



Ninety-Nine Iron: The Season Sewanee Won Five Games in Six Days (Alabama Fire Ant)

Wendell Givens

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The fascinating story of a remarkable, unassailable winning streak.

Ninety-Nine Iron is the story of the 1899 Sewanee football team. The University of the South, as it is formally called, is a small Episcopal college on Mounteagle Mountain in southeastern Tennessee. It is a respected academic institution not known for its athletic programs. But in that final year of the 19th century the Sewanee football team, led by captain "Diddy" Seibels, produced a record that is legendary.

In six days, on a grueling 2,500-mile train trip, the team defeated Texas, Texas A&M, Tulane, Louisiana State University, and Ole Miss--all much larger schools than Sewanee. In addition to this marathon of victory, the 21 members of the Sewanee Iron Men won all 12 of their regular games, and of their 12 opponents, only Auburn managed to score at all against them. Ten of these 12 victories were against Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Association opponents, which put Sewanee in the record books for most conference games played and most won in a season.

In *Ninety-Nine Iron*, Wendell Givens provides a play-by-play account of that remarkable season. He includes an overview of campus life at Sewanee and profiles of the players, the team's coach (Billy Suter), the manager (Luke Lea), and the trainer (Cal Burrows). In the five years he researched the work, Givens conducted interviews with Seibels and visited the five cities in which the Iron Men had played--Austin, Houston, New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Memphis. Givens has written a vivid account of a sports achievement not likely to be seen again.

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