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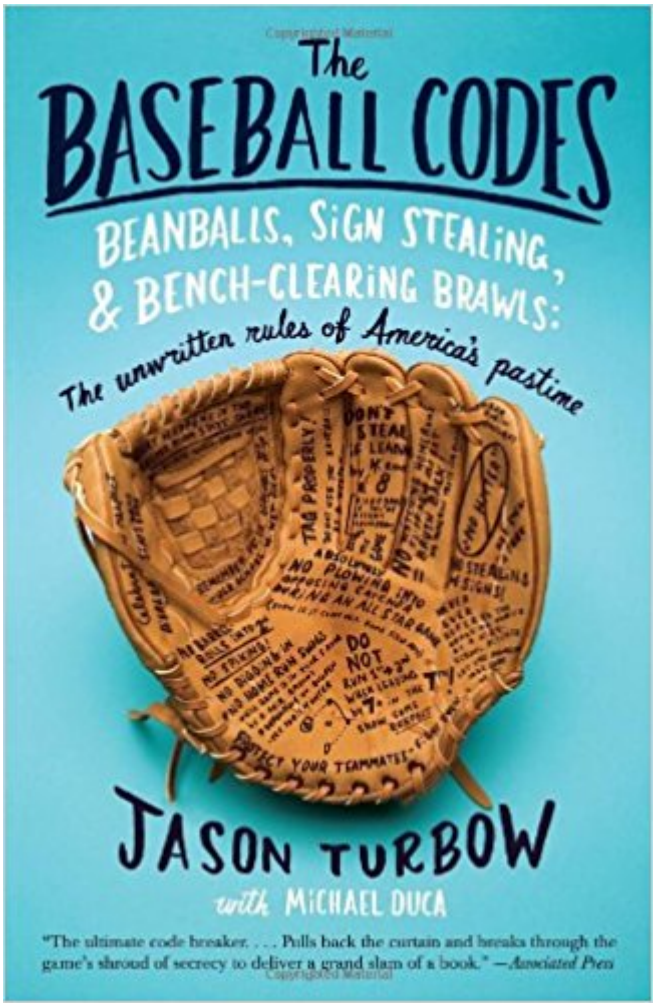
The Baseball Codes: Beanballs, Sign Stealing, And Bench-Clearing Brawls: The Unwritten Rules Of America's Pastime



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Synopsis

Everyone knows that baseball is a game of intricate regulations, but it turns out to be even more complicated than we realize. What truly governs the Major League game is a set of unwritten rules, some of which are openly discussed (donâ ™t steal a base with a big lead late in the game), and some of which only a minority of players are even aware of (donâ ™t cross between the catcher and the pitcher on the way to the batterâ ™s box). In The Baseball Codes, old-timers and all-time greats share their insights into the gameâ ™s most hallowedâ ”and least knownâ ”traditions. For the learned and the casual baseball fan alike, the result is illuminating and thoroughly entertaining. Â At the heart of this book are incredible and often hilarious stories involving national heroes (like Mickey Mantle and Willie Mays) and notorious headhunters (like Bob Gibson and Don Drysdale) in a century-long series of confrontations over respect, honor, and the soul of the game. With The Baseball Codes, we see for the first time the game as itâ ™s actually played, through the eyes of the players on the field.Â With rollicking stories from the past and new perspectives on baseballâ ™s informal rulebook, The Baseball Codes is a must for every fan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have always loved to watch baseball, but I'm going to love it even more this season, thanks to the insight I've gained from reading this colorful, entertaining book. "The Baseball Codes" assembles a dizzying array of stories, from the recent past and from long ago, spelling out all the different unwritten rules of the game.Like any reviewer, I can't help but share some of the delicious stories from this delectable book:* Mike Krukow, throwing at brushback specialist Joaquin Andujar in 1984, and missing him -- twice -- only to rush the plate "in a rare instance of the reverse mound-charge."

Krukow, incredibly, was not ejected, and considered one more attempt, but feared another miss. He instead struck Andujar out - and Andujar fell apart on the mound, securing a Giants win. "We exposed his macho," Krukow said. "It was great."* Phil Garner, who emerges as one of my favorite characters, doesn't subscribe to the rule that you don't steal bases with a big lead. While I appreciate the gentlemanly sentiment behind this rule, I also view it as ridiculous - these guys are clearly not gentlemen (witness chapters on beanballs), and they are trying to win games. Why should they stop trying? "I'm not going to go home at night thinking I shut a ballgame down and let you guys back in it to win it," Garner told old-school Sparky Anderson.* Nolan Ryan - who emerges as a real villain, in my opinion, for his head-hunting tactics - learned the "bow-tie" pitch from Satchel Paige, meaning the art of throwing a fastball right by a player's neck. He's lucky he never killed anybody. He'd throw at guys just because he was mad they bunted on him. He knocked down Lenny Dykstra in the 1986 NLCS, both for bunting and for what he saw as excessive cheering after a hit.

Anyone who was raised with a love of baseball... when the grass was still real... when baseball was still truly America's pastime... and was governed by "THE UNWRITTEN RULES... or CODES" as much if not more than the actual written rules... will love this book. Anyone that was raised when much of the grass was ASTRO Turf... but was lucky enough to have a prior generation's lover of baseball teach them the way a professional really played AND RESPECTED this great game... will love this book. This is a true unveiling of what really went on between the lines... in the clubhouse... and away from the field. The great game of baseball had its own unwritten laws... and thus the players and managers were able to police themselves... when the official rule book didn't provide proper justice. When should one team throw a bean ball at the other to reciprocate for a hit batsman? Who should be hit by a retaliatory pitch... the offending pitcher?... the hitter who watched too long as his ball flew out of the park?... the hitter who "hot-dogged" around the bases?... the guy who slid too hard into a base?... the batter who took too long getting into the batter's box?... the batter who walked in front of the catcher?... the player who was stealing signals? The questions and situations are almost endless... and almost all of these questions are answered in this book. When there's a fight on the field which members of the team should join in?... Should any of the team not engage? What type of cheating is ok? Spitballs?... Scuffed balls?... Pine tar/Vaseline/slippery elm?... Corked bats?How long should a *PAYBACK-GRUDGE* be carried and still be acted upon. In one such case fireball Hall of Famer Bob Gibson waited for fifteen years AFTER HIS RETIREMENT to hit a batter he felt he owed...

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