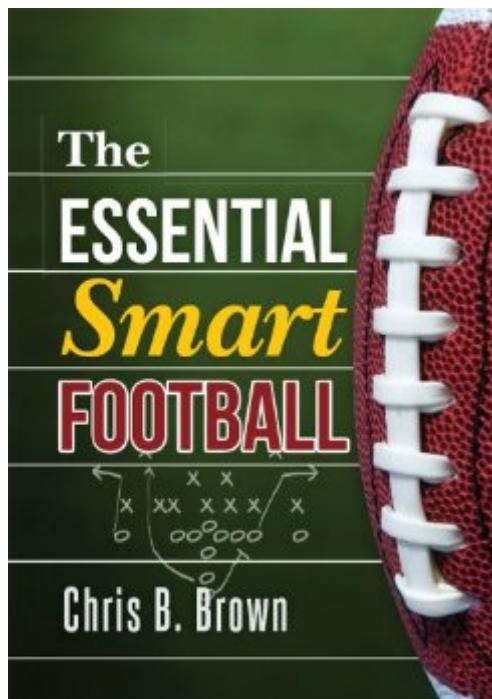


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# The Essential Smart Football



## Synopsis

The Essential Smart Football is an examination of football's most important strategies and ideas, through the lens of the game's best coaches, players, and schemes. Brilliantly written and eschewing unnecessary jargon and technicality, it makes a major contribution to our understanding of football to help all of us -- coaches, players, and fans -- appreciate the game we love all the more. The Essential Smart Football features analysis of football's top strategists and their schemes, including:- Urban Meyer's spread offense- Tom Brady's no-huddle attack- Bill Belichick's hybrid defense- Mike Leach's pass-happy "Air Raid" offense- The most popular scheme for running the ball in the NFL- Nick Saban's school of defenseThe book also includes explorations of modern approaches to the West Coast Offense, evolutions in defensive fronts and coverages, the changing role of the running game in spread and pro-style offenses, and much more."Buy this book if you love football." -- Gregg Rosenthal"[Chris Brown] has put together a book that you need to buy if you're a football fan with a pulse." -- Bill Barnwell, Staff Writer, Grantland"Accessibly erudite".-- New York Magazine"If you're a football geek, this is a mandatory purchase." -- Doug Farrar, Yahoo! Sports"Advanced stats are great, but they mean a lot more when you understand where the players are moving on the field and why. Nobody has taught me more about where the players are moving on the field and why than Chris Brown." -- Aaron Schatz, founder of FootballOutsiders.com, columnist for ESPN.com/ESPN the Magazine"I'm a better coach after reading this book. A must have in every coach's library!"-- Dub Maddox, Offensive Coordinator, Jenks High School, Jenks, Oklahoma (12x Oklahoma State champions)"Must-have new book for any football fan." -- Dan Shanoff, Quickish.com

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Over the last 5 years, Chris Brown's site Smartfootball.com has influenced the way I see (and coach) the game of football more than any other source...and I consult a lot of sources! I read 20+ books a year on football coaching, strategy, and management. Brown stays on top of the game, breaking down the newest strategies and noting why they emerged and where they evolved from. This book contains the best articles from his website all in one book. The best leaders and teachers are great simplifiers and Chris Brown makes the complex seem simple. I'm a high school head football coach and love studying the game. I have a lot of the cornerstone books like Bill Walsh's Finding the Winning Edge, Woody Hayes's Hotline to Victory, "Tiger" Ellison's Run & Shoot, Homer Smith's manuals, and Lou Holtz's The Grass is Greener. I recommend Chris Brown's book and site in the same sentence with those essential texts. All of them will change the way you see the game. The material on Urban Meyer and the Spread Offense traces the roots of the offense and the power of the "true" option as opposed to the "read" option. The chapter on the Patriots's use of "Joker" players like Gronkowski and Hernandez to create uncertainty in the defense with versatile players is essential reading -- it ties into Woody Hayes's idea of building your offense to beat the top 3 teams on your schedule (in this case the Jets, for Belichick). If you run the Spread and haven't read Brown's ideas on "Constraint" plays, you are missing out. The chapter on the No Huddle Offense and how it gives Tom Brady (of all QBs) simpler defensive structures to attack is also outstanding. The bottom line is that this is a fantastic football book from one of the best writers on football today. Buy this book and visit Brown's site and you'll be a better coach. He's as good as it gets.

I have followed Chris Brown's Smart Football website for years, and bought this book (actually 2 of them) knowing that many of the chapters in the book would be very similar to posts I had already read on his blog. What I was expecting was more of a reference book, something that I could flip through for refreshers on basic terminology and offensive and defensive schemes. Chris Brown has mentioned before that there aren't very many good general football strategy books out there, and I was hoping that his book would fill the void. It turns out that the book is mostly copies of blog posts

already on his site. In many cases the only difference between the book chapters and the blog posts are the removal of diagrams and videos explaining certain concepts. The original blog posts were very informative, and I assumed that in buying the book I would get additional material- more diagrams/examples, better organization so that it could be used as a reference, etc. But that's not what this book is. Despite being disappointed, I didn't mind buying the book because of the enjoyment I have gotten out of his website. However, the information in the book is the same as the website, and, it turns out, the website is a better medium for understanding the concepts. I hope one day Chris does write a reference book on modern football strategy.

I came to SmartFootball.com somewhat late to the game, but have been an avid reader since. When I found out that Chris Brown was putting out a book of "best of" combined with new material, I was very excited to see the result. I have not been disappointed. The book will be especially enjoyable to those who are unfamiliar with or new to the site. I had read only two of the older articles, but even there I found new insights after re-reading them. I suspect that even if you are familiar with all of the older content, the book is still going to be a must have based on the new content alone. My only minor complaint is that I wish some of the articles had been longer, and the older ones expanded on further. Several times I felt like I was getting into the meat of the essay only to find it ending on the next page. Despite that, I would consider this to be required reading for anyone interested in a deeper understanding of the strategy of football, at any level.

I'm a regular reader of Chris Brown's blog. The material he posts is one-of-a-kind and completely improves my experience as a fan. As nice as it was to re-read some of his old posts and see some others that I'd missed, I was kind of hoping for new, more comprehensive material.

Chris Brown is an amazing football resource online. This book is a collection of some good essays from his weblog Smart Football. They are more personality-based than some of his work, and I think he's at his best talking raw Xs and Os. But it's affordable, and it will give you a good overview of the state of the art as of about 2012. Certainly, this book will help an eager layperson get a much, much more finely tuned sense of the game s/he's watching.

Apparently drawn from web postings and previously published material, The Essential Smart Football is an intriguing survey of modern offensive and defensive strategies in college and professional football. The individual chapters are short and provide both historical and tactical

background; however the book suffers from being perhaps too technical for a novice and not detailed enough for a student of the game. Overall worth the modest cost, but additional depth and graphics would make for a much better book.

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