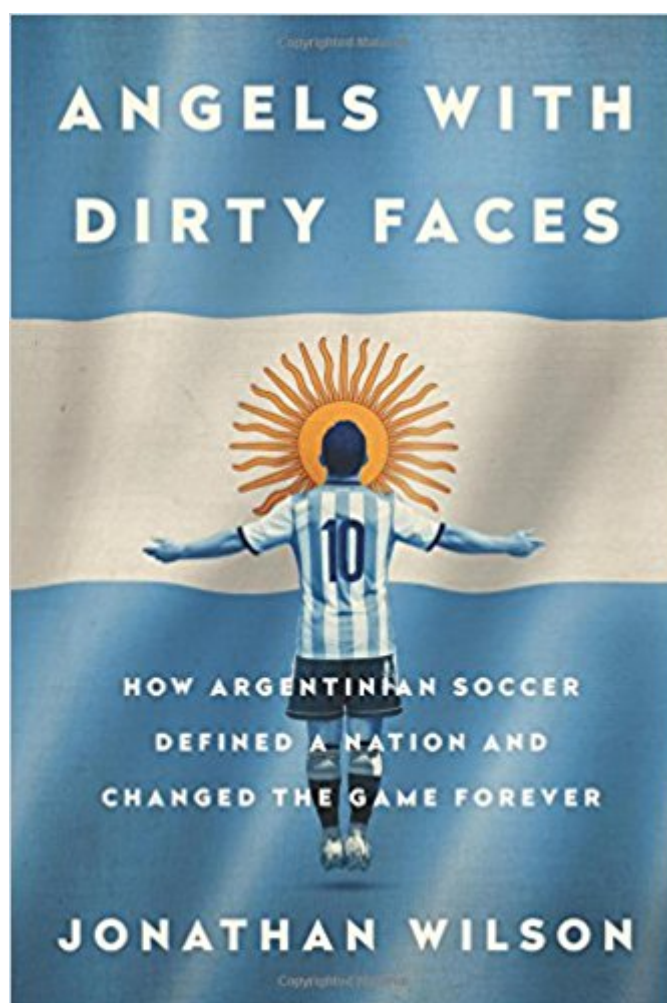


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# Angels With Dirty Faces: How Argentinian Soccer Defined A Nation And Changed The Game Forever



## Synopsis

The Masterful, Definitive History of Argentinian Soccer Lionel Messi, Diego Maradona, Alfredo Di Stéfano: in every generation Argentina has uncovered a uniquely brilliant soccer talent. Perhaps it's because the country lives and breathes the game, its theories, and its myths. Argentina's rich, volatile history—by turns sublime and ruthlessly pragmatic—is mirrored in the style and swagger of its national and club sides. In *Angels with Dirty Faces*, Jonathan Wilson chronicles the operatic drama of Argentinian soccer: the appropriation of the British game, the golden age of *la nuestra*, the exuberant style of playing that developed as Juan Perón led the country, a hardening into the brutal methods of *anti-fútbol*, the fusion of beauty and efficacy under César Luis Menotti, and the emergence of all-time greats. Praise for *Inverting the Pyramid*; Here, for the first time in decades, is a top-notch soccer book on how soccer is actually played on the field. —Simon Kuper; An outstanding work. . . . The soccer book of the decade. —Sunday Business Post

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Argentina's narrative is complicated, and Jonathan Wilson mines all of it *ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES*. What sets Wilson's book apart is the depth to which he goes to show how soccer weaves through Argentina's political and economic turmoil. He finds that the country's most celebrated moments and players are never as great as they seem. —[Bloomberg Businessweek](#); Mr. Wilson is the Lionel Messi of world football writing. Few writers in his genre are on the same literary pitch. His latest work is an integral read for those love the Argentinean style of play, its rich history and why football is the true soul of Argentina. —

World Football Commentaries;[A] comprehensive, but immensely readable and wonderfully-researched history of a nation and its long-term love for the beautiful game; After reading this excellent history, you'll be as convinced as Argentina's football-loving population that it won't be long before the Carasucias add to their two World Cup titles. News North Wales

Jonathan Wilson's *INVERTING THE PYRAMID* won the National Sporting Club Book of the Year Award and was shortlisted for the William Hill Sports Book of the Year Award. His other books include *BEHIND THE CURTAIN: Travels in Eastern European Football*; *SUNDERLAND: A Club Transformed*; *THE ANATOMY OF ENGLAND: A History in Ten Matches*; *NOBODY EVER SAYS THANK YOU*, a critically acclaimed biography of Brian Clough; *THE OUTSIDER: A History of the Goalkeeper*; and *THE ANATOMY OF LIVERPOOL*. He also writes for *The Guardian*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *World Soccer*, and he is the editor of *The Blizzard*. Follow him on Twitter at: @jonawils

It is impressive not only the knowledge, but the level the accuracy and understanding of local issues that Mr. Wilson shows. The book is able to unveil some information even to an old Argentine man, very fond of foot-ball, which is my case. It is a nice and funny experience to read some very local facts by the guy that writes at *The Guardian*!, with full accuracy ..., as if it were written in Spanish by a local journalist. Despite the huge barrier that a different culture and language is supposed to represent to grasp some facts, the book incredibly maintains the local flavor. Wilson also has a good understanding of Buenos Aires "lunfardo" (slang), and gets the deep meaning of some expressions, which clearly helped him to write such an outstanding work.

Jonathan Wilson is probably one of the best scholars of the game. This book is a comprehensive, time-spanning, and thorough look at Argentinian soccer. It doesn't seem to miss anything, and covers all of the most important aspects of the country's footballing history. However, the book lacks a bit of romance - Wilson tries often to tie the political scene of Argentina (often a contentious one) as it relates to football. While the two are undoubtedly intertwined, it never really feels believable in this book. It feels more like parallel events that overlap slightly, but it doesn't really capture the wholly intertwined aspect of football and politics, revolution, geopolitical events, etc. It feels a bit forced. Along the same lines, it often starts to read more like an encyclopedia or anthology vs. a story or historical literature. Many times I found myself zoning out because the book was just

describing a relatively mundane match that didn't feel all that important in the long run of Argentina's football history. A great novel for those who wish to increase their knowledge of Argentinian footballing history, but not for those who are looking for a bit more flair or excitement.

This is a well told story that covers the history of Argentinian soccer both within - the Argentina league - and without - in international competitions - the country. It also integrates the broader story of Argentina such as the dictatorship's attempt to use the 1978 world cup to enhance Argentina's reputation on the international stage. Though the book is not extremely technical, those without at least an intermediate level understanding of soccer tactics may wish to have Wilson's other book, *Inverting the Pyramid*, on hand to provide some background on the evolution of soccer more broadly. Overall, well worth the effort, even for those whose love of soccer is based largely on the European game.

Entertaining but not as good as his previous books. The chapters lack continuity and maybe could have been tied together a little bit more neatly.

Love how Wilson ties the history and turmoil in Argentina to the success and fortunes of the league clubs, players abroad, and national team. All the information interacting can get a bit confusing when putting the timeline together, but it's one of the more interesting reads for me in awhile.

Jonathan Wilson has done a magnificent job with this book. He has able to capture every nuance of modern Argentine soccer and explain who, what, why, where, and how it come to be part of today's football. As an Argentina deeply in love with this sport, I would highly recommend this book to anyone remotely interested in the sport or the politics of the region. Thank you Jonathan for one my of my new favorite books!

Jonathan Wilson carefully weaves together a tale of explosive joy, crushing despondency, and a wry saturnine character. He colors portraits of Argentina's greatest figures. If you are interested in soccer, this is a must read about a completely unique part of the soccer world.

My second Jonathan Wilson book after *Inverting the pyramid*, I wasn't disappointed. Painfully researched and beautifully written.

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