



All the Babe's Men

Eldon L. Ham

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Why are Americans obsessed with the home run in sports, business, and even life? What made the steroid era inevitable? Revisiting the great home run seasons of Babe Ruth through those of Barry Bonds, *All the Babe's Men* answers these and other provocative questions.

Baseball, and particularly the long ball itself, evolved via accident, necessity, and occasional subterfuge. During the dead-ball era, pitching ruled the game, and home run totals hovered in the single digits. Then a ban on the spitball and the compression of stadium dimensions set the stage for new sluggers to emerge, culminating in Ruth's historic sixty-homer season in 1927. The players, owners, and fans became hooked on the homer, but our addiction took us to excess. As the home run became the ultimate goal for hitters, players went to new lengths to increase their power and ability to swing for the fences. By the time Barry Bonds set a new single-season record in 2001, Americans had to face the fact that their national pastime had become corrupted from within.

Through a play-by-play analysis of the game's historic long-ball seasons, its superstars, and the contemporary legal nightmares and tainted records, *All the Babe's Men* divulges how America evolved into a home run society where baseball is king.

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