



Keepers of the Game: When the Baseball Beat was the Best Job on the Paper

Dennis D'Agostino

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There was a time when the most prestigious job on a major newspaper belonged to the baseball beat writer, who enjoyed unparalleled longevity and influence within his profession. Through a variety of events and circumstances—television, expansion, all-sports radio, lifestyle changes, and the Internet revolution—those days are long gone. The baseball beat writers endure, but jobs change, and they have faced new challenges. *Keepers of the Game* celebrates the last generation of baseball writers whose careers were rooted in Teletype machines, train travel, and ten-team leagues, and who wielded an influence and power within the game that are unimaginable today. Dennis D'Agostino brings together, for the first time, the personal histories of a group of journalists whose influence, power, and dedication to the game of baseball is part of a golden age of sports journalism that is now a thing of the past. Twenty-three vintage beat writers tell their own stories, with an individual chapter devoted to each writer. The interview subjects include nine winners of the Baseball Hall of Fame's J. G. Taylor Spink Award, the baseball writing profession's highest honor: Ross Newhan, Hal McCoy, Murray Chass, Peter Gammons, Bob Elliott, Rick Hummel, Tracy Ringolsby, Nick Peters, and Bill Madden. They and their colleagues were the best of their breed, that last generation of writers who were the unquestioned gatekeepers of the national pastime. For decades, their words shaped the history of the game.

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