



A Whole New Ball Game: The Story of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League

By Sue Macy

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"Play ball!" yelled the umpires as the teams of the AAGPBL took the field in the tense, war-torn days of 1943. Like all professional baseball players, these athletes scrambled to their positions, tossed balls across diamonds, and filled the air with chatter. But there was something different about them--they all wore skirts, went to charm school, and continually had to answer one question: "What is a *woman* doing playing baseball?"

What were they doing? Having a great time, playing top-notch ball, and showing that a woman's place was at home only when she was at bat, behind the plate, or scoring a run. For twelve seasons, from 1943 to 1954, some of America's best female athletes earned their livings by playing baseball. This is their story in their own words, a tale of no-hitters and chaperones, stolen bases and practical jokes, home runs and run-ins with fans.

Life in the league, however, was not all fun. Born out of a wartime "manpower" shortage, the AAGPBL ended with the growth of television and the ideal of the suburban home. Here, too, is the story of America's changing attitudes toward men and women and the roles we expect each to play. Author Sue Macy spent eleven years tracking down the women of the AAGPBL, interviewing them, and looking at their scrapbooks. Along the way she found that their odyssey did not end with the collapse of the league.

The same courage and spunk the players displayed on the field led them to get back in touch with each other in the 1980s, to remind the world of what they had achieved, and to take their rightful places in the National Baseball Hall of Fame. Balancing the voices of the women of the league with a lively, insightful overview of the changing patterns of American life, *A Whole New Ball Game* is a sports story full of telling insights about who we expect to be at home and how women can get back to first base.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Macy offers an excellent introduction to one of the least explored areas of baseball history (recently popularized in the film *A League of Their Own*). Established by Chicago Cubs owner and chewing-gum magnate Phil Wrigley in 1943 as an entertainment alternative to the war-depleted major leagues, the AAGPBL lasted until 1954--and until very recently was all but forgotten. Macy has wisely chosen to focus not on the trivia of games past (although the appendix offers enough statistics to satisfy the most rabid baseball addict) but on the social history that produced the league and on the experiences of its players. She writes frankly about such problems as alcoholism and unwanted sexual advances from team officials, fans and sportswriters. The book is particularly astute in its observations on the league as a forum for female bonding, something that few women of the time had at their disposal. Perhaps the most affecting passages concern the reluctance of AAGPBL veterans to discuss their experiences until the rise of the women's movement gave them a renewed sense of self-worth. These tough and funny women emerge as heroic figures worthy of admiration and emulation. Archival photographs add to the book's historical value and its sense of fun. A worthy addition to the library of any baseball fan. Ages 12-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 5 Up-- An interesting and informative look at the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League that operated from 1945-1954. Using interviews with former players, various newspaper and statistical accounts, and sound research, Macy has pieced together a book that not only tells the story of the league but also provides sociological insight into the United States during World War II and the postwar era. While the players' accomplishments on the field are documented, readers will also become privy to the trials and tribulations these athletes faced, which went far beyond the daily hassles that male professional players encountered. They included severe rules governing personal appearance and off-field activities so as not to sacrifice femininity for athleticism. Macy includes a wonderful hodgepodge of useful appendixes that include the league's rules, teams, and statistics, along with a chronology, notes on the author's sources, further reading, and places to obtain more information on the AAGPBL. An array of black-and-white photos, including posed photos of the players checking their makeup during games and plenty of action shots, further enliven the very readable text. *A Whole New Ball Game* is a significant title that may have to be promoted, but its shelf life will far outlast the majority of sports books currently being published. --Tom S. Hurlburt, La Crosse Public Library, WI

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From Kirkus Reviews

Drawing on abundant source material, Macy delivers an articulate, authoritative account of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League (1943-54)--that grand and (until recently) obscure chapter in American sports. (Helmer's *Belles of the Ballpark*--2/93, rev. 12/15/92--covers much of the same territory but relies more on secondary sources and places less stress on feminist themes.) Using archival research, a 1982 survey, and interviews with former players, Macy paints a lucid picture, analyzing not only the reasons for the league's initial popularity and ultimate failure but also its more lasting value; conceived as an arena for a women's game played by women, rather than for women dabbling in a men's game, the league drew hundreds of able athletes to create a team spirit unique in civilian life and an individual sense of self-worth that helped many of the players buck the repressive social trends of the postwar era. Macy also discusses frankly the league's "whites-only" policy (paying brief tribute to a woman who did play in the Negro

Leagues). Extensive back matter: team lists; rule and equipment changes; stats of an all- star lineup; chronology; bibliography; addresses; source notes; index. Illustrated with 50 recent and period photos (most not seen). Outstanding. (Nonfiction. 11+) -- *Copyright ©1993, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Terri Hatfield:

The experience that you get from A Whole New Ball Game: The Story of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League is a more deep you excavating the information that hide inside the words the more you get interested in reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to be aware of but A Whole New Ball Game: The Story of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League giving you joy feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by simply anyone who read the idea because the author of this book is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your vocabulary increase well. Therefore it is easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We propose you for having this particular A Whole New Ball Game: The Story of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League instantly.

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