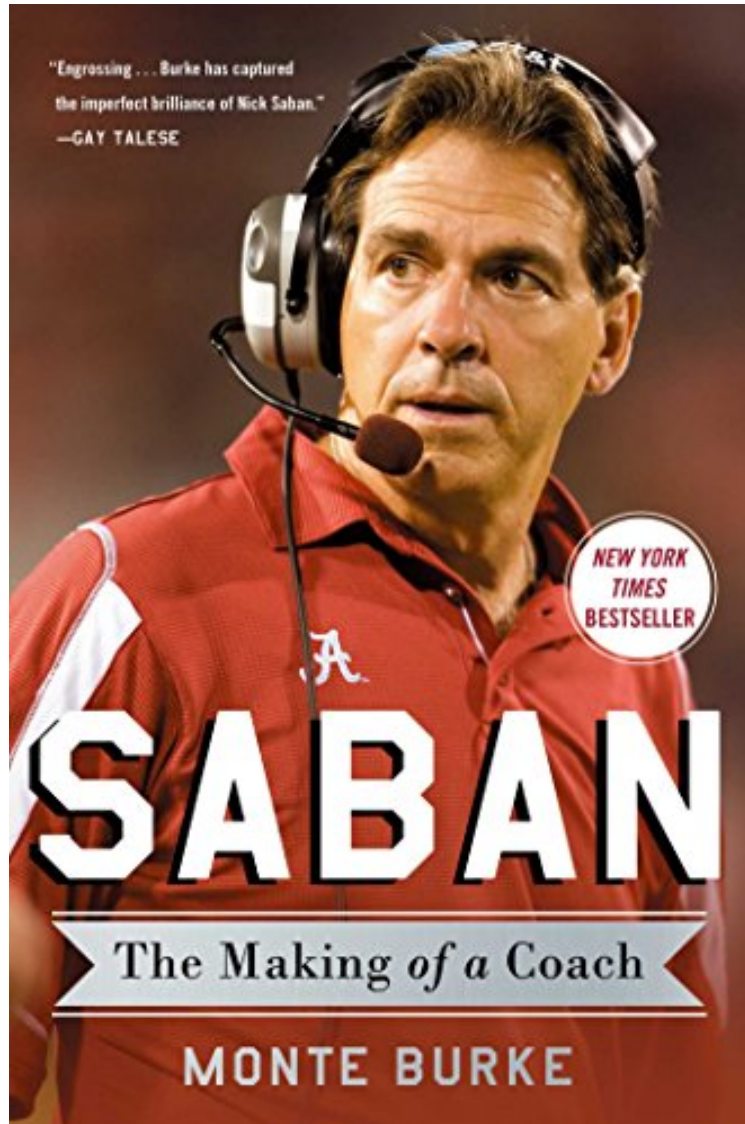


[Free and download] Saban: The Making of a Coach

Saban: The Making of a Coach

Monte Burke

**Download PDF / ePub / DOC / audiobook / ebooks*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#109283 in Books Monte Burke 2015-08-04 2015-08-04 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.00 x 1.30 x 6.00l, .0 #File Name: 1476789932352 pages Saban The Making of a Coach | File size: 24.Mb

Monte Burke : Saban: The Making of a Coach before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Saban: The Making of a Coach:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I would recommend it to a Bama fan not so much to ...By James M. RockwellIt was a quick read giving biographical insights into his personality and coaching style. Got to be a little redundant because they guy hasn't changed over the years. Interesting reading about the background regarding his job changes. I would recommend it to a Bama fan not so much to his prior coaching stops. They probably aren't interested nor could they care about the guy after he left.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Very good bookBy J.

Marshall There are a lot of facts in this book. It really includes a lot details of Saban's career, and discusses some of the issues that have impacted his decision making. This is a very well researched book and if you are at all interested in Saban, you should include this in your list to read. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. You see the man who was willing to change jobs ...By Walter Harrison You see the man who was willing to change jobs countless times to get to the top. His connections to so many other noteworthy coaches (James, Belichick, Carroll, Bruce) was also interesting. Will Alabama be his last stop? You would think so but.....

Instant New York Times Bestseller “Insider, detailed, and absorbing. Come for the chapter titled ‘Why Can’t He Be Happy’ and stay for the one called ‘Miami Vice.’” —Sports Illustrated A defining biography of Nick Saban, the influential and polarizing University of Alabama football coach who not only transformed the college game but might also be the best ever at winning. As the head coach of the University of Alabama’s football team, Nick Saban is perhaps the most enigmatic man in the sport. Unpredictable in his professional loyalties, uncompromising in his vision, and unyielding in his pursuit of perfection, the highest-paid coach in college football has changed the face of the game. His program-building skills have delivered packed stadiums, rabid fans, hundreds of millions of dollars, legions of detractors, countless NFL draft picks, and a total of four national championships, including three in the last six years. Monte Burke’s Saban—the first major biography of the man who has come to epitomize the game—presents this towering figure with a never-before-seen human depth. Though a great deal is known about Saban the coach, not much is known about Saban the man. Little has been written about his early climb through the coaching ranks as an assistant in college and in the NFL, or his head-coaching stints at Michigan State and Louisiana State and his struggles as a pro coach with the Miami Dolphins. Through unprecedented interviews with more than 250 friends, coworkers, rivals, former players, and others, Burke reveals the defining moments of the coach’s life. Saban paints a portrait of a complex and compelling man, fundamentally shaped by both his past and the game he loves, in a way that no previous book has.

“Insider, detailed, and absorbing. Come for the chapter titled ‘Why Can’t He Be Happy’ and stay for the one called ‘Miami Vice.’” —Sports Illustrated “Saban isn’t an authorized biography, but Burke’s array of sources—friends, colleagues, rivals, former players—makes it feel definitive.” —New York Times Book “In this well-reported, engrossing tale, Monte Burke has captured the imperfect brilliance of Nick Saban. Read it, and you will emerge with a deeper understanding of the man, his zeal, his achievement, and the costs that have come with it all.” —Gay Talese “An eye-opening book. Monte Burke has finally taken us behind the great big curtain and, for the first time, shown us who Nick Saban really is and what makes him tick. I couldn’t put this book down. For all college football fans, this is a must-read.” —Paul Finebaum, ESPN college football analyst “Monte Burke has written the most comprehensive portrait yet of football’s most enigmatic coach. Saban is as close as the average fan will ever get to watching film or riding in a golf cart with the man himself.” —Warren St. John, author of Rammer Jammer Yellow Hammer “If you are a fan of college football—or sports in general—you must read this book. Monte Burke does a deep dive into the life and career of Nick Saban and surfaces with an honest and compelling portrait of one of the most complex, driven and successful coaches on the planet.” —Winston Groom, author of Forrest Gump and The Crimson Tide: The Official Illustrated History of Alabama Football “Smart and passionate, Saban combines the ardor of a fan with the eye of a journalist. Monte Burke has his finger on the pulse of the number one coach and the number one program in college football.” —Allen Barra, author of The Last Coach: A Life of Paul “Bear” Bryant “A comprehensive biography . . . Through interviews with more than 250 people in Saban’s inner circle, including players, athletic directors, even golf buddies, Burke reveals the underpinnings of Saban’s success—from his perfectionist father to his obsession with strategy to his West Virginia coal-mining hometown.” —Garden Gun “A no-holds-barred glimpse into the quest for perfection that has driven Saban to win four national titles in his nineteen years as a college head coach. . . . Burke has written a winning, definitive portrait of a fascinating character.” —Publishers Weekly “Burke takes readers into locker rooms, onto the field, and into recruits’ living rooms, as friends, foes, and colleagues shed light on the life of one of today’s most successful college football coaches. . . . Burke wisely focuses on the man rather than the play-by-play, and the result is a genuinely insightful look at a fierce competitor who nevertheless seems to care for his players both on and off the field.” —Booklist About the Author Monte Burke is a staff writer at Forbes magazine and has also written for The New York Times, Outside, Men’s Journal, Town Country, and Garden Gun, among many other publications. He is the author of the books Saban: The Making of a Coach, 4th and Goal, and Sowbelly, and is a recipient of Barnes Noble’s “Discover Great New Writers” award. He grew up in New Hampshire, Vermont, North Carolina, and Alabama and now lives in Brooklyn with his wife and three daughters. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Saban INTRODUCTION On the first morning of 2007, as sleet fell from a dull sky, Mal Moore, the athletic director at the University of Alabama, hustled onto the tarmac at Tuscaloosa Regional Airport. With one last glance over his shoulder, he ducked his head and boarded an airplane bound for South Florida. The plane was not owned by the university—it had been loaned to him by an Alabama booster and Huntsville defense contractor named Farid Rafiee. Moore was going to great lengths to keep this

trip a secret. A little more than a month earlier he had fired Mike Shula, the son of a coaching legend, and the University of Alabama's fourth football coach in seven very mediocre years. Thanks to flight trackers on the Internet, Moore's every move had been followed ever since as he searched—in vain, to that point—for a new head coach. This trip had to remain clandestine. Moore was after the biggest prize in the game. A man named Nick Saban. News of a meeting with him would cause, as Moore put it, “quite a ruckus.” The main reason for that: Saban, who was then the head coach of the National Football League's Miami Dolphins, had publicly denied any interest in the Alabama job, over and over and over. Moore was flying somewhat blind. He did not have an appointment set up with Saban. The Dolphins coach had refused to take his calls. Mal Moore had a down-home manner about him. He mumbled a bit when he talked, and had the lumbering body of an ex-football player. He'd been the backup quarterback on Alabama's national championship team in 1961 under Paul “Bear” Bryant, one of the most successful coaches in the history of football and a man who had attained divine status within the state long before his death in 1983. Moore had parlayed that brush with Bryant's robe into his current job, one that he now was in jeopardy of losing. Moore became Alabama's athletic director in 1999. The first football coach during his tenure was Mike DuBose, who was also a former Alabama player. During his time at Alabama, DuBose posted a 24-23 record, was accused of sexually harassing a secretary, and his program underwent a recruiting scandal that led to crippling NCAA sanctions. DuBose's successor, hired by Moore, was a promising coach named Dennis Franchione. He led the Crimson Tide to two consecutive winning seasons but bolted with a ten-year, \$15 million contract on the table because he felt hamstrung by the NCAA sanctions. Moore replaced him with a man named Mike Price, who was fired before even coaching a single game because of a rowdy trip to a strip club, after which he may or may not have spent the night with a stripper named Destiny. Then came Shula, who had the right pedigree—he'd been an Alabama quarterback and had that football-famous last name. But Shula never came close to living up to his father, Don's, legacy, and he appeared overwhelmed as the head coach, running the football program in a sloppy manner. In those seven years, the Alabama football team—winner of twelve national titles at the time and, formerly, a perennial contender for said titles, and the source of much pride and meaning in the football-mad state—had spiraled downward into, at best, irrelevancy on the national stage. At worst, it had become college football's horror show. For years, Moore had relied on Alabama's name and past glory to acquire head coaches. After firing Shula, though, he found himself in a bind. The shine had worn off. Suddenly, the Alabama job was one that no coach of any real stature seemed to want to touch. Moore had been turned down by Steve Spurrier, the cheeky head coach at South Carolina, a football program that didn't come close to Alabama in terms of pedigree. Moore had offered the job to Rich Rodriguez, a young, up-and-coming coach at West Virginia, and believed that he had accepted it. As Moore was working out the final details of the contract, he was blindsided by Rodriguez, who suddenly changed his mind and announced that he was staying at West Virginia. In the end, Moore appeared to have been merely played by the West Virginia coach for a raise and an extension. The bungled coach search had earned Moore a new nickname within Alabama football circles. They called him “Malfunction Moore.” Now Moore was attempting to woo the fifty-five-year-old Saban, who had been a master as a college head coach, reviving three different programs and winning the 2003 national title at his last stop on that level, with Louisiana State University. Saban had left the college game after the 2004 season to take his first head-coaching job in the NFL. In two seasons with the Dolphins, he'd posted a less-than-mediocre 15-17 record. But his reputation as a college coach still burned brightly, and his name came up anytime a major college program needed a new head coach. Saban, though, appeared to be staying put. The Miami media horde had persistently asked him about the coaching vacancy at Alabama. Saban had begun to get testy. At a press conference just ten days before Moore arrived in Miami, he'd declared, rather definitively: “I guess I have to say it. I'm not going to be the Alabama coach.” At this point, Moore had no other viable options left. His trip to South Florida was all-or-nothing. He knew that his job was on the line. “I told the pilots when they dropped me off in Miami that if I didn't come back to this plane with Nick Saban, they should go on and take me to Cuba,” he said. Moore, however, had reason to feel a sliver of optimism. By coincidence his nephew, Chuck Moore, a home builder, had remodeled Saban's lake house in Georgia during Saban's years at LSU. Saban, of course, knew who Chuck's uncle was. During the last few weeks of the 2006 Dolphins season, despite his public denials, Saban had called Chuck a few times to tell him that he was possibly interested in the Alabama job, knowing full well whom Chuck would call the minute they hung up the phone. Moore had also been in contact with Saban's agent, Jimmy Sexton. Six days after Shula was dismissed, Moore and Sexton had secretly met in New York during the National Football Foundation awards dinner. Sexton had told Moore then that if Saban were to leave the NFL, Alabama would be at the top of his list. Though Saban continued to rebuff Moore, the Alabama athletic director knew that at the very least, the coach's interest was piqued. What Moore didn't know at the time was that a far more important ally was waiting for him in Miami. On the evening of January 1, 2007—after trying, in vain, to reach Saban all day while hunkered down in a hotel room—Moore finally made contact. During a brief phone conversation, Saban made it very clear that he wanted to talk to Wayne Huizenga, the Dolphins' billionaire owner, before he did anything else. He ended the call with a promise to contact Moore the following day around lunchtime. The next day, Moore waited. The call never came. Moore contacted two of the most important Alabama trustees: Angus Cooper II, a shipping magnate from Mobile, and Paul Bryant Jr., the son of Alabama's most famous coach. (The trustee duo had

passed some of their own nervous hours by going quail hunting.) Moore told them that Saban hadn't yet called him back and still refused to meet with him. "We thought we'd lost Nick then," says Cooper. "We knew Huizenga was trying to keep him, and we thought that meant he'd pay him a lot more money." After waiting by the phone a bit longer, Moore finally gave up. He checked out of his hotel and had his driver—Francisco Rengifo, whom he called "Frankie"—take him to the airport. As they drove, Moore—on a whim—decided to make a last-ditch detour. He asked Frankie to drive him to Saban's neighborhood in Fort Lauderdale. They parked a few blocks away, which gave him a view of the comings and goings of the Saban house. Moore sat there, staring out of the car window like a papal supplicant waiting for the white smoke. He later described his first day and a half in Miami as "excruciating." It wasn't exactly pleasant for Saban, either. He paced the floors of his spacious house. He called former colleagues and old friends for advice. He talked to Sexton. He endlessly ran through everything with his greatest confidante: his wife, Terry, whom he'd married during his junior year in college. Saban knew how it would look if he left the Dolphins, after just two seasons and in the wake of his litany of flat-out denials of any interest in the Alabama job. He would be called a liar, a failure, and a quitter. Most of the dread he felt, though, came from the fact that he already knew what he wanted to do. The NFL was not for him. Saban had been an assistant coach in the NFL in the 1980s and '90s, but the game had changed significantly since then. Free agency had blossomed, turning some of the best players into prima donnas who often placed the desires of their agents and themselves over those of their coaches and their teams. The NFL had become more of a socialist enterprise than the meritocracy that Saban preferred. "In the NFL you were penalized for success," Saban says. A good season meant a more difficult schedule in the following one. It also meant a lower position in the subsequent NFL Draft. This left Saban feeling constricted. "In the NFL you only get one first-round draft pick, and that's if it hadn't already been traded away," he says. "You couldn't really outwork anybody. In college, I could recruit ten players with first-round talent every year." In the college game, he had more control. He knew that Alabama wasn't a turnkey program. Hell, it was practically in ruins. It would take some time to streamline everything, to get everyone on the same page, and to restore the Alabama football name to recruits and to the nation. The potential was there, however, and Saban knew that the university was desperate enough to return to football glory that they were willing to give him everything he needed. Moore wouldn't have been in South Florida now if that weren't the case. Still, Saban felt a strong sense of loyalty to Huizenga, a man he very much admired. He'd made a pledge to the Dolphins owner, on many different occasions, to turn around the franchise. Huizenga also had demonstrated complete faith in Saban: He'd never said no to one of his coach's requests—for more control, for more money to spend on assistant coaches, for newer, better facilities. If it were totally up to Saban, he would stay with the Dolphins and give Huizenga what he believed he owed him. But the decision wasn't his alone. After sitting in the car for some time, Moore finally talked to Sexton, who called Terry and asked her to invite Moore in. She did. Saban wasn't home—he was at the Dolphins' complex, where he had a meeting with Huizenga. Terry and Moore hit it off right away, sensing a mutual interest. She served him lunch while the two talked about her husband. She made it clear to Moore that Saban was miserable in the NFL and dearly missed coaching in college. She also made it clear that she wanted out. In the NFL, the coach's wife had no real role in the community. On a college campus—particularly at a place like Alabama—the coach's wife was a figure of prominence, a queen bee. Terry also believed that a college town was a much healthier place to raise their two children. After lunch, she invited Moore to come back for dinner that night. Sometime after Moore left, Saban called home and told Terry that he had made up his mind: He was staying with the Dolphins and he didn't want to meet with Moore. Terry then informed him that Moore was actually coming over for dinner that night. Over dinner, Moore pitched Saban on the merits of the job. Saban would get an unprecedented amount of power and control of the football program. He would also be paid a blockbuster eight-year, \$32 million salary, the highest ever in college football. Saban remained palpably reticent throughout the evening. As Moore was leaving, Terry pulled him aside and told him that they had to find a way to get her husband on the plane to Tuscaloosa the next day. As heartened as he was by Terry's words, Moore still had no idea what Saban was going to ultimately decide. Saban spent another night agonizing over the decision. Terry knew it would be better for him—for them—back in college, and she spent the evening trying to convince him that it was okay to leave the Dolphins, to think of his own—and his family's—well-being and happiness. The next morning, Saban had one more conversation with Huizenga. The Dolphins' owner realized by then that he had lost his coach. He eased Saban's agony a bit by telling him to do what was in his heart. Finally, Saban called Moore and accepted the Alabama job. Moore and Frankie rushed over to the Saban house. By this time, the media had caught the scent that something was in the offing. Press helicopters hovered over the Sabans' house as Frankie backed his white Mercedes sedan into the garage. Saban, Terry, their daughter, Kristen, and a school friend of hers entered the garage through the house, carrying a few hastily packed suitcases. The three women sat in the backseat, their luggage in their laps. Saban sat shotgun. Moore squeezed himself in between Saban and Frankie, sitting on the console. Helicopters chased them all the way to the airport. On the plane, Moore and Saban sat across from each other, with Moore facing the cockpit and Saban facing the rear of the plane. As the plane took off, with its nose pointed toward the sky, Moore found himself looking up at his new coach. He would never forget this moment, and would tell the story frequently to his closest friends, in various versions. "Mal, let me ask you something," Saban said over the roar of the plane's engines, gazing down at Moore. Saban's leg had started to

bounce. At this point, adrenaline was staving off exhaustion. Any pretense he might have felt had been completely stripped away. "Do you think you've hired the best coach in the country?" Moore was a bit taken aback by the question, not exactly sure where it was heading. He still didn't know Saban well, still found him hard to read. Moore rubbed his big hands together and cleared his throat. "Why, Nick, of course I do," he said, while thinking to himself: For four million dollars a year, I sure as hell hope so. "Well, you didn't. I'm nothing without my players," Saban said, locking eyes with Moore. "But you did just hire a helluva recruiter." With that, Moore exhaled audibly.