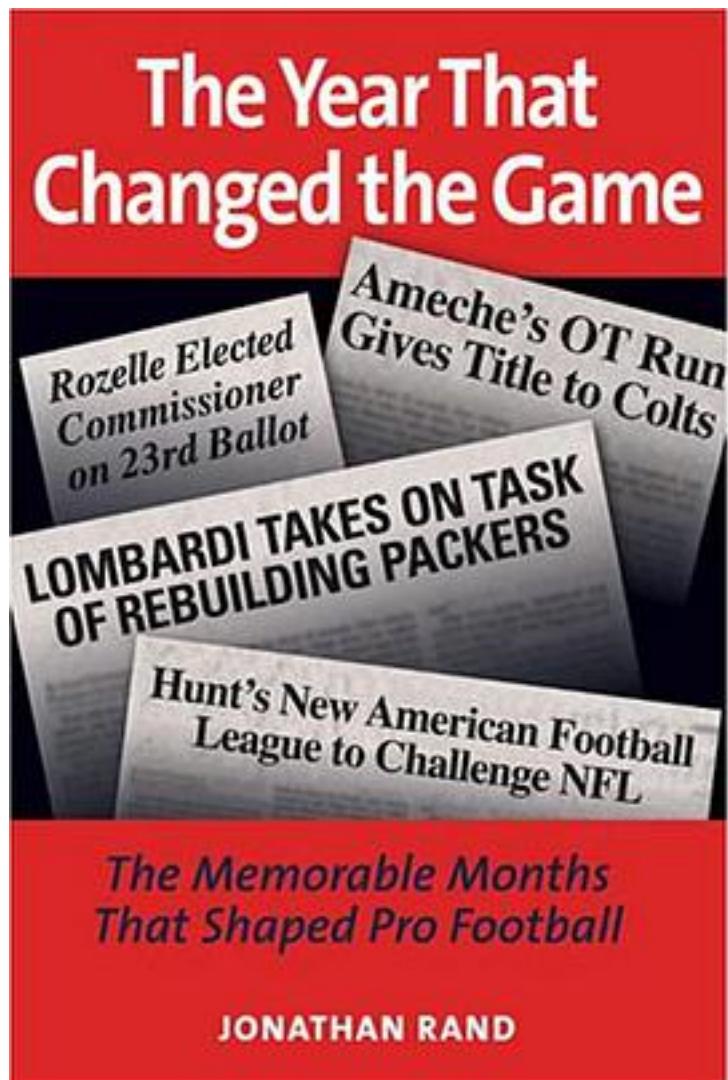


# The Year That Changed the Game



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This book celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of 'The Greatest Game Ever Played' and shows how the year that followed changed the NFL forever. It includes background and details on Pete Rozelle, the AFL, Vince Lombardi, and more. It also highlights how professional football became big business. Some would argue that professional football became America's premier sport through a slow, painstaking evolution starting with the 1920 formation of a fourteen-team circuit that became the National Football League. "The Year That Changed the Game" contends that instead there was a Big Bang - an explosion on December 28, 1958, setting off subsequent aftershocks that in thirteen months transformed pro football from a fringe sport to a rocket ship flying across a nation's sports horizon. While the Baltimore Colts celebrated their dramatic 23-17 win over the New York Giants, courtesy of Alan Ameche's touchdown in overtime, no one could have predicted the upheaval to come. Within the next thirteen months, the Green Bay Packers would hire Vince Lombardi as head coach, starting a dynasty; Lamar Hunt and other businessmen would establish the competing AFL, leading the NFL to respond with expansion, the Super Bowl, and eventually unification; and Commissioner Bert Bell would die, bringing the legendary Pete Rozelle into office. Once pro football rounded the corner, there was no looking back. The 1958 championship game and the following months marked the NFL's transition from a face in the crowd to leader of the parade. One year of change produced fifty years of success. "The Year That Changed the Game" gives this aftermath a closer look.

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目录:

[The Year That Changed the Game\\_ 下载链接1](#)

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