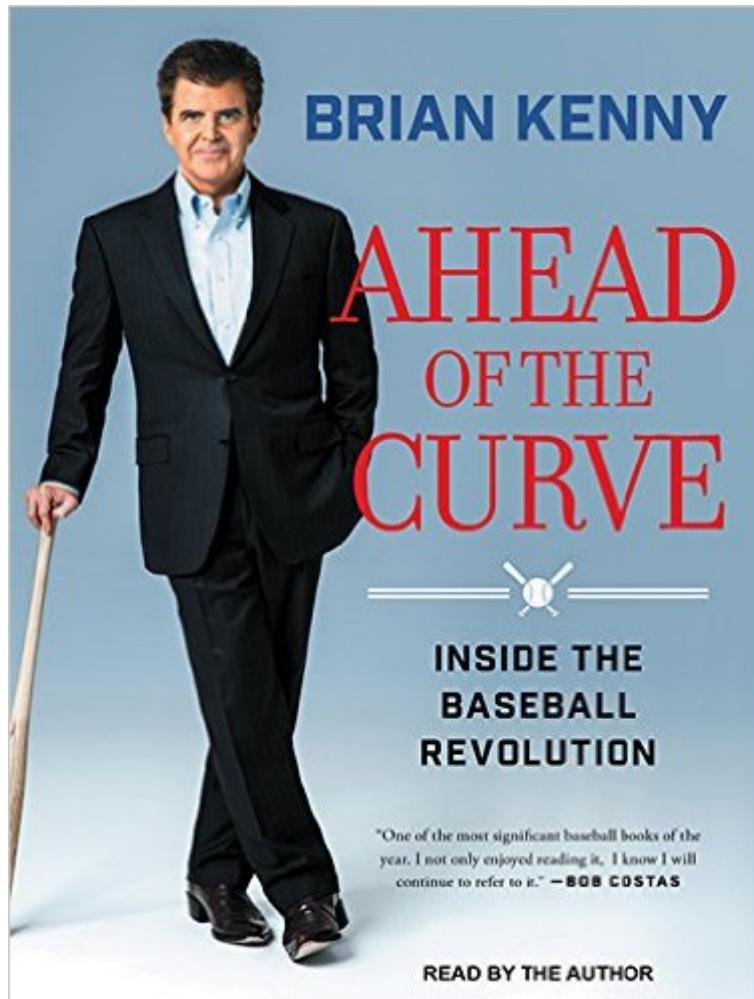


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Ahead Of The Curve: Inside The Baseball Revolution



Synopsis

Most people who resist logical thought in baseball preach "tradition" and "respecting the game." But many of baseball's traditions go back to the nineteenth century, when the pitcher's job was to provide the batter with a ball he could hit and fielders played without gloves. Instead of fearing change, Brian Kenny wants fans to think critically, reject outmoded groupthink, and embrace the changes that have come with the "sabermetric era." In his entertaining and enlightening book, Kenny discusses why the pitching win-loss record, the Triple Crown, fielding errors, and so-called battling titles should be ignored. Kenny also points out how fossilized sportswriters have been electing the wrong MVPs and ignoring legitimate candidates for the Hall of Fame; why managers are hired based on their looks; and how the most important position in baseball may just be "director of decision sciences." Ahead of the Curve debunks the old way of analyzing baseball and ushers in a new era of straightforward logic. Illustrated with unique anecdotes from those who have reshaped the game, it's a must-listen for fans, players, managers, and fantasy enthusiasts.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A definite 5 star book which, for Baseball, is extremely hard to do these days. Here is where I'm coming from to help you decide whether to buy this book. I watch and read a lot of baseball plus I used to play What If Sports but now I play Imagine Sports/Diamond Mind. Everyone uses the web now, Baseball-Reference & Fangraphs, but as far as books go I always thought the best were Bill James Historical Abstract, The Book by Tango et al, and the 2 statistical books by Michael Schell. For passing the time I like the 2 Dead Ball Biographical books by SABR and The Great American Baseball Team Book by Nemec. Kenny's "Ahead of the Curve" belongs in this group and

anyone who enjoys baseball, especially the chess part of the game, will enjoy this book. It's the best baseball book in several years. I need to add that I'm a big Brian Kenny fan. I was addicted to Clubhouse Confidential and broke a few windows when it ended but the current MLB Now is just as good. What's good about it? The information is copious, well presented, well documented. It's hard to put down which says a lot for a baseball book because the sport has been covered in depth from A to Z. The style is great, you almost feel like you're watching the show. Every chapter is great (except I skipped the "Kill the Win" chapter which Kenny has beat to death on TV, sorry BK). I really enjoyed the personal insights like the Epilogue on page 50, the subway ride on page 85, the insight into Bill James on page 100 among others, nice. The "Blame Game" on page 5 is real good. The stats on Mickey Lolich made a believer out of me. If you're able to watch and enjoy an entire 9 inning game which not many do anymore you'll really like this book.

Brian Kenny built a following when he worked as a baseball analyst at ESPN and his reputation as an outspoken commentator has grown even larger since he moved over to the MLB Network. One reason for this is his continuous questioning of traditional statistics and strategy when evaluating players and the best course to take during certain game situations. In this entertaining book, he explains many of his positions in a manner that might make some fans uncomfortable, but will certainly be topics of discussion the next time a reader wants to debate the merits of a bunt or if it is wise to not have a team's best relief pitcher not appear in a game unless it is the ninth inning and the team is ahead by three runs or less. Those two examples are just a small sample of the types of conventional wisdom he questions and then provides an alternative based on statistics, logic and analysis. While this may sound fairly dry, the writing and creativity is entertaining. For example, in his explanation of why it is not good strategy to leave a starting pitcher on the mound as long as possible and then not put the best reliever into the game until the ninth inning in a "save" situation, he calls his alternative strategy "Bullpenning." In this chapter, just about every piece of conventional wisdom is thrown out and a new idea, based on statistical analysis is proposed. The reader may or may not agree with Kenny's radicalism, but it is written in such a manner that one will at least acknowledge that it is something to consider. Kenny's attack on old-school values is not limited to strategy – it also goes into statistics that have been the basis for awards, big-money contracts and even votes for the Hall of Fame.

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