

‘Winning Isn’t Everything. It’s the Only Thing’: The Origin, Attributions and Influence of a Famous Football Quote

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Abstract

One of the most revered and controversial quotes in American sport is the hyperbolic and paradoxical declaration, ‘Winning isn’t everything. It’s the only thing’. These words grace the walls of locker rooms, ignite pre-game pep talks and echo from the rafters of banquet halls. This maxim on winning is featured prominently in collections of classic sport quotes. Arguably, it is the most widely known and repeated quote in American sport. The popularity of this epigram transcends the literature of sport. Virtually all of the general collections of quotations found on library shelves include this sentiment on winning. The controversy surrounding the quote rivals its notoriety. Its assertion about the importance of winning has been touted as a basic tenet of the American sports creed and, at the same time, singled out as encapsulating what is wrong with competitive sport. In the ongoing debate about overemphasis on winning, the credo that ‘winning is the only thing’ has served as counterpoint to the well known sentiment by the American sports journalist Grantland Rice that, ‘[it’s] not that you won or lost but how you played the game’, and to the Modern Olympic creed expressed by its founder Baron Pierre de Coubertin: ‘The most important thing is not winning but taking part [in the Games]’. The ‘winning is the only thing’ quote is associated most often with former professional football coach Vincent Lombardi; however, the *cognoscenti* among sport writers and scholars are aware that the words did not originate with him. The quote is increasingly presented in the context, ‘attributed to Vince Lombardi’. Although the origin of the quote has remained a subject of debate, no one disputes that it was Lombardi who made these words famous. The sport scholar remains interested in confirming the original source of the quote. This is a worthwhile heuristic exercise because verbal expressions carry a sense of ownership just as written ideas and texts do. The correct attribution of a quote tells us something about its contextual significance and about the person who concocted it. The task of tracing a quote’s origin is an inexact science which encompasses two separate but related tasks: confirming that certain individuals did employ the quote and establishing that others – to whom it has been attributed – did not. The investigation of ‘false leads’ becomes an exercise in proving the negative – a difficult but necessary undertaking to clear up the misattributions.

Given the uncertainties of identifying the source of spoken words, it comes as no surprise that quotes are wrongly attributed and that public figures are routinely misquoted.¹ Such inaccuracies are as endemic to sport as to the broader political sphere. An instance that bridges these two realms is the

famous quote, 'The battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton', widely credited to Arthur Wellesley (1769-1852), Duke of Wellington. The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (3rd edition) amends this quote with an explanatory footnote from the 7th Duke of Wellington, refuting the attribution to his famous ancestor.² The current Duke related that within his family it has long been known that the hero of Waterloo never made the statement about the playing fields of Eton.³ In fact, the quote did not surface until 41 years after the Battle of Waterloo when it appeared in the book of a French writer known for his ability to turn a phrase.⁴

Regardless of their origins, the 'playing fields of Eton' quote and the 'winning is the only thing' quote remain part of the lore of sport – a legacy of anecdotes and sayings based upon the recollections of athletes, coaches, sports fans, and journalists. This body of lore, much of it oral, is part fable and part fact, what Walter Camp, the 'father of American football', once described as sport's broad folk highway.⁵ Green commented that sports quotes take on 'lives of their own, gradually separating themselves from their derivations by myth and embellishment until we no longer remember who originated them or why'.⁶ Sentiments about winning are a significant part of sports lore. Adler lists some fifty quotes on winning from football coaches alone, including a dozen on the subject by Vince Lombardi.⁷ Among these is 'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing'. This quote has generated a significant body of lore on its own. These famous words on winning have been attributed to several notables inside and outside American sport. Some of the attributions appear more creditable than others as the existing records are scrutinised.

The various claims, conflicting attributions and continuing questions surrounding the quote 'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing' invite an investigation to trace these words to their source and to track their subsequent history. This paper examines evidence supporting the several claims for the origin of the quote, briefly traces its various incarnations, chronicles its popularisation by Vince Lombardi and assesses the impact of this popular slogan on the ethos of American sport, as well as its broader political and cultural significance.

Search for the Source

It is the nature of athletic coaches to routinely quote each other, as well as generals, politicians, writers and scripture. They read about colleagues' remarks in the sports pages of newspapers and in magazines; they listen to speeches at coaching conventions; they converse among themselves. Some coaches have a penchant for discipleship and are strongly influenced by mentors. They borrow freely from their teachers, not only coaching techniques but favorite maxims. While some individuals credit the source of quotes they repeat, others appropriate sayings and allow the impression to form that they are the originators. Still others repeat popular sayings without knowing the

source. In the case of ‘Winning isn’t everything. It’s the only thing’ creditable sources have attributed its origin to the following: University of Michigan football coach Fielding Yost, University of Illinois coach Bob Zuppke, General Douglas MacArthur, actor John Wayne in a 1953 film, *Trouble Along the Way*, and Henry ‘Red’ Sanders, football coach at Vanderbilt and U.C.L.A. These claims challenge the popular conception that the quote originated with Vince Lombardi.⁸

The following investigation into the origin of the ‘winning is the only thing’ quote is roughly chronological leading up to its verified use by Sanders and Lombardi. The general assumption in this approach is that most individuals are less inclined to quote their followers than their elders or peers. Claims for the origin of the quote carry back to the early twentieth century when American college football was first attracting a public following and football coaches were becoming influential public figures.

One of the most prominent coaches at the turn of the century was Fielding Yost at the University of Michigan.⁹ Fred Russell, longtime sports writer of *The Nashville Banner* recalled ‘an oldster telling me that he had read the [“winning is the only thing”] quote 60 or 70 years ago, and it then was credited to Fielding Yost’.¹⁰ Historians share with barristers a healthy skepticism regarding claims based on hearsay, especially when they rely on the memory of a dated reference, however, this claim acquires credibility given Russell’s long and distinguished career as a sports writer and Yost’s ties to Vanderbilt University, the *alma mater* of both Fred Russell and Red Sanders. The link was Dan McGugin who played football for Yost at the University of Michigan before coaching football at Vanderbilt. One of McGugin’s players was Red Sanders. If Yost was the source of the quote, it might explain where Sanders got it – either directly from Yost or passed down through McGugin. The two schools played each other in football a half dozen times from 1906 through 1923, the year Sanders ‘lettered’ as a freshman quarterback.¹¹

No evidence surfaced, however, that indicates that Yost ever uttered the ‘winning is the only thing’ quote or that it was passed on to McGugin. The quote does not appear among a sizable collection of Yost’s sayings in his book on football or in popular histories of Michigan football, and Yost’s biographer is unaware of the quote’s origin.¹² Fielding Yost was noted for his admonitions to players beginning with the words, ‘Hurry up’; for example, ‘Hurry up and be the first man down the field on a punt or kick-off. This penchant resulted in his nickname ‘Hurry up’ Yost and it was these slogans that were quoted among his contemporaries.¹³ We must conclude that Fielding Yost was not the source of these famous words.

Another colourful figure of the era was Bob Zuppke, who was hired to coach football by the University of Illinois a decade after Fielding Yost came to Michigan. *Sports Illustrated* writer Paul Zimmerman credits the origin of the famous quote on winning to the Illinois coach, suggesting that ‘Winning isn’t

everything. It's the only thing' is a bastardised version of a Zuppke quote of the 1920s, 'Winning is not the most important thing. It's the only thing'.¹⁴ Zuppke, like Yost, was a high-profile character at a time when big-time college football was attracting huge crowds and athletes and coaches were being transformed into celebrities. The Illinois coach's national reputation was built on his team's success in the mid 1920s during the career of its outstanding running back Harold 'Red' Grange.¹⁵ Zuppke's hallmark as a coach was his locker room oratory.¹⁶ Collections of quotes by the Illinois coach were labeled 'Zuppkeisms' by his admirers including Fred Russell, who printed 55 'Zuppkeisms' in his column in *The Nashville Banner* during Zuppke's last season at Illinois.¹⁷ 'Winning is not the most important thing. It's the only thing' does not appear in any of these collections.¹⁸ The Zuppke quote on winning most similar to the one Zimmerman recalls is 'The main idea of competition before everything else should be to earn your opponent's respect whether you win or lose. This is the important thing'. This is probably the quote that Zimmerman recalls.¹⁹ Bob Zuppke does not appear to be the source of the famous quote on winning either.

Given the athletic success of America's military academies in the following decades of the 1930s and 1940s it is not surprising that analogies between football and warfare were offered by coaches and military officers. During World War Two, graduates of the service academies, including General Douglas MacArthur, followed the seasons of Army and Navy football teams in the newspapers and by radio all over the world. Mickey Herskowitz, former sports writer for the *Houston [Texas] Post*, claims that the source of the quote, 'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing', was a telegram sent from the Philippine Islands by General MacArthur to West Point coach Earl 'Red' Blaik – an old friend and protegee – on the eve of the 1944 Army-Navy game.²⁰ This claim, if true, might explain where Vince Lombardi got the quote, as Lombardi was an assistant coach under Blaik at West Point from 1949 to 1953.²¹

Douglas MacArthur had been closely associated with athletics at West Point since his student days when he played baseball and managed the football team.²² Later, when MacArthur was appointed superintendent of the Military Academy, he became an avid promoter of sports as a way to improve the fitness of potential officers. He had carved on the stone portals of the academy gymnasium the words, 'Upon the fields of friendly strife / Are sown the seeds / That upon other fields, on other days / Will bear the fruits of victory'.²³ When Red Blaik returned to West Point as head coach in 1941, MacArthur regularly offered advice from afar to the new coach and sent inspiring messages to the team before and after crucial games.²⁴

The 1944 Army-Navy game was indeed a crucial one for the top-ranked Army team, which was given a good chance to beat arch rival Navy and win the mythical National Championship.²⁵ If MacArthur wired Blaik from the Philippines on the eve of the game, however, that message appears to be lost. James' detailed account of MacArthur's Pacific tour does not mention a telegram to

Blaik on the eve of the Navy game.²⁶ Blaik's autobiography does not report a telegram arriving from MacArthur on that occasion, nor does Blaik's son Bob recall any such quote from the General to his father.²⁷ A telegram from General MacArthur did arrive *following* Army's victory, but it does not contain the famous quote.²⁸ Moreover, the quote cannot be found among the many MacArthur telegrams housed in the collection at West Point.²⁹ The famous MacArthur quote that surfaces time and again in correspondence and speeches is 'There can be no substitute for victory'.³⁰ Thus, no evidence substantiates Herskowitz's claim that General MacArthur was the source of the famous quote on winning. Vince Lombardi surely got the quote from another source. One possible source was a Hollywood film about football that opened in 1953.

In a *Time* magazine article, Roger Kahn commented on Lombardi repeating the slogan, 'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing', and then noted, 'This, if it means anything at all, means that Lombardi saw a movie called *Trouble Along the Way* in 1953. Playing a football coach in that film, John Wayne mouthed the lines that everyone now attributes to Lombardi'.³¹ Thomas Tutko and William Bruns also mention the quote in this film. According to their account, Wayne, playing the coach, responds to a question, 'Is winning everything to you?' by replying, 'No, ma'am. Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing'.³² Lombardi's biographer cites this reference to the quote but does not claim that Lombardi got the quote from the film.³³

The quote does appear in *Trouble Along the Way*; however, John Wayne does not say the lines. Instead, they are delivered by the young actress Sherry Jackson playing Carol, the precocious eleven year old daughter of college coach Steve Williams (portrayed by Wayne). About an hour and 25 minutes into the film, Jackson as Carol appears in a crowd scene at a football game accompanied by actress Donna Reed playing Alice, the romantic lead. A dialogue between the two turns to the subject of money and college football. Alice asks Carol, 'Is winning so important?' Carol responds, 'As Steve says, "Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing"'.³⁴

Trouble Along the Way was filmed in late 1952 and released the following April.³⁵ Melville Shavelson and Jack Rose, who wrote the screenplay, confirm that they borrowed the 'winning is the only thing' quote from University of California (Los Angeles) football coach Henry 'Red' Sanders, who had become a popular local figure following his football team's success.³⁶ The screenwriters' attribution of the 'winning is the only thing' quote – taken in conjunction with other evidence – leads to Sanders as the most likely source.

Henry 'Red' Sanders: Source of the Quote

After graduating from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Red Sanders spent a year coaching at Clemson University in South Carolina and then coached prep school football through 1937, including several highly successful seasons at Riverside Military Academy in Georgia. He returned to college

coaching in 1938 and was hired as head football coach by Vanderbilt in 1940. He coached his *alma mater* through the 1942 season before joining the Navy. Following his military tour of duty, he returned to Vanderbilt in 1946 and stayed through the 1948 season. Early in 1949 he accepted an offer from the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), where he remained as head coach through the 1957 season until his untimely death in August of 1958.³⁷

Red Sanders was one of the most successful college coaches of his era. While at Vanderbilt he was named 'Coach of the Year' in the Southeastern Conference. At UCLA, he won three straight Pacific Coast Conference titles and twice took the Bruins to the Rose Bowl. UCLA was national champion in 1954, and Sanders was named national 'Coach of the Year'. At the time of his death, he was one of seven active coaches who had won 100 or more games.³⁸ The nadir of Sanders' career came in the 1956 season when UCLA was among the Conference schools accused of 'payrolling' players. Sanders and the Bruins were sanctioned severely. The university was fined, placed on probation, and barred from appearing in Rose Bowl games until 1960.³⁹ The beleaguered Sanders died of a heart attack before UCLA's probation ended.

Sanders was typical of successful football coaches whose careers moved them into increasingly high-pressure situations with more emphasis on winning. How he handled that pressure is instructive. Early in his college coaching career on the eve of a crucial game with the powerful University of Kentucky, Fred Russell asked Sanders if he would be satisfied with a one-point victory? "Satisfied", [Sanders] howled. "I would be tickled to death! I might even be willing to settle for a tie"⁴⁰ Sanders always recognised that as far as the alumni and fans were concerned, 'Winning is the only thing'. Commenting on the pressure to win an upcoming game with UCLA's rival Southern California, Sanders offered the line, 'It's not a matter of life and death. It's a little more important than that'.⁴¹ This quote reveals a syntax and rhetorical style quite similar to 'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing'. Both statements are constructed of two short declarative sentences that employ the same verb contraction. Each begins by negating a hyperbole and follows with a second hyperbole that escalates the importance of the point being made. Also, both expressions share an internal illogic. The first quote mocks the premise that nothing is more important than life and death. In the second quote, the expression 'the only thing' is redundant to the use of the word 'everything'. The striking rhetorical similarities of the two quotes suggest that they were concocted by the same person.

This assertion is supported by corroborating evidence from several sources in addition to Shavelson and Rose. A 1955 *Sports Illustrated* article by Joel Sayre noted that Sanders once declared, 'Sure, winning isn't everything. It's the only thing'.⁴² The quote also is attributed to Sanders in two books on UCLA football.⁴³ Other sources indicate that Sanders was using the quote prior to his arrival in Los Angeles. Suzy Platt attributed the 'winning' quote to

Sanders during his post-World War Two years at Vanderbilt. She cites Fred Russell and Scoop Hudgins, Vanderbilt's sports information director (1946-48), as her primary sources.⁴⁴ Russell, who knew Red Sanders since their prep school days, recalls Sanders saying, 'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing', in the pre-World War Two era. *The Nashville Banner* columnist claims that Sanders began using the quote in the mid-1930s when he was coaching at Riverside Academy in Georgia.⁴⁵

Evidence of Sanders using the quote comes from others who knew him. The late Tommy Prothro who played football for Sanders at Riverside Academy, and was an assistant coach under Sanders at Vanderbilt and UCLA, recounted hearing Sanders use the 'winning is the only thing' quote dating back to his days at Riverside.⁴⁶ E. J. 'Buck' Curtis, who knew Sanders since he [Curtis] was seven years old, played football for Sanders at Riverside and then at Vanderbilt. He also recalled Sanders saying 'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing' during his tenure at Riverside.⁴⁷

The weight of evidence therefore suggests that Red Sanders originated this quote in the 1930s. John Tunis, writing in popular magazines in the early 1930s, lamented that Americans were no longer interested in sports for sports sake, or in sportsmanship, but instead were obsessed with winning at any cost.⁴⁸ Michael Oriard has noted in retrospect of the decade, 'that brutal necessity typically made sportsmanship itself anachronistic'. A new skepticism and cynicism appeared in the national temper.⁴⁹ Red Sanders must have sensed these changes in coining the phrase about winning being 'the only thing'. At the time, he had no way of knowing how famous this quote would become.

Sanders was reputed to be one of the most quotable coaches who ever faced a battery of sportswriters.⁵⁰ He became the subject of several national magazine articles in the 1940s and 1950s.⁵¹ Given his quotability, his personal contacts and his national exposure, it was predictable that other coaches would begin repeating versions of the 'winning' quote, including University of Alabama coach Paul 'Bear' Bryant⁵² and Jim Tatum, the highly successful coach at the University of Maryland and later, North Carolina.⁵³ While Bryant and Tatum concocted their own versions of the quote, another coach would make the 'winning' quote famous and imbue it with a sense of zealotry.

Vince Lombardi's Use of the Quote

No one used the quote on winning more often, or to more effect, than Vince Lombardi. An open question is whether Lombardi got the quote from Sanders or from another source.⁵⁴ Neither Lombardi's biographer Michael O'Brien nor his son Vince Jr. can shed any light on the question.⁵⁵ O'Brien noted that Lombardi had heard maxims on winning from several influential coaches in his career, however, he did not credit these words to any of his mentors.⁵⁶ O'Brien speculated that Lombardi may have picked up the 'winning is the only thing' quote either from Red Sanders or the 1953 John Wayne film.⁵⁷

Lombardi is recorded as using the quote in 1959 in his opening day remarks to the team at Green Bay. He may have heard the quote earlier while he was at West Point but apparently not from Army coach Red Blaik or General MacArthur.⁵⁸

It is quite possible that Lombardi picked up the quote from the film, *Trouble Along the Way*. During the summers at West Point, Coach Blaik would assemble the members of his athletic staff at the Bull Pond, a recreational area, where on each Sunday a projectionist from the Army Signal Corps would show a recently released Hollywood film. Lombardi was present at these events during his tenure there. Whether the newly released film, *Trouble Along the Way* was shown in the summer of 1953 can not be documented, but the film would seem a likely choice for a group of football coaches.⁵⁹ If Lombardi did not hear the quote from Sanders or while at West Point, he may have read it in the 1955 *Sports Illustrated* article on Sanders while he was coaching with the New York Giants. But this is speculation; he could have heard the quote at a coaches' conference or in a myriad of scenarios.

Lombardi's use of the quote first captured the American public's attention during his successful reign as coach of the Green Bay Packers in the 1960s.⁶⁰ Following the National Football League Championship game of 1960 between Green Bay and the Philadelphia Eagles, articles on Lombardi began appearing in national magazines such as *Time*, *Look*, *Life* and *The New Yorker*.⁶¹ The 'winning is the only thing' quote from his opening day remarks at training camp was included in a 1962 *Life* magazine article.⁶² Once in the spotlight, Lombardi became known for a repertoire of pet sayings expounded for the benefit of his players, the fans and the media, which appropriated everything from profanities to biblical verses.⁶³ Sentiments about the importance of winning were prominent among them.⁶⁴

Little doubt existed as to what was Lombardi's favorite quote on winning. In a 1976 *Time* article, Kahn commented on, 'Vince Lombardi saying for the thousandth time, "Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing"'.⁶⁵ Indeed, Lombardi was not shy about expressing his views on the importance of winning, and the tone was that of a true believer. Tom Dowling compared the Packers coach to the Prophet Elijah.⁶⁶ American author James Michener dubbed Lombardi the 'high priest of competition'.⁶⁷ Paul Zimmerman alluded to, 'St. Vincent with the booming voice and the lawyer's mind'.⁶⁸ These characterisations portray a man intently serious, strident and sententious in promoting his credo of winning.

Lombardi's reputation was that of a stem disciplinarian with a volatile temper, a coach who drove his players relentlessly and accepted no compromises to victory. His players held few doubts about their coach's insistence upon winning.⁶⁹ They heard his uncompromising admonitions before the outside world became aware of them. Lombardi's opening talk on the first day of the Packers' training camp in 1959 began with the statement, 'Gentlemen, I

have never been on a losing team'. He continued by declaring, 'Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing. If you can accept losing, you can't win'.⁷⁰ Lombardi occasionally offered slightly different versions of the winning quote in his public utterances, but the version offered on the first day of training camp was the one that endured as most representative of the man and his creed.⁷¹

Over time, the quote took on a life of its own, representing one side in the national debate on unrestrained competitiveness in American sport. In response to growing criticism, Lombardi eventually came to regret the statement on winning and offered an apology: 'I have been quoted as saying, "Winning is the only thing". That's a little out of context. What I said is that "Winning is not everything – but making the effort to win is"'.⁷² Lombardi's sympathisers engaged in an effort to ameliorate the harshness of his remarks on winning. His biographer O'Brien commented that the, 'Winning . . . is the only thing' version was the one the media selected to capsulise Lombardi's approach to sport. O'Brien pointed out that Lombardi had said 'Winning isn't everything. Trying to win is' in a 1962 speech in Milwaukee.⁷³ Others pointed to an *Esquire* article that quoted Lombardi as saying, 'Winning isn't everything, but wanting to win is'.⁷⁴ In a *Sport* magazine article subtitled, 'Winning Truly Wasn't Everything', fellow coach Tom Landry claimed that what Lombardi actually said was 'Making the effort to win is the only thing'.⁷⁵

Published collections of notable quotations feature several variations of Lombardi's statement on the importance of winning, including 'Winning isn't everything. Its the only thing'.⁷⁶ A more selective sample of Lombardi quotes can be found on the 'Official Site of Vince Lombardi' on the Internet. This commemorative online article, introduced by Vince Lombardi Jr., features the quote 'Winning is not everything – but making the effort to win is'. Significantly, the 'winning is the only thing' version does not appear on this site.⁷⁷ Lee Green's book *Sportswit* (whose stated purpose is to clarify misinformation surrounding sports quotes) offers none of the sources for Lombardi saying 'winning is the only thing'. Instead, it refers to Lombardi denying ever having made the statement and then offers the alternative 'Winning is not everything – but making the effort to win is'.⁷⁸

These revisionist efforts occasionally resulted in some strange amalgams. In a 1993 issue of *Inc.* magazine, George Gendron submitted a unique version of the famous Lombardi quote: 'Winning isn't everything. The desire to win is everything. In fact, it's the only thing'. Gendron then makes reference to 'Vince Lombardi, the legendary head coach of the Green Bay Packers, whose famous phrase has been misquoted so often that most of us have forgotten what he actually said (if we ever knew)'.⁷⁹ In fact, we do know what Lombardi said. The 'winning is the only thing' version of the quote (among others) is recorded for history by several contemporaneous sources including first-hand accounts by his players and journalists and by Lombardi himself on film. If the media chose to emphasise the one version, Lombardi did not object until late in his

career when he began to complain that he had been quoted out of context. Shortly before Lombardi died, he told journalist Jerry Izenberg 'I wish to hell I'd never said the damned thing. I meant the effort . . . I meant having a goal. . . I sure as hell didn't mean for people to crush human values and morality'.⁸⁰ The suggestion that Lombardi was misquoted can be discounted. Lombardi's remark to Izenberg is a tacit admission. Regardless of regrets, the quote will always be connected with his name and his coaching style.⁸¹

Sanders and Lombardi: A Contrast in Styles

The debate over the importance of winning is as old as football.⁸² Red Sanders and Vince Lombardi were both aware of the escalating pressure to win as they rose through the coaching ranks (Sanders to the college level and Lombardi to professional football). How they responded to that pressure, however, reveals a contrast in styles. Both coaches were fond of proclaiming 'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing', however, the evidence suggests that while Lombardi meant it as a 'dead serious' maxim, Sanders appeared to offer it as a play on words, a witticism. The two coaches' distinct uses of the quote is reflected in their demeanour on and off the athletic field.

Sanders was known for his 'even keel' on the sidelines. At team practices he was a taskmaster who expected discipline, fundamental play and hard hitting. He had a reputation for occasionally scathing comments and harsh verbal jabs directed at his players, but his training rules were liberal: there was not even a no-smoking rule at UCLA. His athletes were allowed to miss practice with no penalty if they had a good reason, and he often cancelled practice late in the week before a game.⁸³

Off the athletic field, Sanders' serious demeanour concealed a ready wit. Russell noted that Sanders' 'often cheerless expression cloaks a perception of humour and a pungent facetiousness'.⁸⁴ Sayre commented on the UCLA coach's wry facial expression, then noted 'but when he is amused, which is often, his face has a way of lighting up'.⁸⁵ Sanders had a reputation for being a jokester and often baited sports writers with deliberately trite responses to their questions.⁸⁶ Sanders' witticisms help us to understand the man and to interpret his rhetoric. Newly settled in Los Angeles, he jested that he always thought 'Hollywood was a place where a bunch of fellows sat around a swimming pool with a dry martini in one hand and a wet blonde in the other'. When critics suggested that his single wing offense might be old-fashioned, he retorted 'Maybe it's a horse and buggy offense, but I like to think we have a TV set on the dashboard'.⁸⁷ Sanders commented on a mediocre team: 'What they lacked in size they made up for in slowness'.⁸⁸ The overall picture is of a man with an ironic wit who turned a clever phrase.⁸⁹ This is the context in which the famous quote is presented by Andrew Hamilton and John Jackson. They comment that 'Sanders was almost as well known for his wit as his coaching skill. "Winning isn't everything", he would say. "It's the *only* thing"'.⁹⁰

Lombardi, by contrast, was known for his heavy-handed methods of dealing with athletes going back to his tenure at West Point, where his harsh methods received critical comment from head coach Blaik.⁹¹ Tom Landry, who coached with Lombardi on the New York Giants' staff, described him as a brooding perfectionist, overly strict and volatile, someone who motivated his players through fear.⁹² Lombardi once admonished his players: 'At Green Bay, we have winners. We do not have losers. If you're a loser, mister, you're going to get your ass out of here right now'. Of the several Lombardi quotes in Kramer's book, the only one betraying an element of wit is: 'Dancing is a contact sport. Football is a collision sport'.⁹³

Lombardi's temperament fused with the spirit of the times in which he coached to alter the rhetorical tone and meaning of the famous quote. Although the emphasis on winning had been just as evident in the 1930s when Sanders coined this expression, sports assumed a distinct significance beginning in the 1960s. Football became a lens through which Americans interpreted their country, their communities and themselves. Sport rhetoric had become a new cultural currency.⁹⁴ What Red Sanders had coined as a witticism in the pre-World War Two era became the catchphrase for winning at any cost in the conflict-torn 1960s and 1970s. This was a period when traditional American values were brought into question by a highly vocal counterculture and the conservative elements of mainstream culture rallied around Vince Lombardi's sentiment on winning. Lombardi may not have conceived the quote on winning, but through his personal style he transformed its import and brought it to centre stage in the national dialogue on values. In this sense, the quote belongs to him as much as to Sanders.

The Lombardian ethic

'Winning isn't everything. It's the only thing' came to be identified almost exclusively with Vince Lombardi.⁹⁵ After Red Sanders' death, Lombardi was responsible for the continuing popularity of the quote among coaches. His oft-repeated assertion about the importance of winning would serve as a rallying cry for those in the coaching profession who emphasised winning at any cost. The values reflected in the quote were labeled variously the Lombardian ethic, the Lombardian principle or simply the 'competitor's creed'.⁹⁶ The sentiment encapsulated the essence of an American sports creed that emphasised competitiveness.⁹⁷ As the competitor's creed filtered down from professional sports to college and public school sports, Lombardi's words surfaced in pep talks and on the walls of school locker rooms.⁹⁸

The Lombardian creed became part of a rhetorical campaign to justify unrestrained competition. Such campaigns often manipulate the setting, control the media and exploit emotion. Their rhetoric may even involve coercive group strategies in addition to those directed at individuals. Closely-bonded individuals, like athletes, develop strong emotional ties and act together without

questioning. They respond to common symbols in both ritual and rhetoric.⁹⁹ In its rhetorical role Lombardi's quote functioned in the classic sense as a slogan, an attention-getting phrase used to focus attention on a position or goal to be achieved. Slogans encapsulate key ideas and attitudes. In form, they must be easy to say, easy to understand and easy to remember. In effect, slogans are rousing. They provide rallying cries that exhort an audience to act. While the traditional use of slogans was to rally troops in battle, their modern counterparts are found most often in sports, politics and advertising.¹⁰⁰

As rallying symbols, slogans are not always accurate reflections of their constituent terms. Scheffler noted that doctrines that contradict each other as literal statements may, in their practical purport, be compatible as abstractions. They may 'vary independently in relevance and moral warrant from context to context'.¹⁰¹ Thus, it is idle to criticise slogans on their logical inconsistencies. With the passage of time, however, slogans evolve into operational doctrines and are then increasingly interpreted more literally, especially by critics of the goals they represent. They are taken as literal arguments rather than rallying symbols. When this happens, the slogan in question is evaluated as a straightforward assertion.¹⁰² Critics begin to ask questions such as, 'Does it make sense?' and 'What is its point?' This move toward literalism describes the change in the response to the maxim that 'winning is the only thing'.

'Winning is the only thing' acquired meanings on both the symbolic and literal levels that transcended the realm of sport. S.W. Pope noted that individuals and groups construct, revise and reshape the interpretations of sports events that are subsequently digested by a wider audience. Sporting traditions are then presented to the public in a variety of ways, as part of a collective experience, to popularise and legitimise particular philosophies and political ideologies.¹⁰³ The lexicon of sport pervades American institutions from the barbershop and bar room to the corporate board room and political arena.¹⁰⁴ Lombardi's slogan on winning was applied widely to business, politics and life in general.¹⁰⁵ This was consistent with Lombardi's own philosophy. In his speech, 'What it takes to be No. 1', he stated: 'Running a football team is no different than running any other kind of organization – an army, a political party or a business. The principles are the same. The object is to win – to beat the other guy'.¹⁰⁶

In 1968 Lombardi was featured in a motivational film, 'Second Effort', produced for the business community. The film included a scene in a stadium press box with an actor playing a bumbling salesman and feeding Lombardi the line 'But winning isn't everything'. Lombardi responds, 'You're absolutely right. Winning isn't everything, but its the only thing'. This 28-minute film became the largest selling industrial film in history and further popularised his credo on winning.¹⁰⁷ His influence upon American business executives can be seen in auto maker Lee Iacocca's article entitled 'The lesson I learned from Vince Lombardi'.¹⁰⁸ America's corporate executives have been quite willing to believe that football experience equates with business experience.¹⁰⁹

Lombardi's ethic that 'winning is the only thing' carried over into American politics. In 1971, President Richard Nixon launched a national fund raising drive to build a memorial to the late Vince Lombardi, who had ended his coaching career in Washington.¹¹⁰ The 1972 Republican Campaign's Committee to Re-elect the President hung a sign in their office with the motto 'Winning politically is not everything. It's the only thing'. The committee's subsequent actions personified the belief that the end of winning justified virtually any means.¹¹¹ The resulting Watergate scandal did not weaken the American belief in the importance of winning. A month before succeeding Richard Nixon as President, Gerald Ford commented, 'We have been asked to swallow a lot of home-cooked psychology in recent years that winning isn't all that important anymore I don't buy that for a minute. It is not enough just to compete. Winning is very important. Maybe more important than ever'.¹¹²

Watergate had followed a decade of domestic turbulence that revolved around protests against the Vietnam War and social injustice. This was a time when mainstream political and ideological values were increasingly challenged by a vocal minority. Political radicalism, in turn, carried over into sport in what was termed the Athletic Revolution. For a growing segment of Americans, the Lombardian ethic represented what was wrong with sport.¹¹³ By the late 1960s, educators, social scientists and popular writers began to openly criticize Lombardi.¹¹⁴ An alternative ethic arose among the emerging counterculture to promote sport's experiential and egalitarian values, sportsmanship and a balance between competition and cooperation.¹¹⁵ The more radical voices of the counterculture argued for the elimination of competitive games. Counterculture guru George Leonard titled a 1973 article 'Winning isn't everything. It's nothing'.¹¹⁶ As Oriard notes 'In 20th century football we read cultural conflict and contradictions, not consensus'.¹¹⁷

The search for the source of the quote on winning carried back to the beginning of the twentieth century. The debate over the importance of winning has endured through the close of the century. In a 1998 article, sport sociologist George Sage asks the question, 'Just what is the ethos of youth and school programs?' His answer: 'There is often an emphasis on "anything goes" in the pursuit of winning. There are all kinds of slogans in the sport culture which exalt winning' He lists first among them, 'Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing'. He concludes by pointing out the detrimental impact this ethic has on the character development of young athletes.¹¹⁸ Many Americans disagree with him.

Sage understood that sport functions as a language system as well as a system of physical expression. Sport historian Mark Dyreson notes that:

The language of sport provides cultures with opportunities to communicate about a wide variety of issues. Sport gives powerful groups with symbols a way to engineer social

consensus. It also arms less powerful groups with symbol systems to threaten the establishment. Sport can communicate important traditions and ideas, influence public opinion, and shape politics.¹¹⁹

American rhetoric about the importance of winning reflects the legacy of Red Sanders. The famous quote on winning transcended its original context as a witty comment on cynical times to become the rallying cry for the adherents of unrestrained competition, while Sanders has drifted into relative obscurity (notwithstanding his recent admission into the Football Hall of Fame). The memory of Vincent Lombardi is probably more secure, as it was Lombardi who personified the competitive ethic and determined its influence upon late twentieth-century America.

While researching and writing this article, I had ample opportunity to reflect on the import of the sentiment that 'winning is the only thing'. I noted the object lesson of UCLA's suspension for payrolling football players followed by Red Sanders' imminent death: a coach who, in the final analysis, may have taken his own words too seriously. I was equally impressed with Vince Lombardi's late regrets that his slogan on winning was being used to 'crush human values and morality'. A mature Lombardi seemed to take less seriously his unequivocal statement on winning. Of all the versions of the quote which Lombardi offered, he came closest to getting it right when he said, 'Winning is not everything – but making the effort to win is'. This is the true competitive ethic. However, we shall have to swim against the tide of oral history to rescue this important distinction.

NOTES:

1. See Ralph Keyes, *'Nice Guys Finish Seventh': False Phrases, Spurious Sayings, and Familiar Quotations* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).
2. *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 567.
3. James Michener, *Sports in America* (New York: Random House, 1976), 12.
4. Charles Montalembert, *De l'Avenir Politique de l'Angleterre* (Paris, 1856). Also see Paul Boller, Jr. and John George, *They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Quotes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 130 for a discussion of the mis-attribution.
5. S. W. Pope, *Patriotic Games: Sporting Traditions in the American Imagination, 1876-1926* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 3.

6. Lee Green, *Sportswit* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), xiv.
7. Larry Adler, *Football Coach Quotes: The Wit, Wisdom and Winning Words of Leaders on the Gridiron* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co.), 1992.
8. Letter, Fred Russell to Steve Overman, 23 March 1995; Letter, Paul Zimmerman to Steve Overman, 23 October 1995; Roger Kahn, 'Aboard the *Lusitania* in Tampa Bay', *Time*, 1976, cited in John Thorne, ed., *The Armchair Quarterback* (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1982), 130; Mickey Herskowitz, *The Legend of Bear Bryant* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1987), 70-1; Thomas Tutko and William Bruns, *Winning is Everything and Other American Myths* (New York: Macmillan, 1976), 6; Green, *Sportswit*, 57; Keyes, 'Nice Guys Finish Seventh', 154.
9. John McCallum, *Big Ten Football Since 1895* (Radnor, PA: Chilton Book Co., 1976); Robin Lester, *Stagg's University: The Rise, Decline, and Fall of Big-time Football at Chicago* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1995).
10. Letter, Russell to Overman. Note: the *Banner* ceased publication in 1998, ending Russell's long career as a sports columnist.
11. McCallum, *Big Ten Football Since 1895*; John Behee, *Fielding Yost's Legacy to the University of Michigan* (Ann Arbor, MI: Ulrich's Books, 1971), 27; Fred Russell, *Fifty Years of Vanderbilt Football* (Nashville, TN: Maxwell E. Benson, 1938), 20; Edwim Pope, *Football's Greatest Coaches* (Atlanta: Tupper & Love, 1956), 214; Will Penny, *The Wolverines: A Story of Michigan Football* (Huntsville, AL: The Strode Publishers, 1974), 72; Fred Russell, telephone interview by Steve Overman, 14 September 1994. McGugin and Yost married sisters and remained life-long friends.
12. Fielding H. Yost, *Football for Player and Spectator* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Publishing Co., 1905); Behee, *Fielding Yost's Legacy to the University of Michigan*; Letter, John Behee to Steve Overman, 13 June 1995; Penny, *The Wolverines: A Story of Michigan Football*; McCallum, *Big Ten Football Since 1895*; Adler, *Football Coach Quotes*, 189-190.
13. See Yost, *Football for Player and Spectator*, 270-71; Grantland Rice, *The Tumult and the Shouting: My Life in Sport* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1954), 192-4.
14. Letter, Zimmerman to Overman
15. Lon Eubanks, *The Fighting Illini* (Huntsville, AL: Strode Publishers, 1976) also Harold E. Grange, *Zuppke of Illinois* (Chicago: A.L. Glaser, 1937); see also John MacAloon, 'Olympic Games and the Theory of Spectacle in Modern Societies', in John MacAloon, ed., *Rite, Drama, Festival, Spectacle* (Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1984), 262 for a description of the tenor of sports in the 1920s and 1930s.
16. Eubanks, *The Fighting Illini*, 14, 124-25, 143.

17. Fred Russell, *I'll Go Quietly* (Nashville, TN: McQuiddy Press, 1944), 17; Fred Russell, 'Sideline Sidelights', *The Nashville Banner*, 19 November 1941.
18. Tim Cohane, *Great College Football Coaches of the Twenties and Thirties* (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1973), 251; Adler, *Football Coach Quotes*, 191-4.
19. Fred Russell, 'Sideline Sidelights', *The Nashville Banner*, 16 October 1940; Russell, *I'll Go Quietly*, p. 17; Grange, *Zuppke of Illinois*, x, 47.
20. Herskowitz, *The Legend of Bear Bryant*, 70-1; See also Henry E. Mattox, *Army Football in 1945: Anatomy of a Championship Season* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 1990).
21. Paul Zimmerman, *A Thinking Man's Guide to Pro Football* (New York: Dutton, 1970), 201. While at West Point, Lombardi occasionally had long talks with MacArthur following the General's return to the States.
22. Earl Blaik and Tim Cohane, *You Have to Pay the Price* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1960).
23. Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 82.
24. Clayton D. James, *The Years of MacArthur: Triumph and Disaster, 1945-1964* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), 364; Stanley Woodward, 'The Pro Game isn't Football', in Jack Newcombe, ed., *The Fireside Book of Football* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1964) 333.
25. Alexander Weyand, *Football Immortals*. (New York: Macmillan, 1962), 242.
26. James, *The Years of MacArthur*, 587.
27. Blaik and Cohane, *You Have to Pay the Price*; Letter, Robert Blaik to Steve Overman, 1 February 1995: 'I know of no such quote by the General to Dad-his [MacArthur's] famous quote that I know was, "In war there is no substitute for victory"'.
 28. The telegram read: 'THE GREATEST OF ALL ARMY TEAMS [STOP] WE HAVE STOPPED THE WAR TO CELEBRATE YOUR MAGNIFICENT SUCCESS', cited in Blaik and Cohane, *You Have to Pay the Price*, 204.
29. Letter, Carol Koenig [Head Librarian, Special Collections Division at the U.S. Military Academy Library] to Steve Overman, 17 August 1995.
30. These words appear in the General's address to Congress on 19 April 1951; see Weyand, *Football Immortals*, for the reference to the speech; and in a telegram from MacArthur to Earl Blaik after an Army victory in 1952. That wire of 16 November reads: 'YOUR SPLENDID YOUNG TEAM FILLS MY OLD SOLDIERS HEART WITH PRIDE REMIND THEM ON NOVEMBER 29 [the date of the upcoming Navy game] THERE CAN BE NO SUBSTITUTE FOR VICTORY'. (Western Union Telegram, 16 November 1952). MacArthur repeats the quote in an address on behalf

- of the Association of Graduates, USMA, at the Founder's Day Dinner, 14 March 1953, V.E. Whan, *A Soldier Speaks: Public Papers and Speeches of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Praeger, 1965), 301-03; these words conclude a congratulatory telegram (dated 29 November 1958) to Blaik following a victory over Navy in the coach's final season at West Point (Western Union Telegram, 29 November 1958).
31. Reprinted in Thorne, *The Armchair Quarterback*, 130.
 32. Tutko and Bruns, *Winning is Everything and Other American Myths*, 4.
 33. Michael O'Brien, *Vince: A Personal Biography of Vince Lombardi* (New York: William Morrow, 1987), 197.
 34. *Trouble Along the Way*. 1953. Dir. Michael Curtiz. Warner Bros., Inc.; Keyes, *Nice Guys Finish Seventh*, 154 confirmed the quote in the dialogue transcript for the film (Reel 5-A, page 4) on file at Warner Brothers Studio.
 35. Melville Shavelson, *How to Make a Jewish Movie* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 19; Allen Eyler, *John Wayne and the Movies* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1976), 292.
 36. Keyes, *Nice Guys Finish Seventh*, 154; Letter, Jack Rose to Steve Overman, 2 November 1994; Letter, Tommy Prothro Jr. to Steve Overman, 28 October 1994; Russell, Telephone interview; Clark, 'What'd I Say?', 18. Sanders had once met John Wayne and shared an agent with Mel Shavelson.
 37. Dudley Green, 'Vanderbilt's Head Coach', *The Vanderbilt Alumnus*, 25 no 6 (1940): 8; Obituary, 'Henry Russell "Red" Sanders', *The Vanderbilt Alumnus*, 44 no 1 (1958): 15; *The Commodore* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University, 1948); Andrew Hamilton and John B. Jackson, *U.C.L.A. on the Move* (Los Angeles: The Ward Ritchie Press, 1969), 178.
 38. Pope, *Football's Greatest Coaches*, 214-15; Al Stump, 'The Ordeal of Red Sanders', in Irving Marsh and Edward Ehre, eds, *Best Sports Stories. 1957 Edition* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1957). 189; *The Vanderbilt Alumnus*, 44 no 1 (1958): 15. Red Sanders was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 1996.
 39. Stump, 'The Ordeal of Red Sanders', 189; Hamilton & Jackson, *U.C.L.A. on the Move*. 180.
 40. Fred Russell, 'Sideline Sidelights', *The Nashville Banner*, 9 October 1941, 14.
 41. Steve Springer, 'The Rivalry . . . UCLA Goes for Five in a Row', *Los Angeles Times*, 16 November 1995, D1.
 42. Joel Sayre, 'He Flies on One Wing', *Sports Illustrated*, 26 December. 1955, 48.

43. Sayre, 'He Flies on One Wing', 48; Hamilton and Jackson *U.C.L.A. on the Move*, 179; Hendrik Van Leuven, *Touchdown UCLA: The Complete Account of Bruin Football* (Los Angeles: Hendrik Van Leuven, 1982), 77.
44. Suzy Platt, ed., *Respectfully Quoted* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1989), 373.
45. Russell, Telephone interview.
46. Letter, Tommy Prothro Jr. to Steve Overman, 8 October 1994.
47. E. J. Curtis, telephone interview by Steve Overman, 20 October 1994.
48. Pope, *Patriotic Games*, 157.
49. Michael Oriard, *Sporting with the Gods: The Rhetoric of Play and Game in American Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 273.
50. Van Leuven, *Touchdown UCLA*, 77. Sanders included among his friends journalists Fred Russell, Grantland Rice, Jim Murray, Jack Murphy and Red Smith.
51. Fred Russell, 'They're All Rooting for "Red"', *Saturday Evening Post*, 11 November 1950, 223-34; Tim Cohane, 'Single-wing Sanders', *Look*, 17 November 1953, 104-06; 'Red's Way', *Newsweek*, 15 November 1954, 100-01; M. Durslag, 'Football Games Aren't Won on Saturday', *Colliers*, 30 September 1955, 74; Sayre, 'He Flies on One Wing', 48.
52. Herskowitz, *The Legend of Bear Bryant*, 46-7, 70-1; Paul W. Bryant and John Underwood, *Bear: The Hard Life and Great Times of Alabama's Coach Bryant* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1974), 336; Benny Marshall, *Winning Isn't Everything: But it Beats Anything that Comes in Second* (Nashville: Parthenon Press, 1965). Bryant, who was an assistant under Sanders at Vanderbilt, had a plaque on his wall proclaiming: 'Winning isn't everything, but it beats anything that comes in second'.
53. John R. Tunis, *The American Way of Sport* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1958), 95; Herskowitz, *The Legend of Bear Bryant*, 7, 47; Paul Attner, *The Terrapins: Maryland Football* (Huntsville, AL: The Strode Publishers, 1975), 158, 337-8. Tatum employed the variation, 'I don't think winning is the most important thing. I think it's the only thing'.
54. Tutko and Bruns, *Winning is Everything and Other American Myths*, 4; Kahn, 'Aboard the *Lusitania* in Tampa Bay', 130.
55. Letter, Michael O'Brien to Steve Overman, 1 October 1994; Letter, Vince Lombardi, Jr. to Steve Overman, 16 November 1994.
56. Letter, O'Brien to Overman; O'Brien, *Vince*, 197. These include Harry Kane, a high school coach in New York, Jim Crowley, coach at Fordham, Frank Leahy, coach at Boston College and Notre Dame, as well as Earl Blaik at West Point.

57. O'Brien, *Vince*, 197.
58. See Fred Russell, 'Sideline Sidelights', *The Nashville Banner*, 10 January 1949, 13; Fred Russell, 'Sideline Sidelights', *The Nashville Banner*, 15 January 1949.
59. Blaik & Cohane, *You Have to Pay the Price*, 1960, 262-3. Blaik confirms that Lombardi was present at these summer retreats. The list of films shown during the summer of 1953 could not be located among the existing records in the Academy Archives, according to U.S.M.A. Reference Specialist Alan C. Aimone, Letter, Alan C. Aimone to Steve Overman, 11 February 1998; Bob Rubin, *Green Bay's Packers: Return to Glory* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 84.
60. Zimmerman, *A Thinking Man's Guide to Pro Football*, 20.
61. 'Drillmaster', *Time*, 19 December 1960, 43; 'Vince Lombardi: The Packers Pay the Price'. *Look*, 24 October 1961, 102-6, 110; Marshall Smith, 'Miracle Maker of Green Bay, Wisconsin', *Life*, 7 December 1962, 49-52; H.W. Wind, 'Sporting Scene', *The New Yorker*, 8 December 1962, 20.
62. Smith, 'Miracle Maker of Green Bay, Wisconsin', 52. The quote also appears on the preface page of Jerry Kramer, *Lombardi: Winning is the Only Thing* (New York: World, 1970) and in Tom Dowling, *Coach: A Season with Lombardi* (New York Popular Library, 1970), 18.
63. See Adler, *Football Couch Quotes*, 100-09.
64. Jerry Kramer, *Instant Replay: The Green Bay Diary, of Jerry Kramer* (New York New American Library, 1968), 65; George Flynn, ed., *Vince Lombardi on Football* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1981), 14. Other quotes on winning include: 'Winning is not a sometime thing. It is an all-the-time thing'; 'There is no room for second place. There's only one place, and that's first place'; 'The zeal to be first in everything has always been American To win and to win and to win'.
65. Kahn, 'Aboard the *Lusitania* in Tampa Bay', 130.
66. Dowling, *Coach: A Season with Lombardi*, 18.
67. Michener, *Sports in America*, 519.
68. Zimmerman, *A Thinking Man's Guide to Pro Football*, 20.
69. See Kramer, *Instant Replay*.
70. Rubin, *Green Bay's Packers: Return to Glory*, 84.
71. See O'Brien, *Vince*, 377-83 for insights into the historical context of the quote.
72. Flynn, *Vince Lombardi on Football*, 14; Pat Harmon, Telephone interview by Steve Overman, 20 August 1996. See also O'Brien, *Vince*, 197. Lombardi occasionally

altered the second half of the quote on winning but continued to receive positive responses to the 'winning is the only thing' version of the quote through the mid 1960s, and this is the version he used repeatedly. Not until a few detractors began criticizing Lombardi (c. 1967) did he voice any regrets about the harshness of the 'winning is the only thing' quote (for example to sportswriter Jerry Izenberg and to Pat Harmon).

73. O'Brien, *Vince*, 197.
74. Robert Riger, 'Pro Football's Bright New Breed', *Esquire*, 58 (November 1962): 118-23.
75. Tom Landry, 'Vince Lombardi in the football-rich fifties . . . winning truly wasn't everything', *Sport 77* no. 12 (December 1986): 25.
76. See *The Reader's Digest Treasury of Modern Quotations* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1975), 561; Jonathan Green, *Morrow's International Dictionary of Contemporary Quotations* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1982); John Bartlett, *Familiar Quotations*, 15th edition (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1982), 925. *The Macmillan Dictionary of Quotations* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 590; Adler, *Football Coach Quotes*, 100-09.
77. CMG Worldwide and V. Lombardi, Jr. (1996) *Official Site of Vince Lombardi*. Available: <<http://www.cmqww.com:80/...1/lombardi/lombardi.html>>, (13 February 1997).
78. Green, *Sportswit*, 252. Green's comments here appear inconsistent with his inclusion of the 'winning is the only thing' version of the quote on page 57 of his book.
79. George Gendron, 'Quote of the Month', *Inc*, 15 (Dec. 1993): 11.
80. Cited in Michener, *Sports in America*, 432; Also see Clark, 'What'd I say?', 18.
81. See O'Brien, *Vince*, 298-9.
82. The 'win at any cost' mentality in college football was being criticized as early as 1909. See Lester, *Stagg's University*, 96; in 1925, Grantland Rice commented, 'The main idea back of sport should be recreation. Victory isn't the entire destiny'. Grantland Rice, 'The Sporting Thing', *Collier's*, 29 August 1925, 12.
83. Stump, 'The Ordeal of Red Sanders', 188; Thomas Bank, 'Missing Memories; '54 Bruins Might Have Been Best Ever, But They Didn't Reach the Rose Bowl', *Los Angeles Times*, 14 November 1994, C1; Sayre, 'He Flies on One Wing', 48; Van Leuven, *Touchdown UCLA*, 81-90.
84. Fred Russell, *Bury Me in an Old Press Box: Good Times and Life of a Sportswriter* (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1957), 72.
85. Sayre, 'He Flies on One Wing', 48.

86. See Russell, *Bury Me in an Old Press Box*, 75. Sanders had a running feud with *Los Angeles Examiner* writer Harvey Knox, of whom he once quipped, 'I hope he goes to heaven. Only thing is, I don't think he'll like God'.
87. Russell, *Bury Me in an Old Press Box*, 72-5.
88. Cohane, *Great College Football Coaches of the Twenties and Thirties*, 187.
89. See Adler, *Football Coach Quotes*, 156-7 for other witticisms by Sanders,
90. Hamilton and Jackson, *U.C.L.A. on the Move*, 179.
91. Blaik, *You Have to Pay the Price*; O'Brien, *Vince*, 91-3.
92. Landry, 'Vince Lombardi in the Football-rich Fifties', 25; see also O'Brien, *Vince*, 296-9.
93. Kramer, *Lombardi: Winning is the Only Thing*, preface.
94. Randy Roberts and James Olson, *Winning is the Only Thing: Sports in America Since 1945* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), xi-xii.
95. Jack Scott, 'Sport and the Radical Ethic', *Quest*, 19 (1973): 71-7.
96. 'Proud Fathers, Proud Sons', *Time*, 14 September 1970, 61; Scott, 'Sport and the Radical Ethic', 71; Michener, *Sports in America*, 519; Desmond Lawless, 'Sport, Power, and Politics: A Look at Sport in Society Yesterday and Today', *Heidelberg College Faculty Journal*, 9 no. 2 (Spring, 1992): 3.
97. Harry Edwards, *Sociology of Sport* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1973).
98. See Eldon Snyder, 'Athletic Dressing Room Slogans as Folklore: A Means of Socialization', *International Review of Sport Sociology*, 7 (1972): 89-102; One high school basketball coach in Pennsylvania escalated the context of the slogan by noting, 'Winning isn't all that matters. I don't care how many games you win, it's how many championships you win that counts'. Cited in Michener, *Sports in America*, 521.
99. Waldo W. Braden, *The Oral Tradition in the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1983), 106-8.
100. Israel Scheffler, *The Language of Education* (Springfield, Illinois: Chas. Thomas Publisher, 1974), 36; Laurance Urdang and Celia D. Robbins, *Slogans*, 1st ed. (Detroit: Gale Research, 1984), 17-18.
101. Scheffler, *The Language of Education*, 41.
102. Scheffler, *The Language of Education*, 36.
103. Pope, *Patriotic Games*, 8.

104. Pope, *Patriotic Games*, 158.
105. See Robert Ringer, *Looking Out for #1* (New York: Faucett, 1978) and *Winning Through Intimidation* (New York: Faucett, 1979). Ringer provides an extraordinary theology for a cynical post-Vietnam, post-Watergate era.
106. CMG and Lombardi, *Official Site of Vince Lombardi*. Lombardi was not the first American coach to blend football and business. In a May, 1928, article in *Nations Business*, entitled 'Knute Rockne Talks Teamwork', the Notre Dame coach discusses commerce not football. See Oriard, *Sporting with the Gods*, 340.
107. Bob Sales, 'The Lombardi Pitch', in Irving Marsh and Edward Ehre, eds., *Best Sports Stories. 1969 Edition* (New York: Dutton, 1969), 146-7; The noted scene from the film is included in Home Box Office Network, *American Coaches: Men of Vision and Victory*, November 1994.
108. Lee Iacocca, 'The Lesson I Learned from Vince Lombardi', (1971), reprinted in M. Olderman, *Sport*, 82 (October 1991): 58. Iacocca was then President of Ford.
109. See Michael Lewis, 'Campaign Journal: The Quarterback', *The New Republic*, 14 October 1996, 14-17 for a post-Lombardian analysis. Lewis argues that business people make a 'leap of faith' in football, as they need sports metaphors to 'keep the faith' in business. The heroic game-playing entrepreneur was a major symbol of the Reagan Revolution of the 1980s. See Oriard, *Sporting with the Gods*, 286.
110. Edwards, *Sociology of Sport*, 96-7.
111. Harold B. Meyers, 'That Profitable Nonprofit in Green Bay', in Marsh and Ehre, eds., *Best Sports Stories. 1969 Edition* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1969), 136; O'Brien, *Vince*, 314-16, 377-8.
112. Gerald Ford and John Underwood, 'In Defense of the Competitive Urge', *Sports Illustrated*, 8 July 1974, 16.
113. O'Brien, *Vince*, 378-9.
114. Scott, 'Sport and the Radical Ethic'; Edwards, *Sociology of Sport*; Robert Lipsyte, *Sportsworld: An American Dreamland* (New York: New York Times Book Co., 1975).
115. See Scott, 'Sport and the Radical Ethic'.
116. George B. Leonard, 'Winning isn't Everything. It's Nothing', *Intellectual Digest* (October 1973): 45-7.
117. Michael Oriard, *Reading Football: How the Popular Press Created an American Spectacle* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 279.

118. George Sage, 'Does Sport Affect Character Development in Athletes?' *The Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance* 68 (January, 1998): 15-18.
119. Mark Dyreson, *Making the American Team: Sport, Culture and the Olympic Experience* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 4.