



Pete Rose: An American Dilemma

Kostya Kennedy

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"Kennedy's book on the tarnished and enigmatic Rose is exceptional. Like the best writing about sport--Liebling, Angell--it qualifies as stirring literature. I'd read Kennedy no matter what he writes about." --Richard Ford

Pete Rose played baseball with a singular and headfirst abandon that endeared him to fans and peers, even as it riled others--a figure at once magnetic, beloved and polarizing. Rose has more base hits than anyone in history, yet he is not in the Hall of Fame. Twenty-five years ago he was banished from baseball for gambling, then ruled ineligible for Cooperstown; today, the question "Does Pete Rose belong in the Hall of Fame?" has evolved into perhaps the most provocative in sports, a layered, slippery and ever-relevant moral conundrum.

How do we evaluate the Hit King now, at a time when steroid cheats appear on the Hall of Fame ballot even as Rose is denied? What do we make of this happily unrepentant gambler, this shameless but beguiling showman whose postbaseball journey has led him to a curious reality show and to the streets of Cooperstown to hawk his signature, his story, himself?

Best-selling author Kostya Kennedy delivers an evocative answer in his fascinating re-examination of Pete Rose's life; from his cocky and charismatic early years through his storied playing career to his bitter war against baseball's hierarchy to the man we find today--still incorrigible, still adored by many. Where has his improbable saga landed him in the redefined, post-steroid world? Do we feel any differently about Pete Rose today? Should we?

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