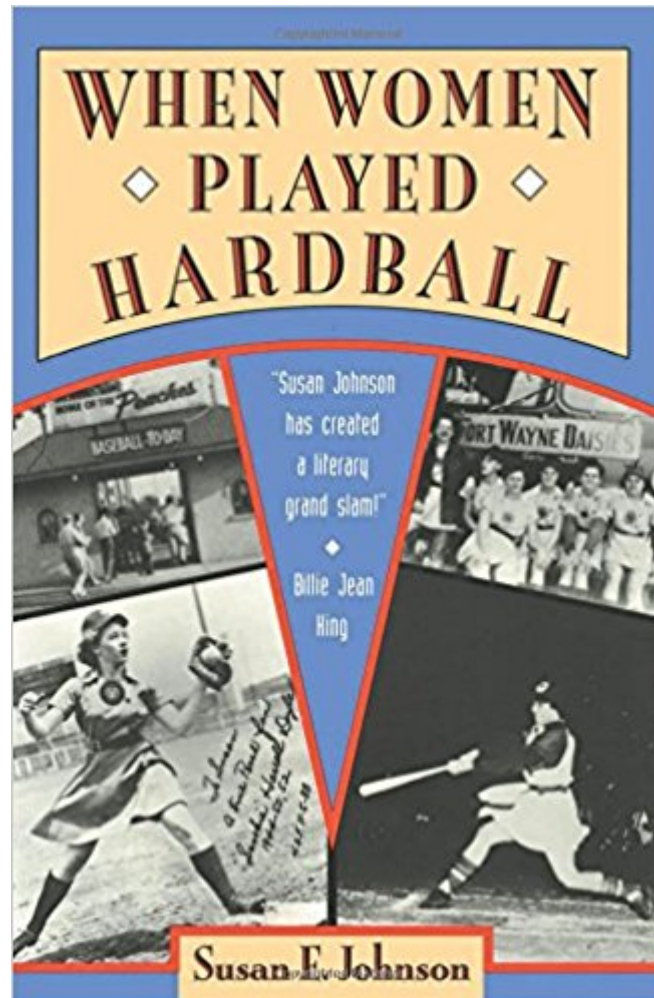




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# When Women Played Hardball



## Synopsis

The years between 1943 and 1954 marked the magical era of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League - which proved beyond doubt that women can play hardball. With skill and style, more than 500 women took to the baseball diamonds of the Midwest dazzling fans and becoming a visible and supported part of our national pastime. In the words of "Tiby" Eisen, leadoff batter for the Fort Wayne Daisies: "We played ball just like the big boys, we broke up double plays with spikes held high and we stole bases in our skirts. We did whatever it took to win." Among those cheering was ten-year-old Susan Johnson, a loyal fan of the Rockford Peaches. Four decades later she has gone back to meet her girlhood heroines and remember a sensational baseball series: the 1950 championship between the Rockford (Illinois) Peaches and the Fort Wayne (Indiana) Daisies - two of the League's most winning and dynamic teams. Filled with colorful stories and anecdotes by the women who played in that spectacular series, *When Women Played Hardball* offers an entertaining look at the culture the league created - and the society it reflected. This is a story about memories, about dreams fulfilled and dreams denied. It is a celebration of a brief yet remarkable period when women truly had "A League of Their Own."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For Johnson, a sociology professor, 1950 was a banner year, marking the summer when the 10-year-old Midwest native became a fan of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League. The league lasted only 11 years (1943-1954), but interest in it was recently revived by the film *A League of Their Own*. Johnson warmly recalls her own days in the stands and convincingly

portrays the importance of the league to young female fans, who often became "Coke girls" to their favorite players, meeting them after every game with a can of soda. Her history alternates excerpts from interviews with 26 of the women who played for the Rockford Peaches and the Fort Wayne Daisies in 1950 with newspaper accounts of that year's championship series between the two teams. Many of the players' recollections have a certain sameness, but the author's enthusiasm for her subject keeps them fresh. Former Peaches catcher Marilyn Jones contends that management insisted on the women being feminine because fans "wanted to see a bunch of girls that acted like girls, and looked like girls and played like boys." Several players were shocked to learn that they were expected to play in skirts and attend "charm school" to learn how to be more graceful; one woman claims "I learned how to be graceful by playing ball out in the pasture, side-steppin' all the cowpies!" Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

As a girl, Johnson was a devoted fan of the Rockford Peaches, a team in the All-American Girls Baseball League (1943-54) that was featured in the 1992 movie *A League of Their Own*. This book, a love letter to the league and its players, vividly re-creates what being in the league was like for the players, who were "unconventional before, during and after their ball-playing days." Seven chapters recount the seven games of the exciting 1950 playoff series between the Rockford Peaches and the Fort Wayne Daisies. Each chapter is accompanied by an in-depth player profile and a section dealing with such topics as the league's feminine image; game strategy; the players' upbringings; and life after the league disbanded. Johnson lets us share the players' memories, lest we forget the high caliber of their play. Highly recommended for public and academic libraries.- Kathy Ruffle, Coll. of New Caledonia Lib., Prince George, British Columbia Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Great book! I love how she not only interviewed players, but she included coaches, trainers, managers, fans, etc. I would give anything to have been able to experience this first hand. It must have been incredible. My only complaint is that she only interviewed two teams, the Peaches and the Daisies. Definitely recommend this book.

Fabulous book. Very well researched and well written about a unique historical period in our national history.

Terrific historical perspective; well written.

great book, shipped fast, well packed THANK YOU

This is a great book. If you like baseball at all, I recomend this book. It's full of history that most people never knew about.

While Lois Browne's "The Girls Of Summer" is perhaps the most complete history of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League, this book is the most personal account due to Ms. Johnson's own fandom of the early 1950's. It's an extremely well-done book interpolating Ms. Johnson's text with interviews of former AAGBPL players and contemporary newspaper game accounts of the 1950 league championship series. While Browne's book (and others) are a little more academic in their approach to the subject, this is the one that really gives readers the best "feel" for what it was like for women to play baseball 50-60 years ago. Parents considering buying this for their children should note that there is a little more emphasis on player sexuality in this book than the others, but that detracts little from the overall effort. I've read four or five books on the AAGPBL, and would consider this the best of them (with Browne's book a solid second).

I feel cheated!!! I was born too late to have been an eye-witness to these remarkable women in baseball! Along with the Cooperstown recognition as well as the movie, "A League of Their Own", it is just not right that these wonderful athletes have not been given even more credit for proving to so many fans, men and women alike, that there is just cause for having a Professional Women's Baseball League today. Susan E. Johnson gives the reader the heartwarming stories of day-to-day life in the AAGPBL. She brings to life the individual women who played their hearts out whether for one season or many providing a glimpse of what it was really like to live the life of a Rockford Peach or Fort Wayne Daisie or one of dozens of other teams. Readers will end the book envious of the lives led by these remarkable women and ask why there isn't a similar league today (though a few major adjustments might be in order regarding the uniform and social rules and regulations). God Bless each and every one of these women for their contribution to the All American Girls Professional Baseball League and to Susan E. Johnson for taking the time and effort to share her stories with those of us who didn't know there really was a league of women athletes who could run circles around many of their male counterparts in baseball! Johnson provides statistics not only for individual players but for the teams in general and doesn't hesitate to compare such detail against the men's teams. There are quite a few instances when these women athletes exceed their male

counterparts - a remarkable achievement in many ways but sadly not known to the general public. The reader instinctively knows the author relishes sharing the details behind the history of the AAGPBL, the managers, the fans, the women themselves as it is learned early on in the book that she was a young fan of these ball players (Rockford Peaches) and seldom missed a home game. Her enthusiasm is easily transferred to the reader. The league eventually ended in 1954 but the spirit remains alive through the continued efforts of former players and their families and fans. For anyone that enjoys the sport of baseball, that enjoys particularly the sport of Women's baseball, or for anyone really curious about the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League and the real women behind the league, you'll love this book and find yourself thirsting for more!

This is a remembrance of and look at the AAGPBL through the eyes of a woman who was once a ten-year-old fan of the Rockford Peaches. That in itself is exciting for the reader to know and keep in mind. The book is organized around the seven-game championship series between the Peaches and the Fort Wayne Daisies in 1950. Each chapter includes memories, reproductions of newspaper articles, interviews with the players. There's a lot of information in this book, though there's no index through which one could easily find the information. Nonetheless, Recommended!

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