

(Ebook pdf) The Perfect Season: Why 1998 Was Baseball's Greatest Year

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Danny Peary, Tim McCarver

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#12108935 in Books 1999-06 Format: Unabridged Original language: English Binding: Audio Cassette | File size: 38.Mb

Danny Peary, Tim McCarver : The Perfect Season: Why 1998 Was Baseball's Greatest Year before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Perfect Season: Why 1998 Was Baseball's Greatest Year:

0 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good Overview of the Character of the 1998 Team By Phil MI am a big Phil Fulmer fan and was anxious to read this book once I found it on . The book emphasizes the character of the team, their toughness and how they molded themselves together to be a true team. I enjoyed reading about this development from the coach's perspective, but would have also appreciated more discussion about the individual games in the season. Each game had its compliment of pictures showing the various practice charts used to prepare the team; I found these to be frankly irrelevant to the story. All in all, it is worth reading. It does give the reader a good glimpse into how a championship team is built and what players need to do to ensure success on the field. I would just have liked a bit more information and discussion of the game day performance of the team and how all of the practices led to their victories. 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Compelling breakdown of the amazing 1998 baseball season By Patrick L. Randall It was inevitable that following the spectacular baseball season of 1998, that there would be books released that would try to immortalize the accomplishments and memories of that year. The two most notable ones were "Summer of 98" by Mike Lupica and "The Perfect Season" by Tim McCarver. McCarver is a long-time baseball analyst on a myriad of networks. Often bombastic and overblown with his commentary, he hits the 1998 season right on the mark. It may very well be 'the perfect season'. In the aftermath of the 1994 baseball strike, Major League Baseball had struggled to regain its foothold in the American psyche. As recently as 1997, underachieving

seasons by so many teams led to a World Series that, while a dramatic 7 games, was also a horribly ugly matchup between Cleveland and Florida. The only glimmer of hope in that season was the home run tears that Mark McGwire and Ken Griffey Jr. went on. Their challenges to the Roger Maris' home run record entertained the nation, but ultimately both fell short, with Griffey hitting 56 and McGwire hitting 58. Little else in that season did anything to attract fans back to the park. The 1998 season dawned with a auspicious feel to it. Mark McGwire was going to have a full season in St. Louis to go after Maris' record and there were some exciting prospects coming up in the minor leagues. But, few could have expected the incredible form this year would take. From Mark McGwire's Opening Day grand slam until the final out of the World Series, 1998 had it all. In "The Perfect Season", McCarver creates an indispensable companion to the year. He breaks down each of the season's major accomplishments in separate chapters and writes each like a little kid excitedly spouting everything he could think of about what he saw. This approach works quite well for the nature of the material. Obviously a great deal of time is spent on the spectacular home run race between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa (in which both broke Maris' record and continued their mano-a-mano battle until the final weekend) and the unbelievable season in which the New York Yankees won 114 regular season games (and 125 overall) on their way to another World Championship. There are some other fascinating topics covered, like the emergence of Cubs rookie pitcher Kerry Wood with his 20-strikeout game, David Wells' perfect game, and the resurgence of the Chicago Cubs, who made the playoffs for the first time in 9 seasons. Additionally, there are some lesser known details of the season that McCarver brings to light, such as Houston's Craig Biggio becoming the first player since Tris Speaker to have 50 doubles and 50 steals in the same season, and Giants' Jeff Kent becoming the first second baseman since the legendary Rogers Hornsby to have 120 Rbi's in back-to-back seasons. McCarver covers all the bases with vivid clarity. This book is a quick read and worthy recap of "The Perfect Season". 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Uninspired Retelling of the 1998 Season. By A Customer Whether 1998 was baseball's greatest year or not is open for debate, of course. If it was, then this book doesn't do a very good job of retelling those events. It misses much of the excitement of that year. A big part of the problem is the format of the book: a particular date is called out, then a particular player is singled out for discussion for that date (maybe he got a hit that day), then a retelling of his career ups and downs, punctuated with statistics even baseball fans will find uninteresting ("..the only player since Joe Blow in 1973 to get two hits, steal two bases, and catch a fly ball in both left and right field...." - that's not a direct quote, just the way it seemed to me). In other words, the book is on the dull side. The second problem is that the book wanders all over the place. Rather than being largely about the 1998 season, it becomes a soapbox for Mr. McCarver's opinion on the whole field and history of baseball. One the plus side, it's nice to hear the experiences of someone who's closer to the action than most of us get to be. And it's nice to tell some stories and antidotes I hadn't heard before.

Nineteen Ninety-Eight was the greatest season in baseball history. While Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa engaged in an epic duel for baseball's most coveted individual record -- Roger Maris's 61 home runs, the New York Yankees set new standards for team excellence and established themselves as one of the greatest clubs in the history of the game. Tim McCarver broadcast the climax of each of these extraordinary achievements and is uniquely positioned as a former player, a commentator, and writer to put 1998 into its proper perspective. McCarver is baseball's best analyst and, as he showed with *Tim McCarver's Baseball for Brain Surgeons and Other Fans*, he is as eloquent and witty on the page as he is behind the microphone. In *The Perfect Season*, McCarver revels in the homer race and the Yankees but shows that the season contained so much more, ensuring it will stand out as the best there has been. Star players performing to the height of their powers broke records set by true legends of baseball, linking today's players with those who exist somewhere between myth and memory: Ruth and Cobb; Gehrig and Mays. *The Perfect Season* describes the accomplishments of veterans like Juan Gonzalez, Roger Clemens, Ken Griffey, Jr., Mike Piazza, and Barry Bonds, and of the exceptional young players who hold the future of the game in their hands: Derek Jeter, Alex Rodriguez, Nomar Garciaparra, and Kerry Wood. Tim McCarver also laments the passing of some friends and colleagues: Richie Ashburn, Harry Caray, and Dan Quisenberry, and celebrates the careers of some stars who retired after the 1998 season. *The Perfect Season* is a comprehensive account of 1998 and the perfect souvenir of baseball's greatest year. With it, fans can remember the season in which they got back into the habit of watching the game and reestablished baseball as America's Pastime. From the Hardcover edition.

.com One of baseball's most outspoken and articulate voices in the booth, Tim McCarver isn't one to mince words in print either. "The year 1998 wasn't just the greatest in baseball history," he states emphatically in *The Perfect Season*, "it was the greatest any sport has ever enjoyed." Helluva claim. He then proceeds to make a helluva case to back it. Leading off with the obvious, McCarver details how the rousing home-run race between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa and the ghosts of Babe Ruth and Roger Maris was the most visibly rousing thrill, but only one of many thrills in a year that overflowed with spectacular accomplishments. His list is a long one: David Wells's perfect game; Kerry Woods's 20-strikeout masterpiece; Barry Bonds creating the career 400-homer-400-steals club; Craig Biggio becoming the first 50-doubles-50-steals man since Tris Speaker; the end of Cal Ripkin's inconceivable streak; another 50-home-

run year from Ken Griffey Jr.; the continuing domination of Roger Clemens; the ascendancy of a trio of marvelous shortstops in Nomar Garciaparra, Derek Jeter, and Alex Rodriguez; the slugging of Mike Piazza; the comeback of Jose Canseco; the Cubs return to post-season play, the 125 Yankee victories, and on and on. "It wasn't just that records fell or were equalled at an inordinate rate," insists McCarver, it was the context of the achievements themselves; in 1998, baseball came face to face with marks etched in the books by historically significant names. Thus, 1998 was more than a marvelous season; it was a telescope through which fans could focus on both an exuberant present and a living, vivid past. --Jeff Silverman

From School Library Journal-McCarver is a baseball insider-a former major league player and now a TV analyst of the game. The Perfect Season recaptures the momentum of 1998 far beyond the memorable home-run race that turned Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa (photographed together on the book jacket) into synonyms for superior baseball. In chronological order, the authors make it clear that the year had more than two icons. Teams, coaches, players, and announcers who brought luster back to America's pastime by approaching the sport with dignity and perseverance are featured in the 39 opinion-packed vignettes. Most of the stories involve record-breaking performances. Each one is notable, but McCarver doesn't laud them all. He comes down hard on bad attitudes, even from guys on a hot streak. However, he writes glowingly of sportsmanship that transcends time, as in the posthumous tributes he pays to Richie Ashburn, Dan Quisenberry, Harry Caray, and his former teammate, Roger Maris. Without being preachy, the book proves that the Hall of Fame is only one peak in baseball. The stories are brief and can be read in any order. Each one is loaded with stats and play-by-play insights wrapped with as much heart as enthusiasm. Being a baseball aficionado is not required; enjoying reading about personal, hard-won victories is.

Karen Sokol, Fairfax County Public Schools, VA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

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