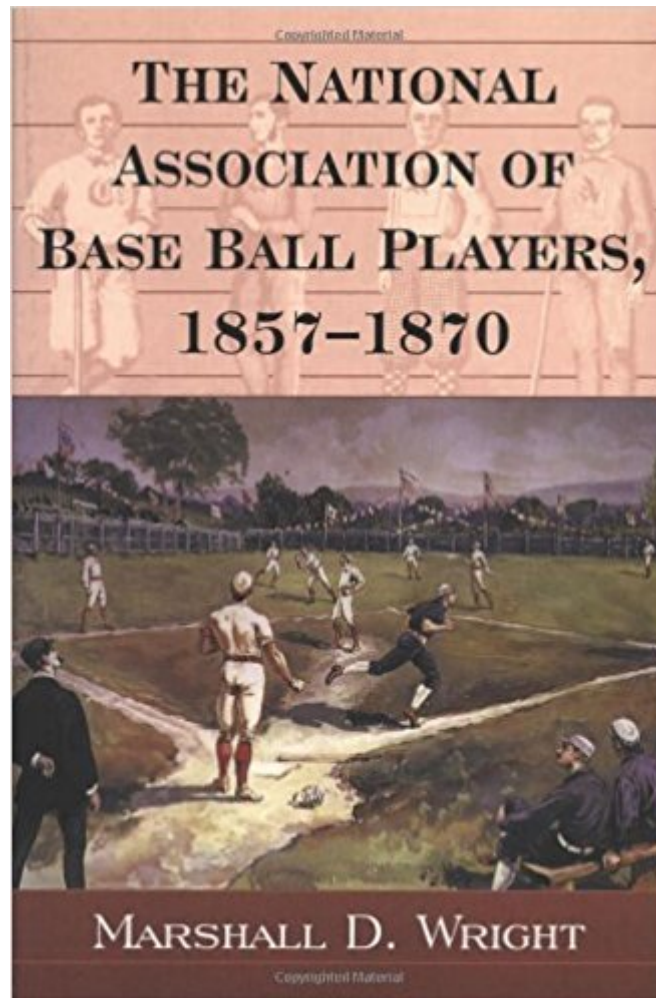




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The National Association Of Base Ball Players, 1857-1870



Synopsis

Before the onset of professional baseball, there existed a myriad of teams and players going back to the 1840s. The early years centered around an organization known as the National Association of Base Ball Players. This group, the antecedents of which date to 1857, governed the world of baseball until the formation of the first all-professional league in 1871. This book is the definitive statistical reference to that organization, from its humble beginnings through its explosive growth after the Civil War, culminating with its coast-to-coast inclusion of several hundred amateur and professional clubs. Relying for the most part on primary sources, the author has included introductory essays for each year, complete team statistics, every game score, and individual batting and pitching statistics for all players.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are two types of people: One cannot imagine why any sane person would ever waste time or money on a book with data such as the record of the Atlantics of Brooklyn in 1861 or the Buckeyes of Cincinnati in 1868. The other starts to salivate at the mere mention of such a book. The first group is vastly larger, but you know if you are in the second. If so, you desperately need this! I have only two complaints (hence four stars instead of five). One is that this really should be in a library binding. Marshall Wright's other books are published this way. It is inexplicable that the publisher went with paperback for this. The quality of the paper and binding is fine, but this is a reference work to be used repeatedly. The second, more serious complaint is the organization of the data. There is a chapter for each year, with the statistics following a short introduction. So far so good. The stats

are by team, but the order of the teams is peculiar. They are in order of winning/losing/tie records. Presumably the idea is to run from best to worst teams, but this forces the reader to refer to the index constantly. So to find the record of the Buckeyes in 1868 we first need to note that the chapter on 1868 runs from pages 186 to 237. We can then go to the index and eliminate from consideration any pages outside that range. This still, however, leaves every citation of the Buckeyes as the opposing team in an entry, so we have to sift through these to finally find, on page 195, the section devoted to them. See now why I wish this had a better binding? The shame is that these problems could have easily been avoided. The appropriate index entries could have been in bold type, or each year could have its own index of entries, or there could have been extensive cross referencing. The person who wants this book at all will be willing to work around this problem, but it is a shame.

Although more information has emerged since publication this book is still a groundbreaking work and lacking information unknown at the time should not be an issue. The criticism of the layout, from a different review, and the decision to go with a soft cover are both valid. All the above being said this book will form the backbone of any persons knowledge of pre professional base ball in America

This book contains an amazing and thorough collection of facts about the National Association. The plethora of statistics and numbers within makes it a must-have for any fan of baseball history.

Although this book is written on a fairly obscure topic, if you are looking to gain a better understanding of the National Association, I would suggest you begin elsewhere. Of the 329 pages, 70% of the material is of line-scores and box-scores. I was disappointed with the lack of insight and was left with a regurgitation of numbers. I think the author loses the historical context of the league by writing a book purely on numbers. If you are interested in the National Association, I suggest you start with Daniel Ginsburg's *The Fix Is In. Scandal and the National Association* go hand in hand. Not only do you see how the league functioned, but also why it soon failed. I would also recommend William Ryczek's book on the National Association. I found more substance in both cases than with Wright's book. Unless you are a stat fanatic...I would not buy this book.

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