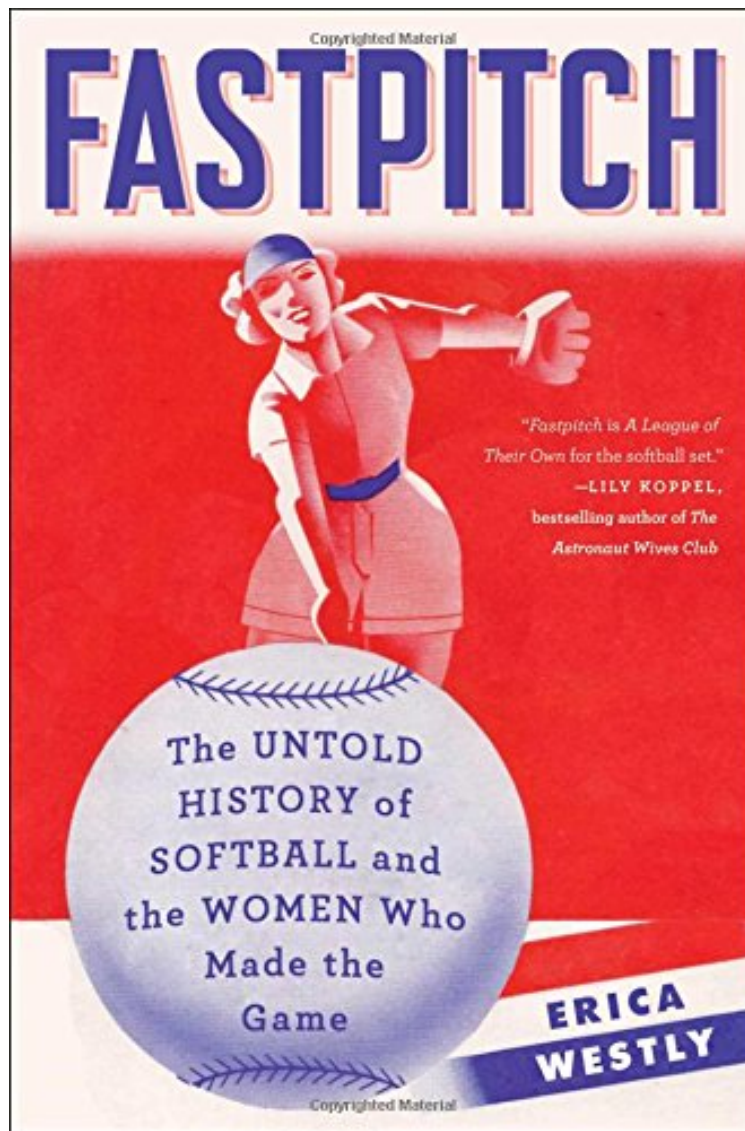


Fastpitch: The Untold History of Softball and the Women Who Made the Game

Erica Westly

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Erica Westly : Fastpitch: The Untold History of Softball and the Women Who Made the Game before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fastpitch: The Untold History of Softball and the Women Who Made the Game:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Hooked from the First Page.By pjderickHooked from the very beginning. Great book for true softball enthusiasts. I have been following my granddaughters softball career from

when she was a young girl to now being a grown woman playing for a Division One college team. Reading this book enlightened me to the full history of the game. Reading how the popularity of women's FastPitch grew over many decades was a fascinating read. The ability for women to play for many years through the companies they worked for and the fan base these teams had was terrific. Modern day women softball players have very limited opportunities to continue to play after college. That is a shame for the sport. Today's sport needs to remain as an Olympic event past 2020. Thank you Erica Westly for bringing the history of the game to all of us rabid fans. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent By Kindle Customer It is well written and researched book about the history of softball and some truly amazing about the sports humbling beginnings. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Lida E. Shoemaker Well written and a very interesting read!

If you think softball is just a women's version of the great American pastime of baseball, well, think again. Fastpitch softball is one of the most widely played sports in the world, with tens of millions of active participants in various age groups. But the origins of this beloved sport and the charismatic athletes who helped it achieve prominence in the mid-twentieth century have been largely forgotten, until now. Fastpitch brings to life the eclectic mix of characters that make up softball's vibrant 129-year history. From its humble beginnings in 1887, when it was invented in a Chicago boat club and played with a broomstick, to the rise in the 1940s and 1950s of professional-caliber company-sponsored teams that toured the country in style, softball's history is as diverse as it is fascinating. Though its thought of today as a woman's sport, fastpitch softball's early years featured several male stars, such as the vaudeville-esque Eddie Feigner, whose signature move was striking out batters while blindfolded. But because softball was one of the only team sports that women were allowed to play competitively, it took on added importance for female athletes. Top fastpitch teams of the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, such as the New Orleans Jax Maids and Connecticut's Raybestos Brakettes, gave women access to employment and travel opportunities that would have been unavailable to them otherwise. At a time when female athletes had almost no prospects, softball offered them a chance to flourish. Women put off marriage and moved across the country just for a shot at joining a strong team. Told from the perspective of such influential players as Bertha Ragan Tickey, who set strikeout records and taught Lana Turner to pitch, and Joan Joyce, who struck out baseball legend Ted Williams and helped found a professional softball league with Billie Jean King, Fastpitch chronicles softball's rich history and its uncertain future (as evidenced by its controversial elimination from the 2012 Olympics and the mounting efforts to have it reinstated). A celebration of this unique American sport and the role it plays in our culture today, Fastpitch is as entertaining as it is inspiring.

From School Library Journal Taking readers to a time when women had few choices to play competitive team sports, this title provides great insight into the history of this fast-paced game that evolved from a sport with two basic constants (large ball and underhand pitch) to a game with all the complexity of its parent sport, baseball. We meet a cast of players spanning decades in the pastime. Women such as Nina Korgan and Bertha Ragan Tickey and the nation as a whole found the game to be a much-needed distraction during World War II. Westly also details a shutout at a charity event when a legendary Boston Red Sox player could not get a hit off pitcher Joan Joyce. The evolution of the sport has been influenced by the important legislation of the Title IX amendment, which made schools provide the same opportunities to women as men, and as a result, softball programs began to grow owing to more funding. The author explores interesting details such as how the uniforms changed from the shiny satin short shorts to more modern and useful designs. Women athletes have always had to make difficult decisions regarding their sport and personal life, and decisions regarding marriage, children, and work outside of softball are all discussed with honesty and clarity. VERDICT A fascinating exploration of a sport that has helped women work through issues of sexism while playing the game they love. Nonfiction shelves of libraries in middle and high schools will benefit from including this book. April Sanders, Spring Hill College, Mobile, AL "A fascinating look at the little-known story of fastpitch softball, and the women who dedicated themselves to it for the love of the game. From the old industrial leagues to today's international competitions, here is the rollicking, unlikely, and totally absorbing story of an original American sport." (Kevin Baker, author of *The Big Crowd*) Every baseball player knows about Babe Ruth and Ted Williams, and every softball player should know about Bertha Tickey and Joan Joyce. I love reading about the history of our sport and about the legends of our game. The opportunities that I had playing this great sport are because of athletes like Bertha, Joan, Jeanne Contel, and others. Every softball player should read this book and learn about their sport. (Laura Berg, Olympic gold medalist in softball and head softball coach at Oregon State University) Fastpitch is hidden history at its most intriguing. Through the story of women's softball, Erica Westly offers unexpected insights into business history, feminism, American social history, and the politics of sports. At the same time, she focuses on the competitive drive of women who wanted to excel on the playing field and the barriers that stood in their way. It's a classic American tale. (Jack El-Hai, author of *The Nazi and the Psychiatrist* and past president of the American Society of Journalists and Authors) Erica Westly's *Fastpitch* is a fun and entertaining read for people of all ages. Team sports were my first love, and Fastpitch immediately brought back wonderful memories of playing softball at Houghton Park in Long Beach, California, winning the 15 Under championships on my softball team, and then later working with legends of the sport

to start a professional softball league. The history is well documented and the storytelling is completely enjoyable! (Billie Jean King)Fastpitch is A League of Their Own for the softball set. Erica Westly takes on the power plays and girl power moments on and off the field. (Lily Koppel, bestselling author of The Astronaut Wives Club)Fastpitch whips through the surprising history of softball and the remarkable women who played it. From rival leagues to cringeworthy news coverage to incredible athletic feats to the shifting politics of playing the sport, Westly gives readers a thorough tour of decades of figure eight wind ups, rise balls, and fast pitches. (Rachel Swaby, author of Headstrong: 52 Women Who Changed Science and the World)"Fastpitch tells you the untold story of softball in a stunning and creative way. A must read for anyone who loves the sport!" (Jonathan Fader, author of Life as Sport)Fill[s] a yawning gap in the literature. Its especially strong at conveying how popular, at times, the game has been as a spectator sport. . . . The author draws fine profiles of some of the sports legendary figures . . . its great teams . . . and, especially, a cultural climate that has often been unsupportive of, if not antagonistic toward, those gifted, dedicated athletes. (Booklist)About the AuthorErica Westly is a journalist whose work has appeared in Slate,Wired,The Smart Set, Self,Esquire, Popular Science, andThe New York Times. Fastpitch is her first book.