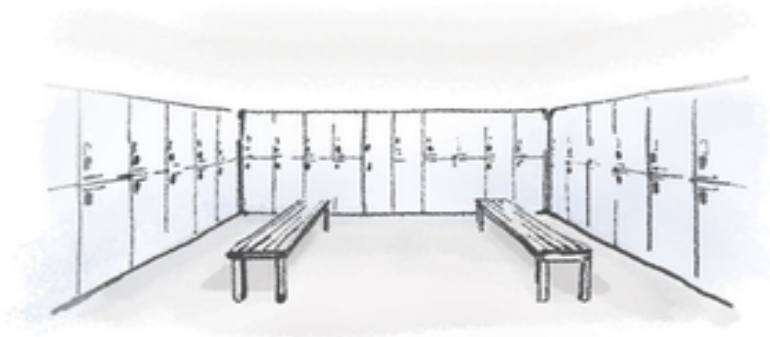


THE  
**LOCKER ROOM**



How Great Teams  
Heal Hurt,  
Overcome Adversity,  
and Build Unity

**DAMON WEST**

Bestselling Coauthor of *The Coffee Bean*

**STEPHEN MACKEY**

Player Development Coach

WILEY

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## **Praise for *The Locker Room***

“Occasionally, a book comes along that really impacts you and really makes you think, feel, and want to act differently going forward. This book is a roadmap for how we can progress towards healing, unity, and overcoming the ugliness that is racism. West and Mackey are onto something here, and we should all pay attention because the current game plan isn't working.”

**—Rhett Power, *Forbes* columnist**

“*The Locker Room* comes at a highly contentious time in our country and delivers a powerful and much needed story whose overriding messages of teamwork, unity, and respect for one another are most welcome in the face of increasing social and political divisiveness and a racial reckoning. Set in the inner sanctum melting pot of a football team locker room, former athletes Mackey and West draw on their experiences to present a story that illustrates how teams with players and coaches from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities ‘come together around a common goal. They work together, sacrifice for each other, and use their diversity as a strength to make each other better.’ The glaring conclusion is that our families and neighborhoods, indeed our country, could benefit from practicing the story’s locker room principles and lessons for the betterment of us all. This is a timely, moving, and thought-provoking read.”

**—Michael Hurd, historian and author of *Thursday Night Lights: The Story of Black High School Football in Texas***

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COVER ART & DESIGN: PAUL McCARTHY

*I dedicate this to my father, Bob West. As a sports writer, you used sports to teach me many valuable life lessons. I still look up to you today, just as I did when I was a kid.*

*Love,  
Damon*

*I dedicate this to my bride, Teressa. Thank you for your love, support, humility, and grace.*

*Love,  
Stephen*

# Preface

At the heart of coaching is a deep-rooted commitment to helping people become the best versions of themselves. The role of a coach is to see the potential in people and then do everything within their power to help them get there. As a coach, you're less concerned with the end goal—although *every* coach wants to win!—and more concerned with the progress your athletes make.

Great coaches, as with other great leaders, must be willing to give the best of themselves to set the example for the cultures they wish to build. In that spirit—to give our best to help you become your best—we have created a short story about a team, hurt and divided, which needed the Locker Room to help them heal, unite, and overcome.

Before entering the Locker Room, we would like to offer some insight into a few of the choices made.

We chose the Locker Room as the location of this story because we both have experienced the power of the Locker Room in sports. We are both former athletes (we won't talk about who was the *better* athlete) and have seen the Locker Room break down barriers and transform lives. While the Locker Room is a physical place for athletes, it has its analogues for students in a classroom, executives in a boardroom, workers in any workplace, service men and women in the Armed Forces, and people in their communities. The Locker Room can be made up of 100 people or just two people sitting across from each other.

The Locker Room is anywhere that:

1. People from different backgrounds, with different hurts, hang-ups, and histories come together for a