

computers, cable television, and Rotisserie Leagues, began to reshape the game to fit the parameters of the computer and consumer age.

Tygiel's essays reflect the judgment of a trained historian and demonstrate that through the lens of baseball one may ascertain a great deal about American culture. However, as Tygiel would certainly acknowledge, baseball has its problems as an analytical historical tool. For example, Tygiel concludes that during the 1980s many males who embraced countercultural values in the 1960s discovered "a form of reentry into the American mainstream through the healing power of baseball" (219). However, examining major league baseball during the last 150 years offers few such insights into the role played by women in American culture and history. While baseball as history certainly possesses limitations, in the hands of a gifted writer and scholar such as Tygiel it also offers many rich possibilities.

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RICH WESTCOTT. *Phillies '93: An Incredible Season*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994. Pp. x + 212. Illustrated. \$21.95 pb.

Only a franchise with a history of futility comparable to that of the Philadelphia Phillies could possibly be the subject of a book devoted to an "incredible season" that ended in defeat. In this case, that defeat was administered by the Toronto Blue Jays in the 1993 World Series. An honorable defeat, no doubt, but a defeat nonetheless. Then again, only once in Philadelphia's long history of National League membership have Phillies fans celebrated a World Series triumph. This occurred at the conclusion of the so far singularly incredible year in Philadelphia Phillies history: 1980. There were other Phillies pennants in 1915, 1950, 1983—and 1993. In fact, as Rich Westcott reminds us, the 1915 and 1993 Phillies entries have something ignominious in common, something shared only by the 1960 Yankees: the World Series quests of all three teams ended in defeat, courtesy of home runs hit by their opponents. Thank you, Harry Hooper of the Red Sox, Bill Mazerowski of the Pirates, and Joe Carter of the Blue Jays.

That would be the Toronto Blue Jays, of course. As Westcott also points out, there was a brief time in the 1940s when the "Blue Jays" was the official nickname of the Philadelphia entry in the National League. It seems that new owner Bob Carpenter ran a contest in which fans were asked to come up with a more imaginative sobriquet for a team whose performance had historically been as lackluster and nondescript as, well, as its nickname. The winning moniker was the Blue Jays, but it never took. Long-suffering Phillies fans apparently preferred what was familiar, even if it was associated with incompetence.

That sense of a long-suffering tradition has extended well beyond the 1940s, occasional accidental successes along the way notwithstanding. The most recent near-miss came courtesy of a living accident-waiting-to-happen known only as the "Wild Thing" (Mitch Williams), whose failures out of the bullpen against the real Blue Jays of 1993 contributed mightily to the Phillies defeat of 1993. Yes, all of the gruesome details are here, including the death threats against Williams following that truly incredible 14-13

loss in Game Four. This is a reasonably thorough history of the 1993 season, complete with pictures, statistics, and an account of general manager Lee Thomas's peripatetic wheeling and dealing over the five years preceding this single season. But it is really a history for devoted Phillies fans, rather than a history for the ages. Sound like a cliché? It is. But so be it, because this book is full of clichés.

To its credit, however, this book is also spiced with occasionally endearing stories of this less-than-storied collection of Phillies, such as Curt Schilling's penchant for leaving tickets for his deceased father at every NL ballpark. For those who care to remember, these were also the Phillies of the "handsome heartthrob" (Darren Daulton), the "character right out of a comic strip" (John Kruk), and the "resourceful team catalyst" (Lenny Dykstra), not to mention the "quietly elegant Jim Eisenreich," the "raucous Pete Incaviglia," and the "refreshing Mariano Duncan." This was a team of colorful "throwbacks," a team Westcott deems highly unlike the "moody and mechanical" Phillies of 1980 (can anything be at once "moody and mechanical?"). John Kruk put it a bit differently. To him, it was a team composed of players who had previously been "thrown back" by other teams. One way or another, it was a team. And, as Westcott never tires of repeating, "there is no 'i' in team." Clichés can be trite and annoying. Of course, clichés can also be right—and nonetheless annoying. This seems to have been the case when capturing this limited edition of the Phillies.

To be fair, this is not an entirely annoying book. It's just that its usefulness is rather limited—about as limited as Daulton's mobility behind the plate or Williams's control on the mound. Historians interested in reminders that general managers were once able to put together near-winners before the current—and currently exclusive—dominance of the big buck franchises might find this a helpful resource, even if Thomas was as lucky as he was good when it came to acquiring these puzzling pieces, and even if the Phillies near-success of '93 proved to be anything but sustainable.

Those who will one day ponder the repeated failures of the team in the nineties might also turn to this book. Does anyone remember that it was the Atlanta Braves who were defeated in six games by the upstart Phillies in the '93 LCS? Westcott remembers that, as well as these numbers. The Braves outhit the Phillies, .274-.227, and outscored them, 33-23. Their team ERA was 3.15 to the Phillies' 4.75. Somehow it was fitting that the series MVP would be Curt Schilling, who was winless in his two starts. Interesting, to be sure. But in the end, this Westcott entry will primarily interest only those Phillies fans searching for tantalizing might-have-beens over the long course of what has been truly incredible: the incredibly persistent history of failure by the Philadelphia Phillies.

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