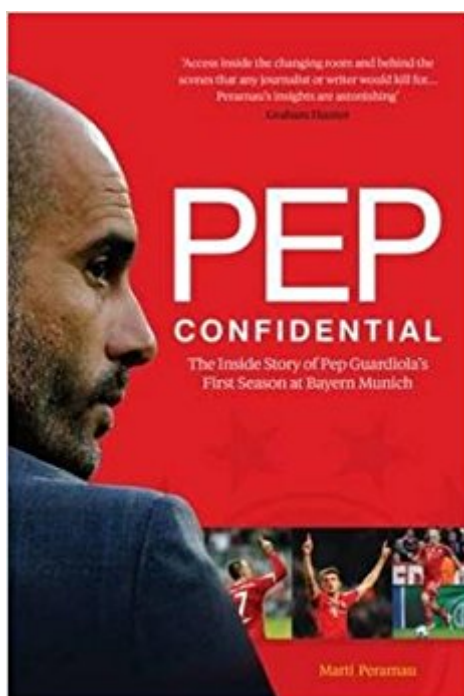


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Pep Confidential: The Inside Story Of Pep Guardiola's First Season At Bayern Munich



Synopsis

Martín Perarnau was given total access to Bayern Munich during season 2013–14, and this book represents the first time in the modern era that a writer has got this close to one of the elite teams of world football. At the invitation of Pep Guardiola, he shadowed the Catalan, his staff, and his superstar players during training and on match days. Bayern smashed domestic records on their way to the double, but were humiliated by Real Madrid in the Champions League semifinal.

Martín was with them every step of the way. Perarnau is with Guardiola as he is courted by the world's greatest clubs during his sabbatical in New York. We hear Guardiola explain in detail the radical tactical moves which transform Bayern's season and reprogram the players who will win the World Cup with Germany. Perarnau talks exclusively and in fascinating detail with an array of players, including Arjen Robben, Manuel Neuer, Philipp Lahm, Thiago Alcântara, and Bastian Schweinsteiger. Pep Confidential is much more than the story of a season – it is also a lasting portrait of one of the greatest coaches in sport.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

'Access inside the changing room and behind the scenes that any journalist or writer would kill for - Perarnau's insights are astonishing' -- Graham Hunter 'Extraordinary' -- Hugh MacDonald * Herald *
'One of the most influential sports books to be written in years' * Scotland Now *

Martín Perarnau is a former Spanish Olympiad turned journalist, and a renowned soccer analyst. He writes for a number of Spanish newspapers and runs the hugely popular Perarnau Magazine

blog.

My expectations for this book were not too high given that an active football manager has a lot to lose by being too candid. Also, I was expecting the book to focus more on drama rather than details about training methods and tactics. But I was pleasantly surprised to see how forthcoming Pep has been about his relationship with the club management at Barcelona and Bayern, about his views on certain players (and vice versa), and his training routines and tactical approaches. The book follows events chronologically, from Pep's signing with Bayern to the DFB Pokal final against Dortmund in May 2014. It gives a rather detailed account of how Pep wished to change the team and his general philosophy about football (developing a playing style to suit the players, his desire for his teams to control the game, his hatred of tiki-taka). There is also much discussion about the Bayern players (a lot about Lahm and HãfÆ'Ã Å_jberg), other team staff and the Bayern club management. What the book touches only on the surface are some of the more gossip-worthy topics: Uli HoeneÃfÅ, and his tax problems, the deterioration in the relationship between Pep and Mandzukic, Kroos' contract talks. It also stops short of pointing out individual players who did not see eye-to-eye with Pep's tactics. The big surprise for me was the level of tactical detail offered for each game (including the major Champions League games). There is also plenty of material on the introduction of new training methods and some on players' diets as well. The tactics are discussed to the point where an avid fan will be interested, and is not a coaching manual. One thing to note is that the book portrays a highly positive image of Pep, which some might be put off by, but I find quite accurate based on my own fanatical following of Bayern's progress over the years. It also dispels a lot of the myths circulating in the media (Pep is turning Bayern into Barcelona, Heynckes was forced into retirement, Pep does not like Robben). I'm a Bayern fan, and a Pep fan now only by association (though I always respected him), but my own opinion of the man has certainly grown after reading this book. To sum up, this book is a fascinating read. Bayern and Pep fans will certainly enjoy it, and there is plenty of material for any avid football fan.

The kind of access that the author managed to get is unprecedented in the history of football. I am not sure what made Pep and the Bayern's senior management allowed such access but whatever the reasons, the result make a very interesting reading. As a Bayern fan I liked the insights into and the dynamics of the Bayern's management - how the club is run, how key decisions are made and who actually hold the real power. These insights are often very surprising and we learn in particular Rummeniege, Sammer and Hoeness provide Pep with very strong support and stand by him during

good and bad times. We also learn a lot about the players and their personalities. The book focuses a lot on Pep as a person and his coaching principles and ideas. We also learn his non sporting side as we as his family and close friends. I found it rather fascinating that Pep has some very interesting friends such as top professors, world chess champions, etc. He comes across as someone complex, passionate and utterly devoted to football. The book also reveals quite a lot of the thinking, planning and also post match tactical analyses of many Bundesliga matches as well as the Champions' League games. Here we learn much about Pep's thinking and his playing and coaching principles. However on the flip side, the book side steps some key issues and incidents. It is no secret that Pep has some major disagreements with some key players. While we like to know about Pep and his philosophy, there were too many pages devoted to the "genius" of Pep and at times the author sound like some teenager with a serious crush on his idol. While the author generally knowledgeable about football, he tends to just report whatever Pep was saying, rather than try to explain what these mean to the general reader using diagrams to explain the tactics. As a result, a general reader without much exposure to football tactics will be lost in the tactics discussion. Lastly, I noticed numerous grammatical and spelling errors.

I've become a hardcore soccer fan in the last couple of years, and although I mostly follow the EPL, I was familiar with Pep Guardiola because of his time at Barca. I thought this book was extremely good because of the access the author was given. He really did become entrenched with the team and provided great insight and details on Bayern's first season with Pep. Overall I just really loved hearing about how Pep went about approaching his players and tactics for the game. If there is any criticism of the book, it does discuss tactics in detail, so if you aren't familiar with the 4-4-2, or 3-5-2, and other formations some of that information may get tedious. For most though, it won't even be noticeable. I highly recommend this book.

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