

In 1950 an owners' revolt led by Ned Irish of the New York Knicks overturned this policy. As a result, three African Americans, Chuck Cooper, Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton, and Earl Lloyd, joined NBA clubs that fall. The tolerance that these three men encountered contrasted sharply with the hostility Jackie Robinson had faced three years earlier, when he joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. Thomas attributes this difference to the high educational level of white basketball players and the relatively low status of professional basketball. "If the NBA wanted to integrate, hardly anyone noticed," he observes (p. 20). Cooper, Clifton, and Lloyd rarely experienced racial problems and enjoyed solid, productive careers. Still, NBA owners did not immediately rush to sign black players, maintaining an informal quota system for at least a decade because of fears of alienating white fans.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s a new, more talented generation of black players entered the NBA. Superstars such as Bill Russell, Elgin Baylor, Wilt Chamberlain, and Oscar Robertson elevated the game to new heights. Off the court, they also brought change by refusing to tolerate racial discrimination on team trips, especially in the South. Thomas also examines the initial exclusion of African Americans from positions as head coaches in the NBA. He focuses in detail on the careers of Bill Russell, Lenny Wilkins, Al Attles, K. C. Jones, and especially John McLendon, the first black head coach in the rival American Basketball League.

This is a very readable book, and Thomas's conclusions seem balanced and reasonable. Most of the information is derived from his own personal interviews, however, which are not part of any oral history collection, and there are few footnotes to other sources. Nonetheless, the book makes a useful contribution to sport history and the history of race relations.

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The End of Baseball as We Knew It: The Players Union, 1960-81. By Charles P. Korr. Foreword by Bob Costas. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. Pp. xviii, 336. Illustrations, notes, sources, index. \$34.95.)

To baseball's millions of fans, buffeted and angered over the last quarter-century by repeated, unfathomable strikes that shut down their game, the title of this book may seem to be a tipoff: here is another broadside against lawyer-union organizer Marvin Miller and his money-minded player-clients whose greed has made America's national pastime past tense. It is not. It is quite the opposite. Author Charles Korr, granted access to the files and correspondence of the

baseball players' union, raises points rarely made in the decidedly pro-owners (or, at least, anti-players) attitude shared generally by sportswriters and a high percentage of the game's vast but shrinking number of fans.

Korr's key point involves baseball players' rights. For four or five generations of fans and players the game prospered with "the reserve clause," which shackled player movement and income. The clause was included in all player contracts. Essentially, the first contract a player signed with a major league team or organization bound him to that team until its management decided to let him go, by trade, sale, or release. The clause was at the heart of special rights given to the game when Congress in the 1920s declared it to be "a sport, not a business" and let it operate unfettered by anti-trust regulations. The Supreme Court upheld the protection time and again over the years.

Miller is the central figure in Korr's analysis of the players' rise from supplicants to dictators, i.e., persons in a position to dictate the terms of their employment to team owners, who had done all the dictating for the game's first seventy-five years or so. The book's title is a quotation from a through-and-through baseball man, Paul Richards, who was first a player, then a manager, and then a general manager. In 1967, when his colleagues in management were about to enter into a collective bargaining agreement with the Major League Baseball Players Association, Richards prophesied that "[t]his will be the end of baseball, as we knew it." Korr's research suggests that he was correct.

And the game? Evidence indicates it became considerably better in the years Korr covers, from 1960 to 1981. At the end of that period, after strikes, bargaining, and court rulings continued to shred the reserve clause, baseball's attendance was up, its broadcasting income soared, and its championships seemed more widely distributed; there was every sign that everyone involved was profiting. That was before the strike-lockout that began in 1994 and carried over into 1995, for the first time causing cancellation of the World Series. Korr discusses this in his epilogue, and baseball has not yet healed all the wounds it inflicted or brought back all of its exasperated, "that's-the-last-straw" fans. That strike and the spiraling costs of free-agency, which led to the \$252-million, ten-year contract Texas gave shortstop Alex Rodriguez, are mines worth further digging. But there is no debating the Korr theme: the baseball of today, as compared with the sport before the emergence of the union in the 1960s, is a whole new ball game—which is the title of another book on this theme, written by Marvin Miller.

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