



Baseball: A History of America's Favorite Game (Modern Library Chronicles)

By George Vecsey



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“Football is force and fanatics, basketball is beauty and bounce. Baseball is everything: action, grace, the seasons of our lives. George Vecsey’s book proves it, without wasting a word.”

—Lee Eisenberg, author of *The Number*

In *Baseball*, one of the great bards of America’s Grand Old Game gives a rousing account of the sport, from its pre-Republic roots to the present day. George Vecsey casts a fresh eye on the game, illuminates its foibles and triumphs, and performs a marvelous feat: making a classic story seem refreshingly new. *Baseball* is a narrative of America’s can-do spirit, in which stalwart immigrants such as Henry Chadwick could transplant cricket and rounders into the fertile American culture and in which die-hard unionist baseballers such as Charles Comiskey and Connie Mack could eventually become the tightfisted avatars of the game’s big-money establishment. It’s a celebration of such underdogs as a rag-armed catcher turned owner named Branch Rickey and a sure-handed fielder named Curt Flood, both of whom flourished as true great men of history. But most of all, *Baseball* is a testament to the unbreakable bond between our nation’s pastime and the fans, who’ve remained loyal through the fifty-year-long interdict on black athletes, the Black Sox scandal, franchise relocation, and the use of performance-enhancing drugs by some major stars.

Reverent, playful, and filled with Vecsey’s charm, *Baseball* begs to be read in the span of a rain-delayed doubleheader, and so enjoyable that, like a favorite team’s championship run, one hopes it never ends.

“Vecsey possesses a journalist’s eye for detail and a historian’s feel for the sweep of action. His research is scrupulous and his writing crisp. This book is an instant classic—— a highly readable guide to America’s great enduring pastime.” —

The Louisville Courier Journal

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

New York Times sports columnist Vecsey (*Year in the Sun*) devotes himself to this sprightly history of the national pastime. His survey unfolds much like a highlights tape, with a breezy background narrative of the game from its pre-Civil War roots to its current drug scandals, structured around set pieces spotlighting the outsized deeds of luminaries like Babe Ruth, Jackie Robinson, Branch Rickey and George Steinbrenner. He finds plenty of time for color commentary, like an appreciation of radio announcers' whimsical homerun catch-phrases (" 'Get up Aunt Minnie and raise the window!' " Pirates voice Rosey Roswell was wont to yell), cantankerous opinionating ("Trying to be fair and neutral about it, I can only say that the designated hitter rule is a travesty and ought to be tossed out") and ruminations on the ultimate metaphysical question of "why the Yankees exist." Throughout, the author stresses the game's continuities: modern-day anxieties about free agency, labor strife and the bereavement of cities abandoned by their teams for greener pastures have plagued baseball from the beginning. Vivid, affectionate and clear-eyed, Vecsey's account makes for an engaging sports history. (Aug. 15)

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From [Booklist](#)

Many of baseball's landmark events and personalities--its ancient origins (Abner Doubleday notwithstanding), the development of pro baseball, the Black Sox scandal, Babe Ruth, Branch Rickey, the Negro League, Jackie Robinson, the media's influence, free agency, the globalization of the game, steroids--have been covered more thoroughly in their own volumes over the past several years. But *New York Times* sports columnist Vecsey neatly pulls them together in this seamless and succinct popular history. His account of the game's early days is especially strong, debunking in particular "founder" Doubleday's role: Vecsey argues that the only verifiable association is a request Doubleday, as a U.S. Army commander, made for baseball equipment for his troops in 1871. Vecsey has covered the game for more than 40 years, and it shows in such simple but profoundly true statements as "Baseball has always relied heavily on luck." Recommended especially for smaller sports collections in need of a general history of America's pastime.

Alan Moores

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About the Author

George Vecsey, a sports columnist for *The New York Times*, has written about such events as the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics but considers baseball, the sport he's covered since 1960, his favorite game. He is the author of more than a dozen books, including *Loretta Lynn: Coal Miner's Daughter* (with Loretta Lynn), which was made into an Academy Award-winning film. He has also served as a national and religion reporter for *The New York Times*, interviewing the Dalai Lama, Tony Blair, Billy Graham, and a host of other noteworthy figures. He lives in New York with his wife, an artist.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jennifer Crowe:

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Ronald Searle:

Often the book Baseball: A History of America's Favorite Game (Modern Library Chronicles) has a lot of knowledge on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of help. The book was written by the very famous author. The author makes some research ahead of write this book. This book very easy to read you will get the point easily after reading this article book.

Rachel Addison:

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