



## Breaking Into Baseball

*Jean Hastings Ardell, Ila Borders*

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While baseball is traditionally perceived as a game to be played, enjoyed, and reported from a masculine perspective, it has long been beloved among women—more so than any other spectator sport. *Breaking into Baseball: Women and the National Pastime* upends baseball's accepted history to at last reveal just how involved women are, and have always been, in the American game.

Through provocative interviews and deft research, Jean Hastings Ardell devotes a detailed chapter to each of the seven ways women participate in the game—from the stands as fans, on the field as professionals or as amateur players, behind the plate as umpires, in the front office as executives, in the press box as sportswriters and reporters, or in the shadows as Baseball Annies. From these revelatory vantage points, Ardell invites overdue appreciation for the affinity and talent women bring to baseball at all levels and shows us our national game anew.

From its ancient origins in spring fertility rituals through contemporary marketing efforts geared toward an ever-increasing female fan base, baseball has always had a feminine side, and generations of women have sought—and been sought after—to participate in the sport, even when doing so meant challenging the cultural mores of their era. In that regard, women have been breaking into baseball from the very beginning. But recent decades have witnessed great strides in legitimizing women's roles on the diamond as players and umpires as well as in vital management and media roles. In her thoughtfully organized and engagingly written survey, Ardell offers a chance for sports enthusiasts and historians of both genders to better appreciate the storied and complex relationship women have so long shared with the game and to glimpse the future of women in baseball.

Breaking into Baseball is augmented by twenty-four illustrations and a foreword from **Ila Borders**, the first woman to play more than three seasons of men's professional baseball.

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