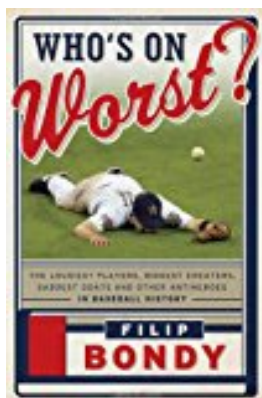


[PDF] Who's On Worst?: The Lousiest Players, Biggest Cheaters, Saddest Goats And Other Antiheroes In Baseball History

Filip Bondy - pdf download free book



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Description:

Q&A with Filip Bondy

Q. Why do readers want to know who the worst baseball players were?

A. Baseball is a game of failure, in its own way. Even the greatest batters fail two out of three times at the plate. Sometimes the stories about misbehaving, or blowing a big game with an epic blunder, are at least as entertaining as tales of heroics. And they've been told less often.

It's fun, I hope, for readers to reacquaint themselves with the follies of contemporary players, of earnest athletes stinking out the joint. And then there are stories about players from bygone eras who may not be remembered at all, and might just appear a little crazy (like Crazy Schmit!).

Q. What drew you to this topic in the first place?

A. An editor at Random House, Bill Thomas, was looking for an author who might be interested in having some fun with this concept book. I didn't have to think about it long. I have to confess that I've always enjoyed writing more about the struggling athletes of my generation than about the seamless careers of successful individuals. There's more meat and gristle to the guys who were not always blessed with great talent or good fortune. Some of these players -- like Bob Uecker and Dick Stuart -- have reveled in their own mediocrity, which only makes them more lovable.

Q. Who is the worst player you've ever seen in person?

A. I'd definitely say Marvelous Marv Throneberry. I was about 10 years old when the Amazin' Mets were invented in 1962, and Throneberry embodied both the charm and ineptitude of that 122-loss team. He was this big, galumphing guy who just couldn't quite bend down to grab those grounders. But he also did really dumb things on the base paths. In the book, I write about how he missed both first and second bases before reaching third on a triple. You don't see that very often.

Q. How do bad players manage to survive in Major League Baseball?

A. It's important to remember these are, after all, very good baseball players. Even today, in the era of expansion, there are only about 750 roster spots open and there are hundreds of millions of people in this world who want them. So these guys must have something going for them. Many of the players in my book are one- or two-skill players who desperately lacked a third or fourth. Maybe they could hit and run, but they couldn't field. Before the invention of the DH, some really good hitters were forced to field positions they were unable to handle. Some great fielders, like the catcher Bill Bergen, couldn't hit to save his life. And then there are guys who can slug the baseball, like Dave Kingman, but misbehave in an uncivilized manner.

Q. Are there any truly terrible players who didn't make it into the book?

A. Oh, there are plenty. The only thing I don't like about writing books is the lead time. Months after I finished the book, many players sank to new depths, too late, and were left out. A few players included in the book -- like Adam Dunn and Barry Zito -- had decent comeback seasons and might have dropped in the worst rankings if I had the time to change them. Alex Rodriguez is now, certainly, one of the most overpaid Yankees of all time. When I wrote the book, however, his hip was still functional and I left him out of that chapter. Maybe for the paperback edition...

From This book has a most unappealing title. And it calls forth many of baseball's usual suspects. The game's greatest goats? Bill Buckner and Ralph Branca—duh. And some inclusions are questionable: Barry Zito and Adam Dunn, the two “most overpaid” players outside the Bronx, actually had redemptive comebacks in 2012. But who can resist reading that Dickie Noles was

traded for himself (he was the “player to be named later”) or that starting pitcher Kei Igawa cost the Yankees nearly \$10 million per win, or that pitcher Gaylord Perry, in the words of Bondy, “was to the spitball what Mozart was to the opera?” Hardcore fans will pore over this compendium of futility and folly perpetrated between the lines during the past century or so. --Alan Moores

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