



# Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream

*Alan M. Klein*

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## **Sugarball: The American Game, the Dominican Dream** Alan M. Klein

In the Dominican Republic baseball is not only a game but a national obsession. Exported from the United States and still controlled by it, the game is also an arena of intercultural relations. "Sugarball" describes how Dominican baseball fosters national pride and competition with the United States while at the same time promoting acceptance of the North American presence in the country. Alan M. Klein traces the introduction and development of baseball in the Dominican Republic, provides sketches of fans, stadiums, and players, and discusses such issues as the origin of the Dominican baseball academies and the international competition for Dominican players. Throughout, he evokes the enthusiasm that Dominicans have for the game and shows how it mirrors the conflict they feel between allowing and resisting American hegemony in their country. Klein relates the efforts of major league teams to seek talent in the Dominican Republic and shape the game to suit their own purposes - efforts that resemble other exploitative enterprises in the Third World. These activities evoke little resentment, because for many Dominican young men baseball is the only way out of a life of unemployment or of hard labour in cities or cane fields. At the same time, their prowess at baseball encourages the Dominicans to oppose further interference from the Americans.

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