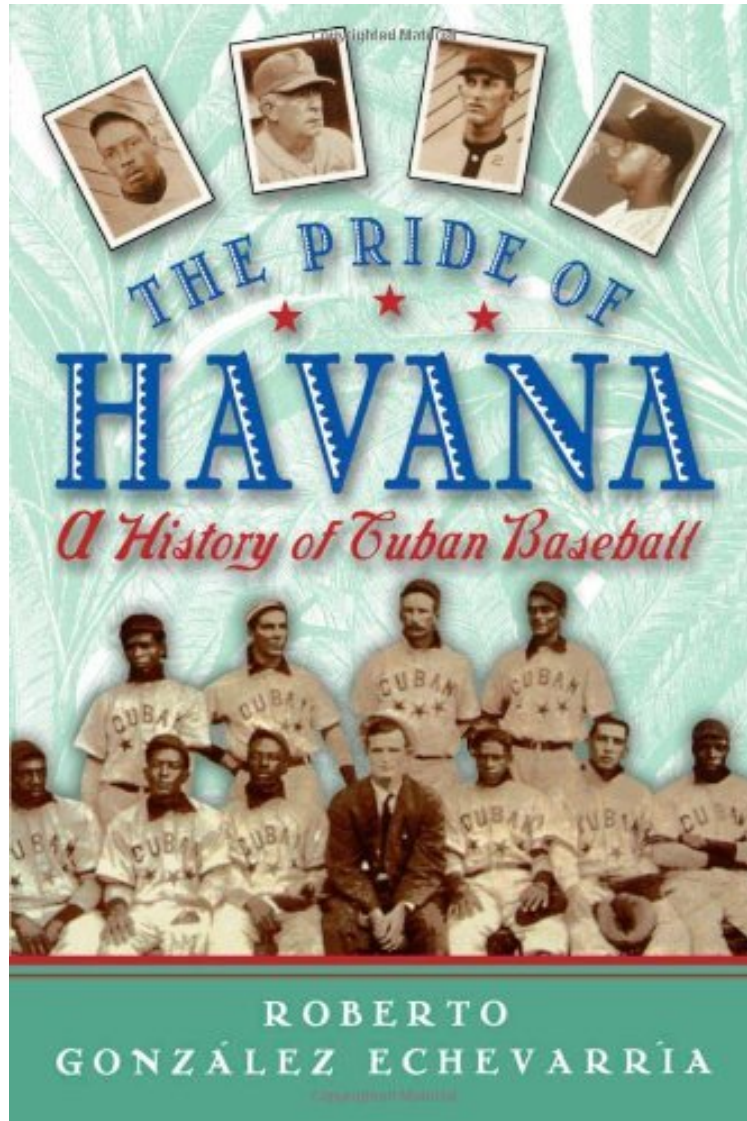


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The Pride of Havana: A History of Cuban Baseball

Von Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria
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Von Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria : The Pride of Havana: A History of Cuban Baseball before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Pride of Havana: A History of Cuban Baseball:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Not a Fan's BookVon Ein KundeWhile this book provides an important "scholarly" sociological study of the connections between sport (baseball), art, dance, and politics in Cuba throughout the century (as well as an engaging portrait of the author's own personal relationship with baseball in the 40s and 50s), it is far too dense and plodding in its treatment to

engage most baseball fans. Also, while the author is condemnatory in his preface of others who have treated Latin baseball with a disregard for the Spanish language, he himself often mangles Spanish and English names (Gourriel/Gurriel, Ulrick/Ulrich/Ullrich, Willie/Willy Miranda, Aldolfo/Adolfo Luque, Ron/Don Blasingame, Buck O'Neill/O'Neil, Double Duty Radcliffe/Radcliff, Zavala/Zabala, Ramon/Roger Colorao/Colorado, Bustamente/Bustamante, Almendares/Almandares, Wilbur/Wilmur Fields, Franklyn/Franklin Murray, etc.) as well as historical facts (Marrero was 25 (35) in 1946, Prieto returned to Oakland in 1977 (1997), Pumpsie Green was an outfielder (infielder), the second Pan Am games were played in 1930, etc.). This is a solid book and in some places even a wonderful book. But poor editing leaves it short of a scholarly book; and the excessive emphasis on Cuban baseball during the author's own childhood (1940s and 1950s) also leaves the volume considerably short of being a definitive historical treatment of Cuban baseball.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Canseco Over Linares or Tony Oliva? Von Ein Kunde In the months that have passed since the publication of RGE's monumental book on Cuban baseball history the nature and value of his work has slowly come more clearly into focus. The dedicated scholar-author is to be praised for his valuable contribution in providing rich detail on the early years of Cuban baseball not found in other English-language sources. But as David Skinner has pointed out in a recent on-target review in the scholarly journal NINE (Canadian Scholars' Press), Professor Gonzalez has throughout engaged in a good deal of mythmaking of his own. While RGE provides many delightful nuggets about early Cuban baseball and Negro league barnstorming on the island, and while he also does service for monolingual baseball enthusiasts by translating into English accounts and statistics from early seasons heretofore found only in Spanish-language books like those of Raul Diez Muro and Angel Torres, Skinner emphasizes rightly that there are many shortcomings in PRIDE OF HAVANA as a comprehensive history of Cuba's national pastime. RGE's heavy anti-Castro's politics causes him to lace the 40s and 50s era "Golden Age" with a thick coat of unwarranted nostalgia (baseball was actually near its death-knell in Cuba at the time), to dismiss the exciting and competitive brand of Cuban League baseball played after the revolution as totally worthless and unworthy of detailed chronicle, and to ignore the crucial fact (which should be central to any comprehensive history of island baseball) that the sport has only been national in its scope in Cuba after 1962 (the professional league which ended in 1961 was restrict to the city of Havana). Skinner's review also underscores other shortcomings: facts of Negro League barnstorming in Cuba are often presented without documentation and sometimes even inaccurate; abilities and accomplishments of recent defectors and Cuban-born major leaguers are highly exaggerated (especially the claim that one-dimensional slugger Jose Canseco is perhaps the best-ever Cuban born player, rather than Martin Dihigo or Tony Oliva or Luis Tiant Jr.); legitimate island stars like Omar Linares, Jose Ibar and Jose Contreras are taken lightly because "they have not played against major leaguers," and the outright dismissal of the past forty years of Cuban baseball development (about one-third of the time frame covered by the saga of Cuban baseball) undermines any claim for a full-scale comprehensive history of the subject. THE PRIDE OF HAVANA has its many merits. But if one wants to see the true coloration of RGE's approach and discover what is missing in this rather incomplete history of Cuban baseball, an excellent start is David Skinner's perceptive review (NINE, Vol. 8, No. 2, Spring 2000).

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A brilliant look at sport and history in Cuba Von Andrew Mattison Roberto Gonzalez Echavarria is fascinated by the relationship between communal cultural activities and ideology over the history of Cuba--he has published articles about dance, popular music, and of course literature. In this book he writes about baseball in Cuba, particularly its relationship with the Cuban national consciousness and the two revolutions it created. But the book also contains vivid lives, of the author himself as well as so many baseball men and baseball fans from the island of his youth, which give the book an immediacy I haven't found in any other history of Cuban culture.

Kurzbeschreibung From the first amateur leagues of the 1860s to the exploits of Livan and Orlando "El Duque" Hernandez, here is the definitive history of baseball in Cuba. Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria expertly traces the arc of the game, intertwining its heroes and their stories with the politics, music, dance, and literature of the Cuban people. What emerges is more than a story of balls and strikes, but a richly detailed history of Cuba told from the unique cultural perch of the baseball diamond. Filling a void created by Cuba's rejection of bullfighting and Spanish hegemony, baseball quickly became a crucial stitch in the complex social fabric of the island. By the early 1940s Cuba had become major conduit in spreading the game throughout Latin America, and a proving ground for some of the greatest talent in all of baseball, where white major leaguers and Negro League players from the U.S. all competed on the same fields with the cream of Latin talent. Indeed, readers will be introduced to several black ballplayers of Afro-Cuban descent who played in the Major Leagues before Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier once and for all. Often dramatic, and always culturally resonant, Gonzalez Echevarria's narrative expertly lays open the paradox of fierce Cuban independence from the U.S. with Cuba's love for our national pastime. It shows how Fidel Castro cannily associated himself with the sport for patriotic p.r.--and reveals that his supposed baseball talent is purely mythical. Based on extensive primary research and a wealth of interviews, the colorful, often dramatic anecdotes and stories in

this distinguished book comprise the most comprehensive history of Cuban baseball yet published and ultimately adds a vital lost chapter to the history of baseball in the U.S..deThe "national" in "national pastime" is a relative term in Yale literature professor and former semi-pro catcher Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria's meticulous examination of baseball in the land of his birth. A respected scholar, Echevarria is also a fan, and he manages to weave both objectivity and appreciation throughout a carefully researched and multi-layered narrative that draws from numerous first-person reminiscences. If Echevarria's prose is dry at times, it manages to cover plenty of interesting territory as he threads the game through the fabric of Cuban history, culture, and lore. The island's romance with baseball has remarkable parallels and interconnections with America's embrace of the game. Ballplayers from the United States loved to barnstorm during the off-season in wide-open Havana, the Dodgers used to train there, the Cuban League--alums include Brooks Robinson, Tommy Lasorda, Don Hoak, and Don Zimmer--was a major force in the vibrant spread of baseball through the Caribbean, and, not surprisingly, several Major and Negro League standouts--Martin Dihigo, Bert Campaneris, Mike Cuellar, Luis Tiant, Minnie Minoso, Camilo Pascual, Tony Oliva, and, more recently, the Hernandez brothers--were stars in their homeland first. But there are also stunning and powerful differences, as stunning and powerful as the differences between the two countries since Castro's rise to power. Castro's own obsession with the game plays prominently, though Echevarria is quick to strike out the myth that Fidel himself was once a prospect. "Let it be known here," he emphasizes, "that Fidel Castro was never scouted by any major-league team, and is not known to have enjoyed the kind of success in baseball that would have brought a scout's attention to him." He had to settle for the world's attention instead. --Jeff SilvermanPressestimmen"The Pride of Havana is an absorbing history of Cuban baseball and the impact so many Cuban players have had on the game in the United States. It sparkles like El Duque in October."--Bob Costas, NBC Sports"Writing with the precision of the connoisseur and the passion of the aficionado, Gonzalez Echevarria provides a masterful account of Cuban beisbol' that is at the same time a profound meditation on the island's national culture. In many ways this extraordinary book marks the culmination of theauthor's distinguished career as the pre-eminent writer-scholar of our generation. A dinger!"--Gustavo Perez Firmat, Columbia University, author of The Cuban Condition: Translation and Identity in Modern Cuban Literature"From Martin Dihigo to Minnie Minoso, Cuban baseball provided excitement for all. In The Pride of Havana, Roberto Gonzalez Echevarria brings back the thrills and colorful stories that made the Cuban League so memorable for players, owners, and fans."--Bobby Bragan, former manager of Pirates, Indians, Braves, and Almendares Scorpions"The study features an excellent bibliography plus detailed notes for each chapter. The research is exhaustive, based on primary sources and interviews that include numerous anecdotes, making this an engaging read."--Library Journal"The Pride of Havana is a massively detailed chronicle of the history of baseball in Cuba, written with the passion of a fan of the country and of the game. Gonzalez Echevarria makes a convincing case that America'a national pastime is also Cuba's national pastime."--Marty Linsky, Wilson Quarterly "The Pride of Havana is an absorbing history of Cuban baseball and the impact so many Cuban players have had on the game in the United States. It sparkles like El Duque in October."--Bob Costas, NBC Sports "Writing with the precision of the connoisseur and the passion of the aficionado, Gonzalez Echevarria provides a masterful account of Cuban beisbol' that is at the same time a profound meditation on the island's national culture. In many ways this extraordinary book marks the culmination of the author's distinguished career as the pre-eminent writer-scholar of our generation. A dinger!"--Gustavo Perez Firmat, Columbia University, author of The Cuban Condition: Translation and Identity in Modern Cuban Literature "From Martin Dihigo to Minnie Minoso, Cuban baseball provided excitement for all. 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