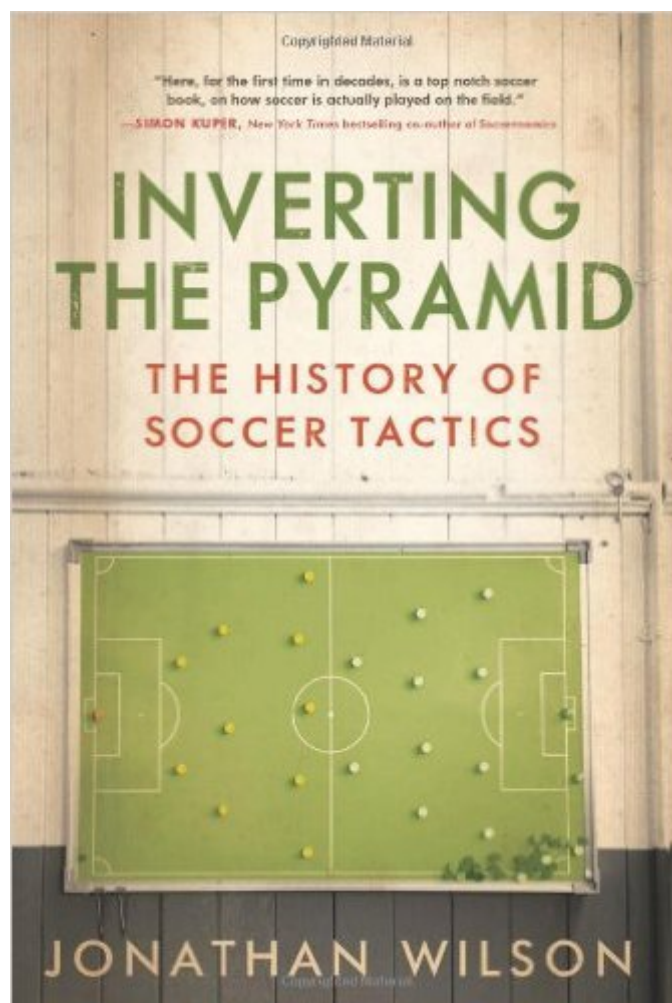


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Inverting The Pyramid: The History Of Soccer Tactics



Synopsis

“An outstanding work”; the [soccer] book of the decade.”—Sunday Business Post
Inverting the Pyramid is a pioneering soccer book that chronicles the evolution of soccer tactics and the lives of the itinerant coaching geniuses who have spread their distinctive styles across the globe. Through Jonathan Wilson’s brilliant historical detective work we learn how the South Americans shrugged off the British colonial order to add their own finesse to the game; how the Europeans harnessed individual technique and built it into a team structure; how the game once featured five forwards up front, while now a lone striker is not uncommon. Inverting the Pyramid provides a definitive understanding of the tactical genius of modern-day Barcelona, for the first time showing how their style of play developed from Dutch “Total Football,” which itself was an evolution of the Scottish passing game invented by Queens Park in the 1870s and taken on by Tottenham Hotspur in the 1930s. Inverting the Pyramid has been called the “Big Daddy” (Zonal Marking) of soccer tactics books; it is essential for any coach, fan, player, or fantasy manager of the beautiful game

Book Information

Paperback: 464 pages

Publisher: Nation Books; First Trade Paper Edition edition (November 5, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1568587384

ISBN-13: 978-1568587387

Product Dimensions: 1.5 x 5.8 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars— See all reviews— (115 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #7,993 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in— Books > Reference >

Encyclopedias & Subject Guides > Sports #6 in— Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous >

Reference #8 in— Books > Sports & Outdoors > Soccer

Customer Reviews

This is definitely a book for the committed fan but if you are a committed fan, you’ll definitely enjoy this book. The quality of writing is very good, well above the level of the great majority of sports journalism, and Wilson appears to be a very thorough researcher. The bibliography is impressive and Wilson deserves credit for grinding through and analyzing a large volume of material, some recondite in the extreme (club histories) and a great deal that must have been rather boring to read

(memoirs by famous managers). The result is an interesting, comprehensive history of soccer tactics since the initial development of the game. There are a couple of recurrent themes. Wilson, as befits a Brit, is rather concerned with the state of British football, and the perpetual conservatism of British coaches and managers runs throughout the book. The corollary, the birth of innovation outside Britain outside Britain, even when fathered by expat British coaches, is another theme. Wilson also illustrates well how tactical changes often occurred somewhat in parallel in different countries, an interesting example of convergent evolution. Some changes occur because of rule changes, Herbert Chapman's development of the WM formation with stopper center half being an example. Others arise as logical tactical adaptations, for example, the development of the flat back four or the withdrawn center forward. Some tactical changes are set in train by others. With teams playing a flat back four, traditional wing play became obsolete. Some tactics, like the Swiss precursor to the sweeper, arose because of unique circumstances, in this case, a semi-professional league, and then spread. There are some real surprises in Wilson's account.

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