



The True Story of Vince Papale

It was 1976 and the Philadelphia Eagles were a losing franchise desperately in need of revitalization. To that end, Eagles' ownership hired Dick Vermeil, the young, energetic head coach at UCLA. Eagles' fans and pundits alike were wary of this West Coast hotshot with no previous NFL coaching experience. Well aware of this skepticism, Vermeil put his credibility on the line with both his bosses and the fans, and announced that the Eagles would be hosting an open try-out.

Enter Vince Papale, a local thirty-year-old part-time bartender, substitute schoolteacher, from Interboro, and upper-deck season ticket holder. This die-hard Eagles fan had only one year of high school football and weekend pick-up games as experience when he decided to take a shot at his dream to play professional football for the Philadelphia Eagles—he had never even played college football.

Vince was the only player from the open try-outs invited to camp with the Eagles that summer. His underdog story, work ethic, and love of the game made him a fan favorite and he was dubbed the "real Rocky." However, inside the clubhouse, Vince received a chilly reception from the veteran pros that went out of their way to make his experience at training camp, at Widener College, as difficult as possible. Nevertheless, Papale persevered and made the team. He became known for his ferocious tackling and aggressive play on special teams, and ultimately played three seasons for the Eagles and became special teams captain.

After being retired by the Eagles after the 1979 season, he was a TV and radio broadcaster for 8 years. After that Vince entered the world of commercial mortgage banking which led to his present position as a Marketing Executive & Special Projects Director for Sallie Mae, the nation's #1 student financial aid company. Papale has served as chairman or co-chairman for: Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans, Spina Bifida Association, Association for Retarded Citizens, Deborah Hospital, Multiple Sclerosis Society, and the American Heart Association. He has also worked with: the Eagles Fly for Leukemia, the Police Athletic League, the Special Olympics, Maxwell Football Club, the Sunshine Foundation, the Boy Scouts, and the Variety Club. Vince has received the Chapel of the Four Chaplain's Humanitarian Award, the United Way's Gold Award, and the Jaycee's Distinguished Service Award. And as mentioned, in 1978, was a finalist for the Byron "Whizzer" White Award, presented annually to the NFL Player who shows the highest level of community awareness and involvement.

This inspirational, underdog story is being brought to the big screen by Walt Disney Studios, producers Mark Ciardi and Gordon Gray of Mayhem Pictures, and director Ericson Core. Disney and Mayhem previously collaborated on two of the most resonating sports movies in recent history, *THE ROOKIE*, starring Dennis Quaid, and *MIRACLE*, starring Kurt Russell.

The movie about Vince Papale "Invincible" was released by Disney in 2006. This blockbuster film featured Mark Wahlberg, as Papale; Greg Kinnear as former Eagles Coach, Dick Vermeil; and Elizabeth Banks as Janet Cantwell Papale. This popular inspirational movie is still available today on DVD.



“What They’re Saying About Vince”

What new coach Dick Vermeil saw impressed him. Papale had speed and sure hands, but most of all, he exemplified what Vermeil calls “Eagle Effort...”. Whenever his name would come up at cut meetings, Vermeil would say no. “He’s a character player,” the coach said. “We need more like him, not less!” **Sports Illustrated. 1977 Feature Article.**

In the past year, Papale has made more public appearances than the 76’ers Julius Irving, the Phillies’ Mike Schmidt, and the Flyers’ Bobby Clarke, combined. “Vince makes Bob Hope look like a recluse,” says Eagles General Manager Jim Murray. **NFL Pro Magazine. 1977 Feature Article.**

“...Thanks for an inspiring and motivational speech. You are a true living legend.”
U.S. Healthcare/HMO. Keynote speaker—National Sales Rally.

“May I take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of Deborah for your gracious giving to our humanitarian effort. We are privileged to consider you a member of the Deborah family and making a reality of the words...” “Deborah—where healing comes from the heart.” **Deborah Hospital Foundation. Executive Director. Participation in Fund Raiser.**

“Your opening remarks and presentation were excellent and well-received. It is a pleasure to meet and speak with someone who has participated in professional sports and knows what a privilege it is to be so gifted and motivated to be able to perform. And, not only to perform, but perform as well as you did. Your enthusiasm for sports and life is to be admired.” **Iron League of Philadelphia. Keynote Speaker.**

Thank you for your help in making our wellness day such a success. We really appreciate your participation; it could not have been accomplished without you!”
Sterling High School District. Keynote Speaker.

“Thanks to my dear friend, Vince Papale, our annual Notre Dame/Penn State Banquet was a huge success. You seem to have the unique ability to do a quick overview of an audience, and address your remarks appropriately. I received many comments from members of both clubs telling me how they enjoyed your excellent mix of humor, fun, in addition to your more serious side relative to the remarks you made!”
Notre Dame/Penn State Banquet. Keynote Speaker.

“I will take this opportunity to thank you for your contribution in making the Father and Sons Dinner of the Lutheran Church Of Our Saviour a great success last Friday. Your presentation was interesting and inspirational to everyone who was there. Afterwards, I received many unsolicited favorable comments.” **Father/Sons Dinner, Keynote Speaker.**

“You made our first revival of Father/Sons Dinners very special! Our “men” both young and old, were touched by your words of sincerity.” **Father/Sons Dinner, Keynote Speaker.**

“Your message to our students was loud and clear. Hopefully, it will have a lasting effect. All feedback that I received from students and faculty and staff, concerning the luncheon and assembly was positive. Thanks again for your excellent presentation.” **William Penn School District. Student’s Achievement Awards Day. Keynote Speaker.**

“On behalf of the Board of Managers of the Camden County Unit of the American Cancer Society, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for making the Monsignor Sharkey Roast a great success. The unit is grateful for your commitment to support the educational and patient service programs of the A.C.S.” **American Cancer Society Fund Raiser, Celebrity Roaster.**

“We would like to thank you for being the guest speaker at our SPORTS NIGHT...your time and patience with the (special) athletes is greatly appreciated. We hope you enjoyed yourself as much as we enjoyed having you.” **St. John of God Community Services, Keynote Speaker.**

“On behalf of the students, staff, and administration of Pennsville Memorial High School, I would like to thank you for your motivational dissertation during our day of drug and alcohol awareness. Points that you bring forward are those which all educators share...that being...students have unlimited potential, there are logical systematic approaches to every endeavor, and you must believe in yourself before any success can be realized. Your instructional background and experience with teenagers was very evident during your presentation.” **Pennsville Public School District. Keynote Speaker.**

“What else can I say...you were great! I received calls at the house this morning from parents who thought you were super!” **I.B.M. Recognition Picnic. Keynote Speaker.**

“It is refreshing to me to know that there are still people who have achieved celebrity status and who are still willing to take time out of their busy lives for the benefit of area youth. After the banquet and the days following the same, I received numerous calls and letters about the banquet and everyone was quite impressed with your speech to the kids.” **Northampton Indians Football. Keynote Speaker.**

“The positive response we received from the campers and their parents was overwhelming; and we felt your talk was enjoyable, enlightening, inspirational and fun!” **Derek Hollaway Football Camp. A Featured Speaker.**

“With former Philly Eagle and Philadelphia Bell Vince Papale as emcee, the evening flowed like fine wine.” **NewsZap.com**

“You did a great job speaking at the Cingular meeting last week. The employees are still talking about it...you really inspired the gang and generated a lot of enthusiasm... Everybody was very impressed with your story and how you presented it.” **John Caras. Cingular.**

Hey Vince, I just wanted to drop you a note to say thanks for your great work on Radio Row at the Super Bowl. You did a tremendous job with all of the interviews, and as always, I appreciated your professionalism and your high energy level. **Chip Namias—President, Athlete & Event Sports Public Relations.**

Vince Papale brings an enthusiasm, passion and energy to each and every crowd we've presented him to. His story is both inspirational and motivational and leaves every group he speaks with uplifted. We are proud to be working with Vince! **Mollie Plotkin & Ellen Barkann—The Philadelphia Sports Group.**