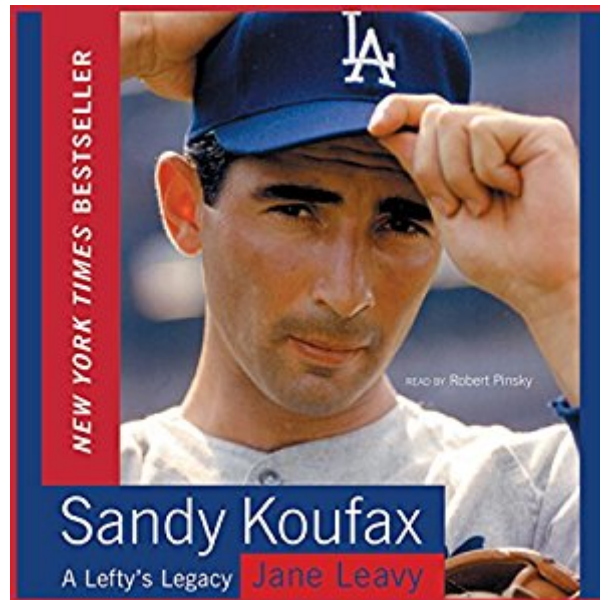




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Sandy Koufax: A Lefty's Legacy



Synopsis

“The incomparable and mysterious Sandy Koufax is revealed”. This is an absorbing book, beautifully written. • Wall Street Journal “Leavy has hit it out of the park” A lot more than a biography. It’s a consideration of how we create our heroes, and how this hero’s self perception distinguishes him from nearly every other great athlete in living memory a remarkably rich portrait. • Time The instant New York Times bestseller about the baseball legend and famously reclusive Dodgers pitcher Sandy Koufax, from award-winning former Washington Post sportswriter Jane Leavy. Sandy Koufax reveals, for the first time, what drove the three-time Cy Young award winner to the pinnacle of baseball and then just as quickly into self-imposed exile.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Wow. What a story. I was eleven when Koufax retired. We were DIE-HARD Cardinal fans so essentially I couldn't stand him. Glad I read this book. What an incredible athlete AND person. This book is fantastic in the way it tells the story of his life and weaves it in with the account of his masterpiece on the mound. The story of Koufax's early career was unknown to me. I had no idea he spent the early years on the bench because Walter Alston wouldn't pitch him. I recommend this book for an fan of the game of baseball.

As my teenage years coincided beautifully with Sandy Koufax's best years, it was a treat to read the 'behind-the-scenes' details this book provides that were simply not available to fans back then. This

book captures elegantly the Koufax aura that existed at the time; young fans like myself were in awe of him; older fans realized how rare was his talent; and even his contemporaries on the diamond still carry memories of his incredible impact. I personally went to buy Koufax's 1966 biography, which Sandy kindly autographed for me at Shillito's department store in Cincinnati, then went to see him beat the Reds that night in what turned out to be his final start in Cincinnati. I couldn't have known, until reading this book, just how tender his arm must have been on that September day, or that he knew even then that he was planning to retire only a month later. I still have the book, with his kind note addressed to me on the inside cover. But beyond personal reasons, I liked the book for its interesting account of Koufax the man, breaking down the myth of the reclusive former superstar, while capturing the essence of his fun-loving and kind nature. The book also revealed the intensely competitive nature of Koufax the athlete. Like many athletes of his day, he sacrificed his body, playing through intense pain in order to keep himself, and the Dodgers, in the game - or in the World Series. But in his case, the results had so much more of an impact on the game than any other single player in the lineup possibly could have. All of this and more comes out in this very inside look at a man who gave baseball all he had, then proceeded to live out the rest of his life with the same intensity, returning to the sport when it suited him simply because he loved the game, the players and being able to satisfy some of the public curiosity that inevitably would build up over years and decades. He liked being out in public, but he liked his privacy, just as we all do. Finally, for those who remember the role his Jewishness played in the public perception of him, we find in this book some very rich anecdotal material about this side of Sandy Koufax. The book would not have been the same without it, and the topic is well-covered. I highly recommend this book to anyone with an interest in this unusual man's life and career accomplishments.

I must admit I like my biographies to be traditional. I like page 1 to say he/she was born here on this date and the last page to say he/she died here on this date. That was not the case with this book but it didn't matter. The author did a magnificent job of gracefully weaving the story of Koufax's life into the story of his 1965 perfect game. The rehashing of the time periods being covered at first seemed forced and too long but as you got used to the style they became an integral part of the story, creating a backdrop for the period of the subject's life that she was dealing with. This is not a tell-all because frankly there is not much to tell. Koufax appears to be as amazing off the diamond as on and that comes through loud and clear. It's a quick and complete read and I can't recommend this book more. It is a must biography not just among sports figures but among men (and women).

I was born four years after Koufax hung it up for good so never had the opportunity to see him pitch. While I have always been a Yankee fan, there was an aura I'd hear baseball fans, players, commentators and family members talk about when Sandy Koufax came up in a conversation. As a youngster, you'd hear about the greatest lefty ever and the best 6 year stretch that any pitcher ever put together. Those little tidbits, plus some old film, his oft-cited reclusiveness and his decision not to pitch in the 1st game of the 65 WS because of Yom Kippur were the essence of my knowledge about #32. I finally decided to read Jane Leavy's book when I bought her recent bio on Mickey Mantle. I'm certainly glad I decided to read about the great Koufax. This book was pure baseball nirvana for me. Leavy structure is to intersperse each objective and insightful chapter on the life and career of Koufax with a chapter that covers each inning of his only perfect game (one of his three no-hitters) against the Cubs in 1965. That game might have been the best pitched baseball game ever when you consider it was the cleanest baseball box score in history -- 1 run, 1 hit and 1 error.... for BOTH teams. Perhaps because of Koufax's brilliance and aura, I never realized that the Cubs pitcher Bob Hendley lost this duel 1-0, giving up a solitary hit (it didn't factor in the run) and losing as the result of an error and a few stolen bases that led to the run. Much of what Leavy covers was new to me --- from Koufax love of basketball, the lack of trust and outright mis-use (or no use) by Walter Alston, Dodger manager, for the first 6 years of Koufax's career, to his family background and the role of Judaism in his life. In the day of 24 hour sports cycles, coddled athletes, primadonnas and performance enhancing drugs, --- and leaves me with an even fonder appreciation for this baseball legend. The only thing that I truly regret after finishing this book was never having a chance to watch #32 pitch at the ballpark.

One of the best pitchers to ever take the mound...bar none. Ms Leavy does a good job covering things you don't hear about too much....it did lean heavily on the Jewish connection a bit too much for my taste but hey....there just aren't too many out there to start with so the trumpet blowin' can be understood. Good easy baseball read. Recommend.

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