

# The Wow Boys



THE  
**WOW  
BOYS**  
JAMES W. JOHNSON

A COACH, A TEAM, AND A TURNING  
POINT IN COLLEGE FOOTBALL

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著者:Johnson, James W.

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In 2002 ESPN rated football's shift to the modern T-formation offense as the second best sports innovation of all time--just behind baseball's free agency. The story behind this shift is also the story of a season unparalleled in the annals of college football--the year Stanford's new coach, fresh from seven dismal seasons with the University of Chicago, deployed the T-formation offense to take a team of talented underdogs to the Rose Bowl. The Wow Boys (the title refers to the nickname the team earned at its very first game) chronicles this 1940 phenomenon, from the hiring of coach Clark Shaughnessy to his marshalling of the untapped talents of such future standouts as left-handed quarterback Frankie Albert, runners Hugh Gallarneau and Pete Kmetovic, and fullback Norm Standlee, to his reintroduction of the out-of-favor T-formation and its profound and enduring effect on football. James W. Johnson gives a game-by-game rundown of this dramatic season as well as an in-depth account of Shaughnessy's accomplishment in the face of overwhelming criticism and skepticism. This story is one of tenacity, character, and radical ideas prevailing against formidable odds--a sports revolution engineered one play at a time. James W. Johnson is a professor emeritus of journalism at the University of Arizona. He is also a longtime newsman who worked for the Philadelphia Inquirer, the Oakland Tribune, and the Oregonian, among other newspapers. His most recent book is Arizona Politicians: The Noble and the Notorious.

作者介绍:

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