

Randy Roberts and David Welky., eds. *One for the Thumb: The New Steelers Reader*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006. Pp. xi, 366. Paper, \$19.95.)

One for the Thumb: The New Steelers Reader, edited by Randy Roberts and David Welky, is a revised version of *The Steelers Reader*, originally published in 2002. Published in response to the Steelers' Super Bowl XL victory—the franchise's fifth, hence "one for the thumb"—this book is a compilation of newspaper and magazine articles, book chapters, and internet postings on the history of Pittsburgh's National Football League team from the Pittsburgh Pirates of the 1930s, the Steelers (and Steagles and Card-Pitts) of the 1940s through the 2005 season.

With this volume, Roberts and Welky "attempt to give the feel of the Steelers, how the team frustrated, enraged, amused, thrilled, and otherwise moved its fans" (p. 14). All of the selections in this volume succeed in accomplishing the editors' goal. Roberts and Welky divide the selections into six sections: "From Pirates to Steagles," which covers the era from the franchise's origin in 1933 through World War II; "Pre-Renaissance Steelers," from the postwar era to the arrival of Chuck Noll as head coach in 1969; "Reasons for Hope," the pre-dynasty years; "Dynasty," the Super Bowl teams of the 1970s; "Transitions," the era from Art Rooney's death in 1988 through the last game at Three Rivers Stadium in 2000; and "One for the Thumb," which focuses on the opening of Heinz Field and key players of the 2006 Super Bowl champions. In each of these sections, Roberts and Welky include newspaper and magazine articles, along with book excerpts, that provide contemporary accounts of key games or portrayals of prominent Steelers.

In the Introduction, Roberts and Welky include a brief overview of the team's history to provide a context for readers not familiar with the history of football in the Steel City. The book focuses upon not just major events, such as playoff and Super Bowl victories, but also the people and personalities of Pittsburgh's National Football League franchise. Team owner and founder Art Rooney receives special attention (in fact, Roberts and Welky dedicate the book to Rooney), with Myron Cope's interview of "The Chief" from *The Game That Was: The Early Days of Pro Football*, John Lardner's portrayal of the owner in *Newsweek* in 1939, *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph* and *Pittsburgh Press* articles on Rooney's sale of the team in 1940, Bob Broeg's

article in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in 1969, and the *Pittsburgh Press* editorial following Rooney's death included among the selections.

Perhaps more enlightening are the accounts and reminiscences of former players, including linebacker Dale Dodrill, lineman Ernie Stautner, kicker Frank Lambert, running back Rocky Bleier, linebacker Andy Russell, quarterback Terry Bradshaw, guard Steve Courson, and quarterback Neil O'Donnell. The players' recollections include comments on Pittsburgh fans, their teammates, and Super Bowl experiences. Some of the reflections are entertaining, such as Dodrill's recollections of training camp in the 1950s, Stautner's characterization of Pittsburgh as a "lousy" sports town, and Rocky Bleier's and Terry Bradshaw's first impressions upon arriving in the Steel City. Others are more sobering, such as Steve Courson's accounts of alcohol and steroid abuse. Occasionally the players reflect on their teammates, including Andy Russell and Terry Bradshaw on the impact "Mean" Joe Greene had on the team's success during the 1970s. *One for the Thumb* also provides a balanced account of seminal events in Steelers' history, most notably Terry Bradshaw's recollection of the "Immaculate Reception" and the article from the *Oakland Tribune* in which Raiders coach John Madden questioned the legality of Franco Harris's catch.

In addition, Steelers from several eras merit biographical portrayals in the volume, either as obituaries or accounts of their contributions to the team's success or failure. Among the noteworthy Steelers discussed are player/coach Johnny Blood (McNally), quarterback Bobby Layne, running back Franco Harris, wide receiver Lynn Swann, and Kordell "Slash" Stewart. Swann, in fact, receives two sketches, one a ranking of his stature among wide receivers from safety Jack Tatum and the other a tribute from Frank Deford.

The last section, which focuses upon the Super Bowl XL team, provides a satisfactory conclusion to the new edition. Selections range from an excerpt from the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* on the opening of Heinz Field in 2001 to the team's acquisition of quarterback Ben Roethlisberger in the 2004 draft, portrayals of safety Troy Polamalu and wide receiver Hines Ward, the Steelers' victory in Super Bowl XL, and Jerome "The Bus" Bettis's retirement following the game.

Overall, *One for the Thumb: The New Steelers Reader* provides an entertaining and enlightening venture into Steelers history from 1933 to 2006. Roberts and Welky have chosen wisely in their entries, with no obvious omissions.

BOOK REVIEWS

The editors clearly identify the origin of each article and provide background information on the author and context of the selection. This book is definitely a must read for anyone interested in Pittsburgh history or sports history.

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