



Three-Week Professionals: Inside the 1987 NFL Players' Strike

Ted Kluck

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In 1987 the players of the National Football League went on strike, demanding better pay and the right to seek free agency. Determined to keep the league going, team owners pulled replacements from wherever they could be found, from the semi-pro leagues to bar stools, in order to create makeshift teams. For three weeks, “regular” men—truck drivers, school teachers, stockbrokers—were able to put on NFL helmets and jerseys, play in professional stadiums, and live their dreams. The replacements had to dodge thrown food and endure catcalls while they played in nearly empty stadiums, but for three weeks they could call themselves professional football players.

Ultimately, the replacements' days as professional athletes were all but forgotten by fans and the league. Ted Kluck changes that in *Three-Week Professionals: Inside the 1987 NFL Players' Strike*, sharing the stories of the replacements alongside the strike experiences of NFL veterans. The innocence and joy experienced by the replacements stand in stark contrast to the high-stakes negotiations being waged by striking NFL players, negotiations that would spike the pay scale and change the face of the NFL.

Three-Week Professionals includes original interviews with both the replacement players and the professionals who went on strike, bringing to life these brief but unusual days of football. Football fans and sports historians alike will find this book a fascinating glimpse into three of the strangest weeks in the NFL—and come to realize the impact those weeks had on the world's most lucrative sports league.

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