

George Allen
A Football Life
Mike Richman
Foreword by Dick Vermeil

“Every chapter reveals intriguing, motivational stories about the spirit of the innovative maverick George Allen. Mike Richman provides fresh, inspirational perspectives giving readers meaningful life lessons and understanding why for indefatigably driven George Allen—the future is always now!”—George Felix Allen, son of coach George Allen and former governor of Virginia and U.S. senator

“In his exhaustive biography, Mike Richman captures the life of the ultimate Cold War coach from football’s golden age, George Allen. This is the story of a man both consumed and capable, a big winner who could only be defeated by his own flaws.”—Jack Gilden, author of Collision of Wills: Johnny Unitas, Don Shula and the Rise of the Modern NFL

“We set out to do a thirty-minute documentary on George Allen. We realized thirty minutes wasn’t enough, so we expanded it to an hour. But you need a book to tell Allen’s story. Mike Richman has written a great one.”—Ray Didinger, senior producer, NFL Films

George Allen was a fascinating and eccentric figure in the world of football coaching. His remarkable career spanned six decades, from the late 1940s until his sudden death in 1991 at the age of seventy-three. Although he never saw a Super Bowl win, he never had a losing season as a head coach and was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2002.

In George Allen: A Football Life, Mike Richman captures the life and accomplishments of one of the most successful NFL coaches of all time and one of the greatest innovators of the game. A player’s coach, Allen was a tremendous motivator and game strategist, as well as a defensive mastermind, and is credited with making special teams a critical focus in an era in which they were an afterthought. He had a keen eye for talent and pulled off masterful trades, often for veteran players who were viewed to be past their prime, who then had great seasons and made his teams much better.

In addition to his coaching feats, Allen was an idiosyncratic and controversial personality. His life revolved around football 24-7. One of his quirks was to minimize chewing time by consuming soft foods, giving himself more time to prepare for games and study opponents. He lived and breathed football; he compared losing to death. Allen had contentious relationships with the owners of the two NFL teams for which he was the head coach, the Washington Redskins and Los Angeles Rams. Richman explores why he was fired by those teams and whether he was blackballed from coaching again in the NFL.

Based on detailed research and interviews with family, former players, and coaches, George Allen is the definitive biography of the football coach who lived to win, loved a good challenge, and left a lasting legacy on pro football history.

Mike Richman is an author and journalist who has covered sports for more than twenty-five years. He is the author of Washington Redskins Football Vault: The History of a Proud Franchise; The Redskins Encyclopedia; and Joe Gibbs: An Enduring Legacy. **Dick Vermeil** was an NFL head coach for three teams across fifteen seasons and led the Rams to their first Super Bowl win. He was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 2022.