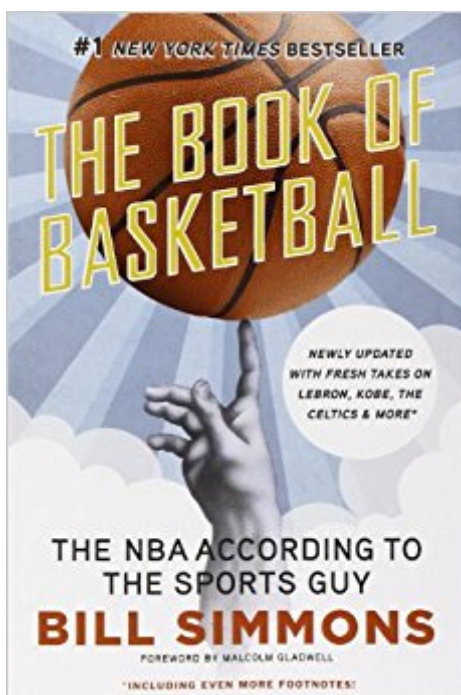


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The Book Of Basketball: The NBA According To The Sports Guy



Synopsis

Foreword by Malcolm Gladwell • Newly updated with fresh takes on LeBron, Kobe, the Celtics & more* Bill Simmons, the wildly opinionated and thoroughly entertaining basketball addict known to millions as ESPN.com's The Sports Guy, has written the definitive book on the past, present, and future of the NBA. From the age-old question of who actually won the rivalry between Bill Russell and Wilt Chamberlain to the one about which team was truly the best of all time, Simmons opens—and then closes, once and for all—every major pro basketball debate. Then he takes it further by completely reevaluating not only how NBA Hall of Fame inductees should be chosen but how the institution must be reshaped from the ground up, the result being the Pyramid: Simmons's one-of-a-kind five-level shrine to the ninety-six greatest players in the history of pro basketball. And ultimately he takes fans to the heart of it all, as he uses a conversation with one NBA great to uncover that coveted thing: The Secret of Basketball. Comprehensive, authoritative, controversial, hilarious, and impossible to put down (even for Celtic-haters), The Book of Basketball offers every hardwood fan a courtside seat beside the game's finest, funniest, and fiercest chronicler.*Including even more footnotes!

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Best of the Month, October 2009: The Book of Basketball is a 700-page work of hoops genius that would make Dr. James Naismith beam proudly and probably blush. Author Bill Simmons, best known as ESPN.com's "The Sports Guy," explores the NBA with hilarious insight, brilliant analysis, and a bevy of irreverent footnotes. Simmons is a fan first and a fact best explained

in an entertaining foreword by Malcolm Gladwell and writes from the stands, not the press room. His knowledge and passion for the game provide him with few peers, yet his voice represents those who stick by their teams through thick and thin. As a result, *The Book of Basketball* is not just a tribute to hardwood heroes, but also a celebration of yelling at TV sets, revering lucky jerseys, and holding our breath until the final buzzer sounds. Throw in pages of nearly-insane statistical breakdowns (including a projected boxscore from the movie *Teen Wolf*), and it's easy to see why fans of all levels should clear shelf space for this instant classic.

--Dave Callanan --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Starred Review Simmons, aka "the Sports Guy" is a regular columnist on ESPN.com. He writes about all sports, with a particular affection for his hometown Boston teams. Stylistically, there's no one quite like him writing about sports. Sardonic, both irreverent and reverent, silly, self-deprecating, and melancholy are all adjectives that can be used to describe his work. The NBA seems to bring out his best stuff, perhaps because of its unique mix of personalities and cultures and the mysteries of its team dynamics. This monster of a book (more than 700 pages) is equal parts history and analysis. Simmons summarizes the history of the league, discusses his personal fandom, includes a great "what if?" chapter (what if Michael Jordan had been drafted second by Portland instead of third by Chicago?), analyzes Most Valuable Player choices through the years, and dissects the careers of the league's all-time best players. The true NBA fan will dive into this hefty volume and won't resurface for about a week, emerging from the man cave unshaven, smelling of beer and pizza, grinning, and armed with NBA history, insight, anecdotes, statistics, and a dozen new examples of Simmons' Unintentional Comedy Scale. This is just plain fun. Expect significant demand from hoops junkies.

--Wes Lukowsky --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Great read. I bought this book years after it was published. While some of the information is dated (he ranks the all time great players and LeBron is laughably low now), you'll still appreciate his thinking on each player. This is a thoroughly researched book that actually takes a stand in the true Simmons style. Simmons writes like 2 friends debating silly but necessary things about sports over beers. I suppose Simmons' rubs many the wrong way. If so, this book will only make you like him more. However, if you like Simmons or are indifferent, give this book a shot. It's a great mix of stats and "I just feel" analysis that forms the basis of all great sport's debates.

Very interesting and engaging read, weakened only by Simmons' pronounced biases and historical blind spots. One simply has to learn to counter them. For example, reduce by roughly 30% the praise he heaps upon any Celtics team or player, especially from his childhood in the mid-80s. Yes, these were great teams and athletes in many cases, but Simmons' adulation overcomes his objectivity here. Increase by 20-25% his unenthusiastic assessment of any star or team from an era before his time and for which he can find little video. (For example, being unable to view Julius Erving's astounding 5-year ABA career, during which Dr. J achieved heights (literal and figurative) of skill and creativity that no other hoopster has or will, leaves Simmons to assess Erving less generously (and less accurately) solely on his more restrained subsequent NBA work.) Increase by 20% his assessment of any team that beat (or outdid) a Celtic team by playing better "Celtics basketball" (his assessments of the 69-70 and 72-73 NY Knicks championship teams are especially stingy). And decrease by 15-20% his assessment of recent stars in the overall pantheon of NBA talent - again, he relies too heavily on the familiar. Much here to pick nits and argue with, but also much to enjoy - and Simmons does communicate convincingly his love for the sport and the league. He could also be a bit more skeptical of the ways that marketing has weakened the sport and fan experience, but there are some hands that feed him that he might be best served not to bite. Overall a very enjoyable read.

Great read, I confess that I do not read a lot but I just couldn't put down this 700 page book filled with Bill Simmons' style of cultural reference and exaggeration humor. Sometimes his humor or maybe 700 pages of basketball might get old and tiring for people but simply put it down, take a rest, and pick it up again whenever you feel like it. No harm done. Personally my favorite section was Bill's idea on how the Basketball Hall of Fame should be, which leads to his list of greatest players ever. You may disagree but remember this is a book written by a FAN first, a Boston fan. If you're someone who has zero sense of humor, easily offended, extremely subjective and lacking in empathy, then maybe this book isn't for you. Otherwise you'll have a wonderful time hearing another friend talk basketball with you. Sometimes you agree, sometimes you disagree, sometimes he brings your image of your favorite players back down to earth by pointing out flaws, and sometimes he makes you realize how truly GREAT some players are with facts and analysis you didn't even know. I still can't believe I actually read a 700 page book cover to cover.

I've always liked the Sports Guy and his flippant pro everyman rants by default since I grew up back east and share part of his ethnicity. He writes from the gut with a rare passion not seen among the

literary sedentary set. Having said that, this book is too much to digest for casual fans. You must be from an A list basketball hub---Boston, LA, Chitown---or at least be an OCD hoops fanatic. A guy could get a stroke trying to read this in just a few sittings. Heck, writing it must've been a trip. So it has to be enjoyed in manic fits and starts or furtive bits 'n pieces. It's that exhausting and uber comprehensive. The focus here beyond his dad's Celtics season tickets sealing his fate as a kid fan, is on pyramid pantheon best ever debates, what ifs, secret knowledge, team comparison compendiums and various other scenario incidentals. Simmons, master of the between the lines scoop, says what's on his mind, is quick to offend and may be off the cuff with tactless fan boy antics, but he thinks like a genius GM and really should be considered as part of an NBA team brain trust someday. BS's magnum opus is media layman proof that astute educated fans can know the game better than some insider suits. His bias as a loyal Beantown homer is readily evident, but it doesn't detract from the overall tome scope. He has a hoop sleuth's way of witnessing the pall of history by outing its mistakes, rebuffs. etc. Like how inventor of the shot clock Danny Biasone and Celtics defensive clutch gem Dennis Johnson were snubbed from timely HoF induction. Via a coach sharp humanist link tying cults of personality to levels of performance, we learn that selfish players hit a ceiling and greats must share the ball to be transcendent. Someone give Bill a PhD in basketball. He really is an expert above the 4th estate rim. As for fun pop culture trivia references he's well known for, they rock here when they relate to more civilized innocence of the 70s and 80s. However, when they veer off into the 90s and beyond they get too dystopian for old school taste. And there are so many offbeatedly forced porn references that it makes you wonder if he somehow missed his true calling in life. For the record, pop culture in bed with sports didn't start with Simmons. T was ironically originated by an adult cinema historian who mixed pop, news and sports trivia intros with his movie reviews in an erotic film bible from the early 1980s. There are just enough extras missing here to make room for a 2nd volume that would be salable at even half the length. With so much info on elite players and teams, this needed a tongue-in-cheek chapter on footnote characters of the game like Darryl Dawkins, aka Chocolate Thunder, a rushed high school prospect who never reached his full potential but was memorable for destroying backboards on slam dunks. It also could've used a special part on basketball video games. But if this book is so discursively expansive that you anticipate a welcome sequel, then that's surely saying something.

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