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Juiced: Wild Times, Rampant 'Roids, Smash Hits, And How Baseball Got Big



Synopsis

When Jose Canseco burst into the Major Leagues in the 1980s, he changed the sport -- in more ways than one. No player before him possessed his mixture of speed and power, which allowed him to become the first man in history to belt more than forty home runs and swipe more than forty bases in the same season. He won Rookie of the Year, Most Valuable Player, and a World Series ring. Canseco shattered the mold of the out-of-shape baseball player and ushered in a new era of superathletes who looked like bodybuilders, made outrageous salaries, and enjoyed rock-star lifestyles. And the ticket for this ride? Steroids. Behind the gaudy stats and the glamour of his public life, Canseco cultivated a secret just about everyone in MLB knew about, one that would alter the game of baseball and the way we view our heroes forever. Canseco made himself a guinea pig of the performance-enhancing drugs that were only just beginning to infiltrate the American underground. Anabolic steroids, human growth hormones -- Canseco mixed, matched, and experimented to such a degree that he became known throughout the league as "The Chemist." He passed his knowledge on to trainers and fellow players, and before long, performance-enhancing drugs were running rampant throughout Major League Baseball. Sluggers scooping up pitches at their ankles and blasting them out of the park, pitchers cranking fastballs inning after inning -- Canseco showed the players how to customize their doses to sculpt the bodies they wanted, and baseball as we know it was the result. Today, this issue has crept out of the closet and burst into the headlines as players balloon to herculean proportions and hundred-year-old records are not only broken, but also demolished. In this shocking memoir, Canseco sheds light on a life of dizzying highs and debilitating lows, provides the answers to questions about steroids that millions of fans are only now beginning to ask -- and suggests that, far from being a passing trend, the steroid revolution is only a taste of things to come. Who's juiced? According to Canseco's authoritative account, more than you think. And baseball will never be the same.

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Customer Reviews

This, unlike, say, Pete Rose's book last year, is one book I had to read as soon as it came out. Simply written (no co-author is noted, but he must not have been very good), the book flies by. Of course, the media has leaked much of the good stuff already. As with any memoir (again, a stretch to use that word), truth is often muddled. Here it is worse. Did baseball really blackball Jose? Did Roger Clemens use steroids? Dave Martinez (that was funny--he was so mediocre)? Jose is clearly bitter for the way he was treated over the years. I can't possibly understand what it was like for a Latino ballplayer in the mid-80s. When he describes the racism involved in the game, much of it rings true. His bitterness toward Cal Ripken (I'm assuming details were left out to avoid libel suits--common throughout the book) seems more mysterious. He is right that media (and the umps) play favorites sometimes. There is no question he is right about certain players and their steroid use. His digs at Mark McGwire are not cheap shots (pun intended). Mac was never the nice guy that we often heard about. He was surly, angry, and quite possibly a fraud. Same with Sammy "The Diva" Sosa. Each of these guys did a ton of stuff for charity. So did Canseco (which, immodestly, he points out)...but who knew that about Canseco? Not me. Where he runs into trouble, at least for this reader, is his insistence on how good steroids are. The only steroids I ever took were for an infection and hope I never have to take them again. They can be great (look at how they saved Jerry Lewis--and how puffy he got) as medicine perhaps. But, his insistence on their goodness is a bit scary. Still, the man is a true believer. I just hope kids don't read this as the gospel.

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