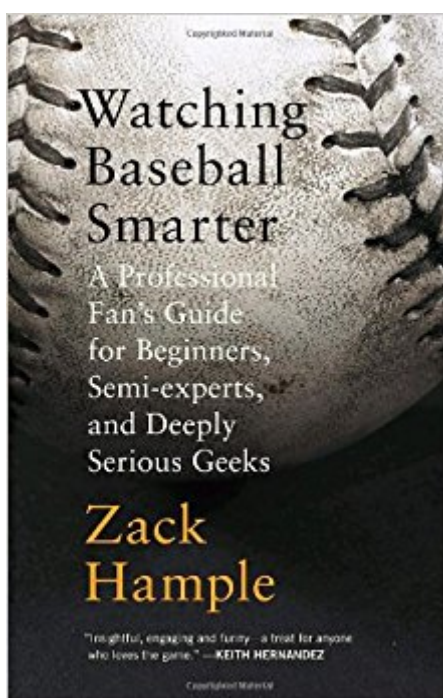


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Watching Baseball Smarter: A Professional Fan's Guide For Beginners, Semi-experts, And Deeply Serious Geeks



Synopsis

This smart and funny fan's guide to baseball explains the ins and outs of pitching, hitting, running, and fielding, while offering insider trivia and anecdotes that will appeal to anyone—whether you're a major league couch potato, life-long season ticket-holder, or a beginner. What is the difference between a slider and a curveball? At which stadium did "The Wave" first make an appearance? How do some hitters use iPods to improve their skills? Which positions are never played by lefties? Why do some players urinate on their hands? Combining the narrative voice and attitude of Michael Lewis with the compulsive brilliance of Schott's *Miscellany*, *Watching Baseball Smarter* will increase your understanding and enjoyment of the sport—no matter what your level of expertise. Features an glossary of baseball slang, an appendix of important baseball stats, and an appendix of uniform numbers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review. "Professional fan" Hample (*How to Snag Major League Baseballs*), who falls squarely in the "deeply serious geek" category, has put together an invaluable resource for armchair fans. A former college shortstop, four-time attendee of Bucky Dent's Baseball School and an obsessive baseball collector, Hample covers basics like what to watch for in pitchers, catchers, hitters, fielders and base runners; he also provides answers to such nagging questions as why spectators stretch in the seventh inning and why most ballplayers grab their crotches. He explains the difference between a change-up and a split-finger fastball, breaks down a box score and offers an extensive glossary of baseball slang that defines both a "courtesy trot" and a "dying quail." Other sections address free agency and fair balls, umpires and uniform numbers, stadiums and

superstitions. Trivia abounds, including the names of the 10 switch hitters honored in the National Baseball Hall of Fame and a record of inside-the-park homeruns. Hample hits the equivalent of a reference-book homerun with his witty, loose and readable style-taking a friendly for-a-fan-by-a-fan approach that doesn't hide his enormous depth of knowledge. Highly recommended for baseball watchers, Hample also schools amateur players and coaches with well-illustrated examples of some complex pitching, hitting and base-running scenarios. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Hample is known in the blogosphere as the foremost snagger of major-league baseballs (read all about it at snaggingbaseballs.mlblogs.com). Here he turns to ink and paper with a Baseball for Dummies-type guide that, thanks to its irreverent, tongue-in-cheek style, will also appeal to fans who left the dummy stage long ago. He covers such topics as the amateur draft, grips for various pitches--slider, curve, splitter, etc.--and what managers talk about on their visits to the mound. There is discussion of the seemingly obvious (the role of starting pitchers) and the more arcane (when not to slide), and there is plenty of genuinely fascinating historical trivia (how the letter K came to be the scorekeeper's symbol for a strikeout). All in all, this is a light but informative tome that will be just the ticket to get fans in the right frame of mind for opening day. Wes Lukowsky Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

The subtitle of this well crafted work: "A Professional Fan's Guide for Beginners, Semi-Experts, and Deeply Serious Geeks." For the first two categories, right on! Geeks are not going to learn a whole lot that they already do not know. That aside, though, this is a nice work. Examples of what is in some of the chapters: Chapter 2 focuses on "Pitchers and Catchers." The first part of the chapter describes basic pitches (and how they are thrown)--fastball, curveball, slider, change-up, split-finger fastball, knuckleball, screwball, spitball (naughty, naughty!), eephus, and gyroball (does it even exist?). Each is described, with a bit of humor added here and there. Chapter 5 explores "Fielding." There are brief descriptions of what each position has to do. As an old second baseman, I enjoyed reading about the basics of the double play and so on. Chapter 6 examines "Stadiums" (but should this not be "Stadia," to use the proper Latin term?). One of the more enjoyable features is the description of some unique fields. Think Fenway Park or Wrigley Field. But why not talk about the cool stadium in Cleveland? Chapter 9 takes a peek at "Random Stuff to Know." E.g., Why K for strikeout on scorecards? What about uniform numbers? The seventh inning stretch? And so on. This book is a lot of fun. Even hard core baseball fans might enjoy it for its style, even though they may

not learn a great deal that is new. For beginners and intermediate fans, though, this will be quite a pleasure!

I grew up watching and playing baseball. I sometimes visit Major League parks in other cities while traveling. I have a friend who is not from this country, who now has a son, and he said he wanted to know more about the game. I decided to buy the book to take a look at it from those 2 perspectives. I think this book succeeds on both of those levels, and does it while peppering in many bites of trivia. I think it assumes some basic understanding of the game, which someone could gain from watching a single game. The title "Watching baseball smarter", implies that one has previously watched the game. I think it's a great reference book to keep around, great for women or anyone who wants to understand and participate in watching the game, and I think it would be fun thing to take to the ball park and leaf through while enjoying a game. While it's not exhaustive in statistics, it provides some of the key benchmarks that most people want to know about. The best of the best, stats. Great gift item, and desk reference!

This one is OK. It does what it says, it shows you some pointers to look for while watching baseball. Some of them are useful, like interpreting strategy from the movements of the players. Some of the information is useful. However, if you are looking for a book that explains the game of baseball and/or the rules to a beginner, this may not be the place to start. It does give some very basic information, but it's not really consistent. It jumps from some really basic things right into some subtle stuff that would appeal to a more seasoned fan. No really horrible problems, and some parts are good. It is probably worth getting as long as you know what the point of it is. Probably good for people with some familiarity with baseball, but not complete beginners or somebody with a deep knowledge of the game. More of an "intermediate" reader, if there is such a thing.

I just finished this book and learned a lot of interesting things. Now I am going to read it again, making notes along the way. Very entertaining book as well as educational.

Like watching baseball? Think you know it all? You don't. Great book. Well written and a LOT of fun information about this great sport!

Such a great book so far! I am excited to grow my knowledge of baseball and then head to AZ for a couple spring training games. The author is a great writer, very fun, has a good pace, and explains

things very well to the old pro and newbie alike. Probably you should have, as he writes in the introduction, at least seen a game or two, know that it's three strikes and you're out, 9 innings, etc, but everything else Zack'll teach you. Love this book!

I grew up playing and watching baseball, so apart from one or two vocabulary words, a couple of complicated rule and statistical points, and a few arcane historical facts, I didn't learn much new from this book. Though, I did learn some better, more concise and more clever ways of explaining concepts to those who don't know the game. That was useful. And as someone who simply loves the game of baseball this book was just fun for me to read, even though I knew the stuff already. I got 100% on the rules quiz so I'm ready to be a Major League umpire. The Kindle version I read has lots of text formatting errors.

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