

Book tells truth about college ball

by Brian Lennox

The Hundred Yard Lie: the corruption of college football and what we can do to stop it
by Rick Telander
(Simon & Schuster, 223 pp.)

Sports fans are well aware of the abuses of collegiate athletics in America. U.S. college football has increasingly come under attack because of the abuses taking place. The corruption in NCAA football is isolated to the big schools, but they are more visible to the public. Unfortunately, more U.S. colleges want to gain prestige on the athletic field which, more often than not, creates the problems.

Rick Telander is a senior writer for *Sports Illustrated* specializing in college football. As a former player and an insightful writer Telander has the benefit of observing the crisis in college football and understanding the consequences. In his recent book, Telander offers a personal account of the problems. The academic abuses, the huge money now being offered to schools and the admission of non-students to universities are just a few of the concerns he addresses.

Telander initially declares he is no longer going to cover college football. He says he has had enough of the cheating, bribing and general corruption in the game. His most recent experiences soured him on the game. Within the last year Telander has covered the scandal at Oklahoma, the Tommy Chiaken steroid story and the high school football player who died of a heart attack that was blamed on steroid use.

The book deals with Telander's experiences while working at *Sports Illustrated*. He uses a conversational style of writing that

hurts the book's quality. He too frequently quotes what other people have said about sport and college football.

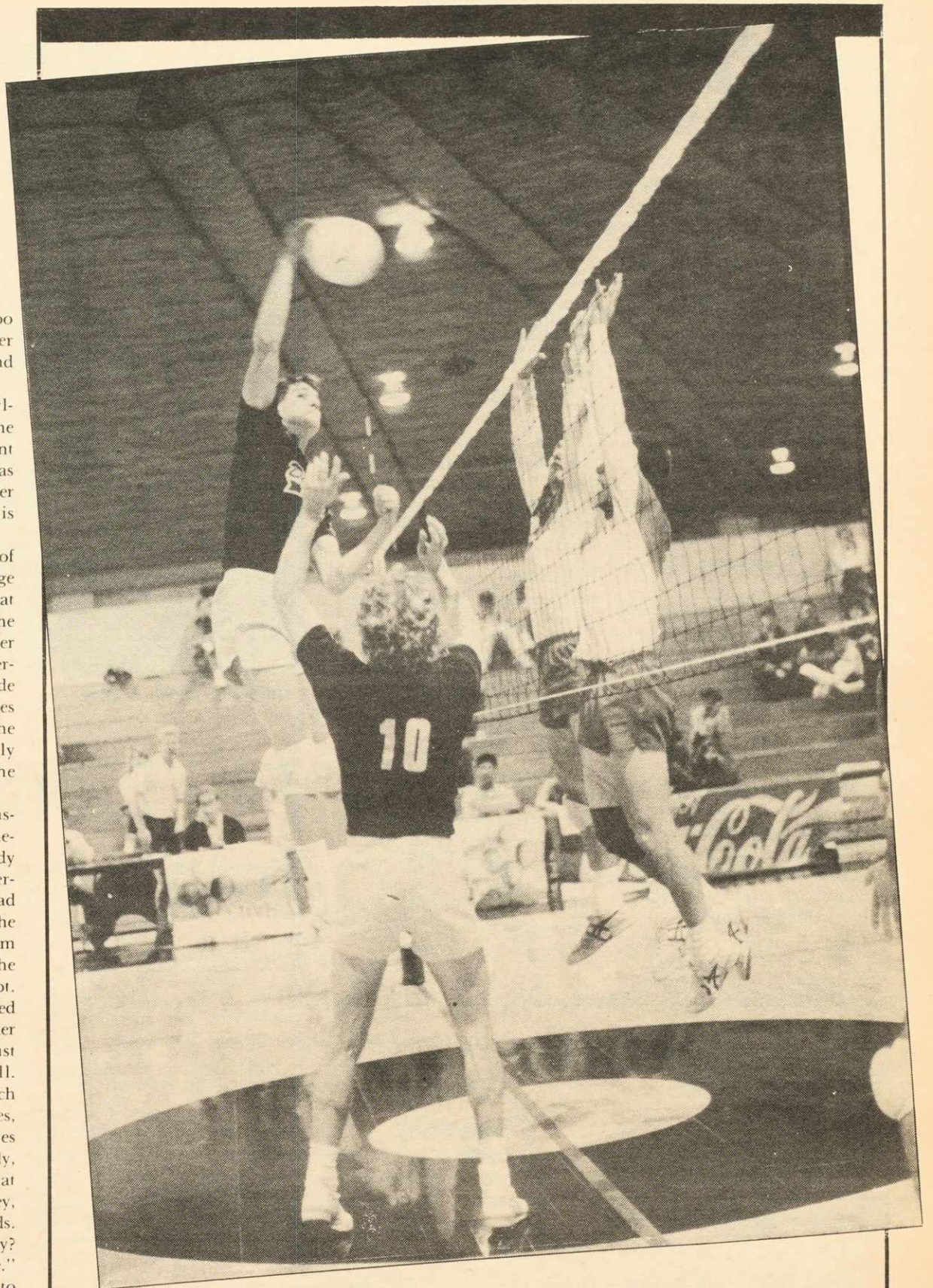
However, Telander's knowledge of the game and his genuine concern for sport are apparent throughout the book. He has decided that he can no longer write about something which is so rampant with hypocrisy.

Telander does dispel many of the myths attached to college football, such as the belief that football brings money to the school. On the contrary, 62 per cent of division one schools operate in the red. The money made by the athletic departments does not go to the university. The athletic departments are basically operating by themselves, he explains.

Telander, to his credit, illustrates that this is not a recent phenomenon. Sixty years ago a study was commissioned which determined that there was widespread cheating in the NCAA. With the increase in money available from television and promotions, the system has become more corrupt.

The NCAA has clearly created its own problem but, as Telander points out, corruption is not just isolated to college football. Sports in general have lost touch with reality. Telander writes, "big time college football proves to all students — and, ultimately, to all of us — that no matter what anybody says, winning, money, and entertainment are our gods. Knowledge, truth, integrity? They're okay — in their place." This quote can be applied to sports, and also society, as a whole.

The Hundred Yard Lie is a decent book but is rather expensive as a hardback. You are better off waiting for the paperback edition.



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