



A War in Dixie: Alabama Vs. Auburn

Ivan Maisel, Kelly Whiteside

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Each year, on a Saturday in November, emotions run high as the entire state of Alabama comes to a halt. Stores close. Bars open. Families, friends, and couples who on any other day of the year are civil to one another become enemies. Young men strap on their equipment to partake in the annual frenzy that they will not experience again in their lives, whether or not they go on to play professionally. And a victory gives them and their fans bragging rights for a year. Short of a national championship, to win the state's own Super Bowl -- ultimately dubbed the Iron Bowl -- may well be their greatest accomplishment. Above all, the very future of the football programs themselves hinge on which team wins. With remarkable access to both schools, *A War in Dixie* reveals the passions and the pressures that have made the Alabama Crimson Tide-Auburn Tigers rivalry the most feverish in the nation. Both head coaches -- Tom Tuberville and Mike DuBose, in his last game at Alabama's helm -- open their doors to meetings, practices, film study, team meals, and every other activity as they prepare for the Iron Bowl. From the coaches' first meeting at seven A.M. to lights out, hour by hour, day by day, we see what the athletes and staffs endure in order to win.

Looming over the proceedings are the long shadows of history: Paul "Bear" Bryant, whose Crimson Tide dominated the Tigers during his reign by winning nineteen of twenty-five contests, and Ralph "Shug" Jordan, who went head to head against the Bear for almost his entire career. And then there are the games: Ken Stabler's 47-yard touchdown run through mud in a driving rainstorm for a 7-3 victory, Van Tiffin's 52-yard field goal as time expired, and David Langner's two blocked punt returns for touchdowns that led to Auburn's shocking upset in what became known as the "Punt, Bama, Punt" game.

Featuring a foreword by Ken Stabler, a former Crimson Tide All-American, *A War in Dixie* is hard-hitting proof of a hit of local wisdom: This isn't life or death, it's more important: it's Alabama-Auburn football!

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