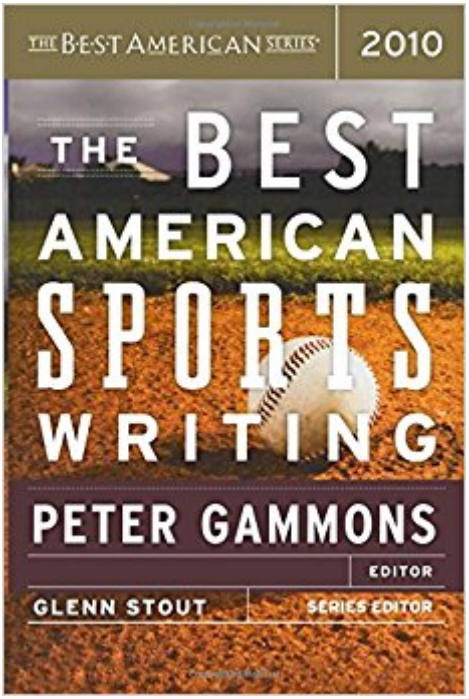
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The Best American Sports Writing 2010 (The Best American Series Ã‚Â®)



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Synopsis

Well established as the premier sports anthology, The Best American Sports Writing brings together the finest writing on sports to appear in the past year. Edited by theÃ Â award-winning Peter Gammons,Ã Â the pieces in this volume embrace the world of sports in all its drama, humanity, and excitement.

Book Information

Series: The Best American Series Ãƒâ Ã Â®
Paperback: 448 pages
Publisher: Mariner Books; 2010 ed. edition (October 5, 2010)
Language: English
ISBN-10: 0547152485
ISBN-13: 978-0547152486
Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1.1 x 8.2 inches
Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 28 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #534,804 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #70 inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > Journalism #256 inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > Essays

Customer Reviews

Venerable (and venerated) baseball writer Gammons makes some fine picks in this twentieth annual installment of the excellent series. The 26 pieces include Thomas LakeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s inspiring story of two Pacific Northwest college softball players who carried an opponent around the bases after sheÃ¢â ¬â„¢d hurt herself hitting her only career home run. ThereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a disturbing look at the brain trauma and subsequent dementia suffered too frequently by NFL players. Michael LewisÃ¢â ¬â„¢ perceptive New Yorker profile of HoustonÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Shane Battier, defender extraordinaire against the LakersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ Kobe Bryant, is also reprised here. And the Boston GlobeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Bob Ryan and the Los Angeles TimesÃ¢â ¬â„¢ Bill Plaschke, who appear on ESPNÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Around the Horn, show theyÃ¢â ¬â„¢re not only about sound bites by delivering strong pieces on racial equality in the NBA and on a veteran MLB scout, respectively. No reason not to add this installment to a shelf beside its predecessors. --Alan Moores

"Memorable reading...A must for all sports collections." (Booklist) --This text refers to an out of print

or unavailable edition of this title.

As other reviewers have noted, this volume leans heavily on Boston-area writers and athletes whom the guest editor knows. Fortunately, it doesn't have yet another paean to the Red Sox, but it does have an eggregiously long and mundane exploration of the deplorable condition of high school sports in Boston's inner city. The research for that article is prodigious, but I've seen similar stuff about NYC, Washington, DC (where I live), and other cities. There's nothing in the writing or anecdotes that suggests that the story is anything more than good reporting.Otherwise, there are some great highlights. A piece about a paralyzed Texas high school football player and his mother who cared for him for decades is awe-inspiring. Other poignant pieces include one about a female distance runner who was hit by a car and the NFL's neglect of pioneering African-American players. The Bobby Orr piece gives those of us who know little about hockey a glimpse into the life of a legend. And the sassier pieces about Todd Marinovich and Jose Canseco pierce the gauzy veil that often accompanies sports profiles; those two pieces show the strength of the macho, GQ-style of reporting that has come to the fore in the last 10 years.As always, it's very good stuff.

It's not the "bottom of the ninth with the wining run on second base" type of book. It is wonderful writing about people, some of it fun and some of it sad, but all of it heart-warming. A book that is hard to put down.

Excellent collection---Peter Gammons at his best in selecting a diverse representation of our American sports world.

It was year 20 for the Best American Sports Writing series, quite a milestone as these things go. It's a relative of the series that came out after World War II, even if the editors wouldn't recognize some of the source material that helps to fill the current series. ("Internet? What the heck is an Internet?")The driving force of the series remains Glenn Stout, who has taken the idea of the year's best sports writing, some of which has only a little to do with sports, and maintained it nicely. He picks out a large group of material from a much larger collection of material, and mails them to the guest editor. That person, in turn, makes the final picks for the book. It's tough to know how much of the picks reflect the editor's viewpoint and how much reflect Stout's -- probably some of both.The editor of the 2010 book is Peter Gammons. He's certainly qualified to join the elite company. Gammons is the most influential baseball writer of his time and is most worthy of his Hall of Fame

induction. It’s easy to see Gammons’ fingerprints on some of the selections here, which are as usual up to the series’ high standards.That means baseball gets a good shake here. It would be easy to guess that Gammons would like Bill Plaschke’s story on an aging baseball scout, or Eric Nusbaum’s piece called "The Death of a Pitcher." You can even picture Gammons laughing at Pat Jordan’s attempt to do an interview with Jose Canseco, written for deadspin.com.And as a former Boston Globe writer, it figures he’d be interested in a story on Bobby Orr or a column by his former coworker, Bob Ryan.There are plenty of other good tales here:* "The Way It Should Be" by Thomas Lake is a heartwarming tale about the effect of a gesture of sportsmanship (or should I say, sportswomanship.* "(Still) Life" by Skip Hollandsworth has plenty to do with life, and only a little to do with football. It’s how a devastating injury affected a family and a town. The research was fabulous.* Interestingly, there are three stories on the effects of playing football on the brain. They are all good if a little redundant at times, but "This is Your Brain on Football" by Jeanne Marie Laskas was my favorite.* There are also a few "whatever happened to ..." stories about former top athletes. The one with the biggest twist was "Life Throws Bernie Kosar for a Loss" by Dan Le Betard. If there was ever a football player who should have had a smooth transition into life after playing, it was Kosar. Wrong.These books are always difficult to rate, usually falling between very good and great. In 2010’s case, I didn’t skip over any articles after starting them (it happens sometimes). There might not have been that single great story this year that I’ll tell people to go read, but that may have been because my favorites seemed to come from Sports Illustrated (four articles) and thus had read and enjoyed already.So it doesn’t get five stars. Big deal. Go get it, and you might just rank it as one of your favorites of the year, As usual.

When I saw that Peter Gammons was the guest editor for "The Best American Sports Writing - 2010," I knew I had to read this compilation of the best of the best. I have long been a fan of Gammons. His writing is always intriguing, and the personal conversations I have had with him over the years have always yielded nuggets of gold and insight. So, I knew his editorial eye would pick only those sports writing pieces worth reading.As I made my way around the base paths of this 400 page compendium, it also became clear that Gammons had an agenda in selecting the pieces for this year’s collection; several of the articles tackle the topic of the NFL’s intransigence in addressing the issue of post-concussion syndrome. Malcolm Gladwell’s piece, "Offensive Play, addresses the issue, Skip Hollansworth’s article "(Still) Life" deals with a devastating football injury. In addition, we have Jeanne Marie Laskas writing "This Is Your Brain on Football," and Robert Sanchez offering "This Is Ted Johnson’s Brain." Finally, Dan Le Betard gives us "Life Throws Bernie Kosar for a

Loss," another tale of a failed ex-NFL player.The collection is not all doom and gloom. There is a fascinating story about Dick Fosbury, the Olympic champion for the Mexico City Olympics who introduced the world to the "Fosbury Flop." The article is entitled "The Revolutionary," by Richard Hoffer.Having grown up watching Bobby Orr's magic show on ice, I was intrigued with the two ways that Orr's presence is felt in this book. There is S.L. Price's article, "The Ever Elusive, Always Inscrutable, and Still Incomparable Booby Orr." In his Introduction, Peter Gammons offers this poignant vignette from his own personal encounter with Orr. Gammons was rehabilitating from a stroke that he suffered a few years ago."We someitmes lose sight of the fact that the men and women who perform these feats are really like us. They are human. How many millions of copies of the picture of Bobby Orr flying through the air have been sold? That is the seen performing genius of an artist. Yet when I was transferred from Brigham and Women's Hospital to a room in the Rehabilitation Hospital of the Cape and Islands as I recovered from a severe aneurysm, I found Bobby Orr, being who he is, lying on my bed . . . S.L. Price gets Bobby Orr right: the greatest player who ever put on skates, the man who was sitting on a sick man's hospital bed, ready to greet him and help jump-start his rehab with his smile; the man who sits in the stands at Cape Cod League baseball games and thanks every kid who asks him for his autograph. Every one." (Page xxvi, xxiii)This holiday season, treat yourself or another sports fan to the gift of this wonderful collection.Enjoy.Al

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