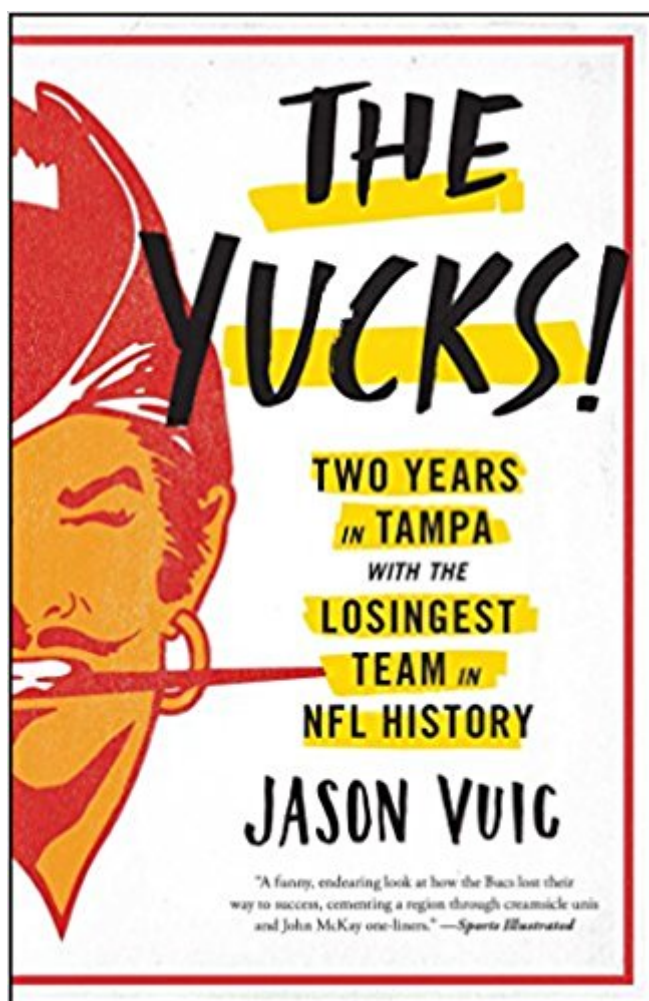


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The Yucks: Two Years In Tampa With The Losingest Team In NFL History



Synopsis

Friday Night Lights meets The Bad News Bears in *“a brisk, warmhearted reminder of how professional sports can occasionally reach stunning unprofessional depths”* (Publishers Weekly): the first two seasons with the worst team in NFL history, the hapless, hilarious, and hopelessly winless 1976–1977 Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Long before their first Super Bowl victory in 2003, the Tampa Bay Buccaneers did something no NFL team had ever done before and that none will ever likely do again: They lost twenty-six games in a row. This was no ordinary streak. Along with their ridiculous mascot and uniforms, which were known as “the Creamsicles,” the Yucks were a national punch line and personnel purgatory. Owned by the miserly and bulbous-nosed Hugh Culverhouse, the team was the end of the line for Heisman Trophy winner and University of Florida hero Steve Spurrier, and a banishment for former Cowboy defensive end Pat Toomay after he wrote a tell-all book about his time on “America’s Team.” Many players on the Bucs had been out of football for years, and it wasn’t uncommon for them to have to introduce themselves in the huddle. They were coached by the ever-quotable college great John McKay. “We can’t win at home and we can’t win on the road,” he said. “What we need is a neutral site.” But the Bucs were a part of something bigger, too. They were a gambit by promoters, journalists, and civic boosters to create a shared identity for a region that didn’t exist—Tampa Bay. Before the Yucks, “the Bay” was a body of water, and even the worst team in memory transformed Florida’s Gulf communities into a single region with a common cause. The Yucks is “a funny, endearing look at how the Bucs lost their way to success, cementing a region through creamsicle unis and John McKay one-liners” (Sports Illustrated).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“A funny, endearing look at how the Bucs lost their way to success, cementing a region through creamsicle unis and John McKay one-liners. •Sports Illustrated
“The Yucks is a delightful merging of terrific writer, terrific subject, ugly-ass uniforms, and a gathering of gridiron ineptitude only a blind scout could love. Wonderfully done. • Jeff Pearlman, author of Boys Will Be Boys
“A brisk, warmhearted reminder of how professional sports can occasionally reach stunning unprofessional depths. • Publishers Weekly

Jason Vuic is the author of *The Yucks: Two Years in Tampa with the Losingest Team in NFL History*; *The Yugo: The Rise and Fall of the Worst Car in History*; and *The Sarajevo Olympics: A History of the 1984 Winter Games*. A lifelong Buccaneer fan with degrees from Wake Forest University, the University of Richmond, and Indiana University, he grew up in Punta Gorda, Florida, and now lives in Fort Worth, Texas.

As a football fan, I often wistfully look back at the 1970s brand of NFL football I enjoyed in my youth. While today’s NFL fans bathe in a sea of endless in-your-face information, merchandise and the ability to watch EVERY game played year-in and year out, they missed out on arguably the best decade of NFL football that existed (at least in my 50 years). Instead of nflshop.com available 24/7, we held our breath for the annual Sears Christmas Wish Book for all of our NFL needs, traded football cards instead of fantasy players, had the original “America’s Team” to despise, Raiders who really were ruthless pirates and the “Steel Curtain” • That decade of unforgettable winners also produced the NFL’s most unforgettable loser | the 0-26 Tampa Bay Buccaneers. Jason Vuic masterfully paints an image of those miserable losing seasons in hues of blazing orange with THE YUCKS! | a story is as strange, funny, ugly and memorable as the Buccaneer uniforms and “Bucco Bruce” • There really is no modern professional comparison to the first two seasons of Buccaneer football | big money pretty much ensures no NFL team will likely

replicate losing 26 consecutive games. The author thoroughly examines the 1976 birth of professional football in Tampa Bay and recounts the first two seasons (1976 and 77) in a manner that is both nostalgic and hilarious. All the ingredients for a good sports story are present: a cheapskate owner, a crusty, cranky, smart-aleck head coach, a team with questionable talent (save the Selmon brothers) and the gaudy 1970s as a backdrop. What makes *THE YUCKS!* worth reading is that is that an NFL team losing 26 consecutive games IS sports history; the thought of it happening again is almost unfathomable. While I have no personal interest in the team, it's hard not to wonder how a professional football team could be THAT bad. Vuic certainly provides a litany of who, what, when and why information that generates logical answers. I found the story of the early Bucs quite fascinating and humorous. Whether it be the penny-pinching owner (Hugh Culverhouse) constructing a team complex that had less square footage than a current NFL team weight-room or the endless stream of one-liners from befuddled head coach, John McKay (who allegedly responded to a reporter's question about the team's execution on the field with "I'm in favor of it") the early years of pro football in Tampa were certainly funny. Adding to the mix were the hodge-podge of players whose Sunday performances dominate the NFL blooper archive. While many players, like the coach's son, weren't NFL-caliber material, the defense was quite good (the first player drafted by Tampa, Leroy Selmon, became a bona-fide Hall of Famer). Vuic details the perspective from inside the organization and outside (the fans and city of Tampa) and while the story centers on futility, former members of the organization contributing to the book (players and personnel) look back fondly at those frustrating years. I found *THE YUCKS!* to be an enjoyable and fast read; Vuic keeps things interesting from beginning to end. While the crux of the story focuses on those first two seasons, the author succinctly continues the Buccaneer history to include its eventual Super Bowl winning season in 2002 to put things in perspective. If you like the 1970s brand of hardnose NFL football, *THE YUCKS!* is certainly worth reading. While the decade is pretty much defined by the winning of the Pittsburgh Steelers, the story of the league's biggest losers is probably more entertaining.

I'm actually a bit older than the author and remember the Bucs' first season like it was yesterday--I lived in Tampa and lived the history! I remember Coach McKay, the media, the players, and even the specific games, plays, and scores. I was there in the driving rain when the Bucs beat the Chiefs 3-0 to win the division for the first time. I remember the so-called controversy around here when the

Bucs drafted Doug Williams. If you remember things like I do, you'll love this book as a walk down memory lane that provides a background for why things may have happened as they did. It filled in the gaps for too many things I remember so well. If you just vaguely remember the Bucs or have heard about how bad they were, the tidbits of info will have you laughing and shaking your head. If you are in the sports industry today, whether on the business or player side of the stadium, this is good one to pick up. This book is a must-read for any die-hard Bucs fan and big time football trivia fan. It's really more of a chronicle of what happened; That is, the author does little analysis or insertion of his own opinions. And that's just fine today! Took me about 12 hours to read.

Excellent in-depth coverage of the early history of the Bucs, and details about the NFL's mistakes when working out the kinks in expansion teams. A must-read for Bucs fans and all NFL fans. You think you know the history but there are lots of surprises!

Dr. Vuic is a skilled and entertaining story-teller, with a keen wit, an attention to detail, and a strong academic focus. If all you want is a collection of facts for the 1976 & 1977 seasons then this book is probably not for you. But if you want to know the context of the Yucks' 26 game losing streak, as well as the aftermath and legacy, then you'll want to read this book. There are many details in the book that deserve attention. One is the issue of team ownership. Culverhouse, and the Bucs' current owners are reminiscent of THE PRODUCERS - loving a failure that makes a profit. For those of us who were there, the nostalgia takes us back to the time. In short, this book is an excellent read.

I was impressed by the breadth of the research by the author. I remember this team and they were god-awful when they started. I have three books on the Bucs and this one is by far the best. You can tell J. Vuic utilized primary research sources (Sporting News Guides? old Sporting News issues? SI back issues? Newspaper accounts) plus interviews and archival film footage. I was also impressed with his breezy, witty writing style. I had this one read within a week! Loved every page of it! Also, Impressed with product and delivery. One thing: Sam Hunt of the '76 Patriots was a LB not a CB. Otherwise, well done!!!!

Interesting book highlighting the early years and foibles of the Tampa Bay Bucs. Gives us a differing view of John McKay, who may not have been the comedian everyone made him out to be. Especially interesting were the very early years and how the team was born. Great read for the

Bucs and NFL fan

I picked up this book as an avid sports fan, and a long suffering Bucs supporter. It completely exceeded my expectations, and I could not put it down. Funny, interesting, and gave a real insight into Florida and NFL life in the seventies. The depiction of the characters, oftentimes from first person accounts, was extremely well done! Two thumbs up!

Good back story for the early Bucs years. Good insight on what ownership thought about the team and why they struggled early on. Good and interesting read for a true Tampa Bay Buccaneers fan.

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