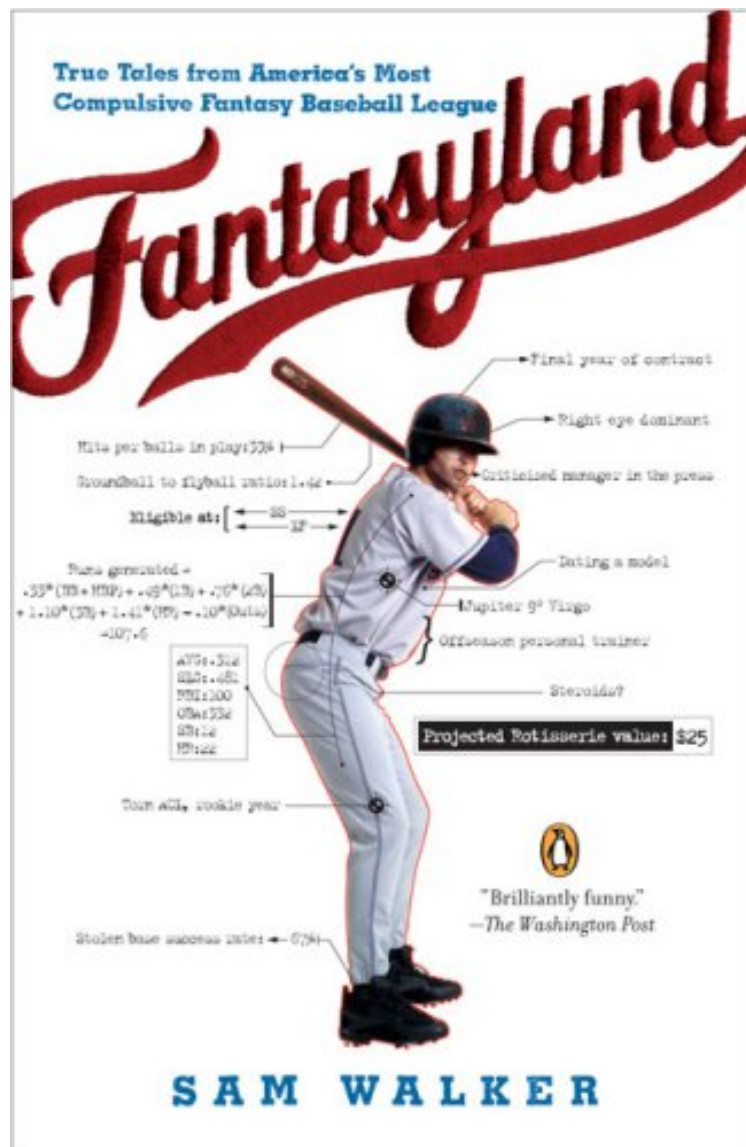


Fantasyland: A Sportswriter's Obsessive Bid to Win the World's Most Ruthless Fantasy Baseball

Sam Walker

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Sam Walker : Fantasyland: A Sportswriter's Obsessive Bid to Win the World's Most Ruthless Fantasy Baseball before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fantasyland: A Sportswriter's Obsessive Bid to Win the World's Most Ruthless Fantasy Baseball:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Better Than MoneyballBy David RandolphSeven years ago I was talked into playing fantasy league baseball by a friend. As a life long baseball fan I wasn't sure how I would like what I saw as the mathematical side of it. I was wrong...two weeks into my first season I was hooked for life. I mention this because this book, while it can be enjoyed by the casual fan, is really meant for the fantasy league fanatic. I have just recently completed Fantasyland and am glad I have a few years of fantasy play under my belt. It made the book that much more fun since I recognized nearly all the characters in the book. It explains the very beginnings of rotisserie league ball in a factual and humor filled way. That can be somewhat of a difficult task with this subject. The three main characters are Sam (the author), Nando (the old school research assistant) and Sig (the stat geek). Sam wrangles an invitation to the Mt. Olympus of baseball fantasy leagues...the Tout Wars and hires Nando and Sig to aid him in his quest for baseball immortality. The results are absorbing, bittersweet and hilarious. I found myself in the Nando camp as far as judging prospective players for Sam's roto team. Sig was very persuasive, but as I say, the math side takes the hunch factor away and to me, that is a large part of fantasy baseball's appeal. And, after all, players are people, not just machines. I also liked how the author gives the reader a humanistic look at the other Tout Wars baseball experts as well as several ballplayers. I've read Moneyball (and seen the movie) and I found myself skimming through portions of it. Not so with Fantasyland. I read it cover to cover and once started, I couldn't put it down.Incidentally, iTunes has a podcast (cbs sportsline) now playing that features Nando as one of it's commentators. It's very good and well worth your time if you play fantasy league sports.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great Book...StillBy JohnGreat book. Couldn't put it down since I got it and read in a couple of days. Sam is a very conversational, engaging writer. Anyone who's played fantasy baseball the past 10 years will still know the players referenced and appreciate the parallels to similar players and experiences today. The book is kind of the equivalent of- but still different in many ways than- "Committed" by Mark St. Amant which is about fantasy football. I recommend this book- especially at this price!- to any fantasy baseball fan.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Good History of Roto, Slightly Odd Current ViewBy UpperWestSalFantasyland provides an excellent review of the history of rotisserie baseball that has developed into an entire industry. This is much more than a retelling of the commonly cited story about a few baseball fans developing a game at the Rotisserie restaurant in New York. The narrative is breezy and a quick read. I would buy the book for this back story alone.The odd way Sam Walker goes about trying to win a well-known fantasy baseball league has some significant holes. Hiring a rocket scientist(literally) to crunch numbers and a self-proclaimed baseball talent evaluator is a clever idea, but its never clear why these two guys are remotely qualified to help. The passages describing other gurus in fantasy baseball, many of whom are well-known to avid roto players, is interesting in pointing out the ranks of experts are filled similarly with people of questionable talent.Together, the book is worthwhile, but it does not necessarily prove there any secret to the fantasy baseball world. Instead, it does a nice job of revealing how a game has become an obsession to so many.

Every spring, millions of Americans prepare to take part in one of the oddest, most obsessive, and most engrossing rituals in the sports pantheon: Rotisserie baseball, a fantasy game where armchair fans match wits by building their own teams. In 2004, Sam Walker, a sports columnist for the Wall Street Journal, decided to explore this phenomenon by talking his way into Tout Wars, a league reserved for the nations top experts. The result is one of the most sheerly entertaining sports books in years and a matchless look into the heart and soul of our national pastime.

From Publishers WeeklyWhen Walker, a senior writer for the Wall Street Journal, enters his first fantasy baseball tournament, he aims high: Tout Wars, a competition for guys who make a career out of analyzing stats to find the best Major League hitters and pitchers. He figures that because he can get to the ballparks in his journalistic capacity and talk to the players and coaches, he'll be in a better position to judge the intangibles and pull one over the pure numbers crunchers. But even with the help of a young research assistant and a NASA scientist, things quickly head south. This hilarious diary of the 2004 season includes several encounters with the players Walker has picked; from Jacque Jones's struggle to refute predictions of mediocrity to David Ortiz's razzing Walker for trading him away. Along the way there are mini-profiles of the Tout Wars competition, as well as explorations of the origins of fantasy baseball (predating even the famed Rotisserie League) and the shaky relationship between dedicated statistical analysts and Major League executives. Readers might even pick up a few tips on how to draft their teams this spring, but the real fun is in watching Walker's well-laid plans unravel. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.From Booklist*Starred * Fantasy sports leagues are ubiquitous. For the uninitiated, fantasy games comprise a competition among individuals based on statistics of players they select in a real sport--in this case, baseball. Walker, a Wall Street Journal sportswriter, initially avoided contact with fantasy baseball--too geeky--but after burning out on such real-life baseball subjects as steroid scandals, labor strife, and contract negotiations, he decided to write about the game's fantasy side after all. He wangled himself a spot in one of the most prestigious fantasy leagues and decided to research in person the team he would pick. The result was a tour of a dozen spring-training sites in Florida and Arizona during which he spoke to players, coaches, general managers, and trainers. And, of course, he availed himself of the fantasy traditionalist's potpourri of statistical reports, online sites, and daily box

scores. It's all great fun, written with humor and a twinkling eye directed at the lunacy of it all; but fantasy baseball and its attendant statistical reliance has spawned an internecine baseball war between old-school traditionalists (most scouts, for example) and the numbers people, many of whom have fantasy backgrounds. In offering a fascinating analysis of this underlying conflict within the sport, Walker gives his account of fantasy fanaticism an unexpected and satisfying depth. Fantasyland has a chance to be the Moneyball of 2006. Wes Lukowsky Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved A vivid journey into baseballs bizarro world . . . Mr. Walker not only finds the humor in this world of the obsessed, he also finds the drama. (Dan Barry, The New York Times) Brilliantly funny. (The Washington Post) I have read many books on baseball, but none of them approach the delight, the zaniness, the lunacy, and the sheer reading pleasure of Sam Walkers Fantasyland. (Buzz Bissinger, author of Three Nights in August and Friday Night Lights) The most entertaining book ever written about pretend sports. (Chuck Klosterman, Play: The New York Times Sports Magazine)