



## Pure Baseball

*Keith Hernandez, Mike Bryan*

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Former All Star Keith Hernandez teaches even the most learned fan a thing or two about baseball with his unparalleled insight into all aspects of the game, from the action in the bullpen to the positioning on the field to the plays at the plate.Praise for *Pure Baseball*:

"We have never seen the game scrutinised with such care and detail. Hernandez provides commentary on two ball games in the 1993 season : a Philles-Braves match-up and an extra innings battle between the Tigers and the Yankees. [He] examines the overall strategies of the game and offers good analyses of fielding techniques, base stealing, lineups, umpiring etiquette, double-steal rundown, hit-and-runs, signals, infield shifts and more. His most intense and incisive analysis, however, is saved for the psychology of the pitcher-hitter duels. No matter where you are watching, you will never again see the game in the same way."

-- *Playboy*"Keith Hernandez, it turns out, is even smarter than we thought he was in the Mets' glory years. All the subtleties of baseball are revealed as the two games unfold. Mr. Hernandez's opinions and pet-peevs--intentional walks, early-inning sacrifices, throwing fastballs to prevent stolen bases, large gaps in the outfield, pitchers who 'nibble. nibble, nibble,"--are well thought out and clearly articulated. [He] is particularly strong in analyzing the cat-and-mouse game played between pitchers and hitters as the count shifts the odds back and forth."

-- *New York Times Book Review*

"An MVP of a guide to the national pastime from savvy 17-year veteran of the major leagues who remains an ardent fan in retirement. Hernandez came up with an angle that works to near perfection: tellingly detailed start-to-finish accounts of two games played midway through the 1993 baseball season."

-- *Kirkus Reviews*(starred)

## Pure Baseball Details

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## From Reader Review Pure Baseball for online ebook

### **Jesse says**

Pretty much pure baseball theory in the form of Keith Hernandez watching two games (circa summer '93, I think) and breaking them down pitch by pitch. What pitch counts does the hit and run work on? Keith is happy to explain. This is more or less like listening to him call a game (I suspect it was kind of an audition tape), though without the drama of an actual game, or his delicious ever-present semi-snark. Keith definitely loses narrative momentum frequently.

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### **Brian says**

I thought I was a fan of the game before this book. I could not have been more wrong. After reading this book I became a true fanatic for this wonderful, maddening, beautiful, and crazy game. Mr. Hernandez shows the reader that baseball is not just a physical game, but a mental one as well. Because of his breakdown of the pitcher/catcher vs. batter matchup. I actually root for low scoring pitching duels.

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### **Leonard says**

A great guide to the serious baseball fan about pitches selected, count, runners, etc. A bit much for a new fan.

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### **Alvin Ashcraft says**

If you love the pitch by pitch strategy of baseball, you will love this book.

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### **Stephen says**

A dense, detailed book that takes 230 pages to describe two - just two! - run-of-the-mill baseball games. Your guide is famed batter Keith Hernandez who naturally knows his stuff, but can also write about it in a clear and compelling conversational style. He reveals complexities of which I was completely oblivious, and which has transformed the way I watch the game.

The book proclaims itself to be for the advanced fan, which I clearly am not. I still got a huge amount from it, although I had to puzzle over some phraseology that would be natural to a more seasoned spectator. (It could easily be made more accessible, though, with a glossary and rule summary at the back). It also got more complex as the book wore on - commendably, Hernandez assumes that you have learnt what he told you previously in the book.

But, boy, is it dense! Hernandez doesn't waste many words on much that isn't pretty directly related to some facet of baseball, with that facet directly related to what is happening in the game at the point he's currently

describing. I found at times that I had to limit how much I read without losing concentration.

It was written about 20 years ago, so I'm sure loads has changed, but perhaps not. It also doesn't mention any of the doping scandals that plagued the sport, but I don't know whether this is because the book is from a prior era (I don't think so), through wilful bowllderisation of history, editorial judgement, avoidance of being sued, or not wanting to piss off his colleagues.

There is a little bit of self-puffery here, but not enough for me to find objectionable. He also seems happy to let you know when he's guessed wrong, when it would have been easy to fix what he said (I don't know, maybe some of that did go on, but I didn't get that sense). It's opinionated too - he's happy to say when he disagrees with conventional wisdom.

So for all that, and for this reader, it is probably a book to reread. I got it from the library, but would definitely like to buy a copy to refer to.

Probably the best sports book I've ever read.

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### **Roger says**

Okay last baseball book for awhile I promise.

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### **Luis says**

Wow. 50 pages in and baseball is even better than before. It's like Kanye's workout plan for seamheads.

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### **Michel says**

Only gave this book 3 stars, but that's more a reflection on my limitations than on those of Hernandez' book. I want to press this book into the hands of anyone finds the game less exciting than football, not that they're gonna like it, but they'll get a feel for what they're missing (that's why the average rating, BTW: the acute feeling of what I'm missing, this book is so far out of my league; I guess if he'd taken the pain to write it down to my level, it would've been 2000 pages long?)

Baseball is only a game as chess is only a game: it's all about mindfucking the other fellow, not just if you are a pitcher, making the schmuck with the stick swallow anything you gonna serve him, but the manager, the outfielder, the runner, and yes the batter, as Hernandez showed, on the field and in this book.

He tells us the story of 2 games, one week apart, in June 93: a close one between the Phillies and the Braves at Veteran Stadium; and a ten-inning 3h40min affair at Yankee Stadium against the Tigers. "How much you can learn from just two regular-season ball games, featuring American League-style and National League-style play, grass and artificial turf, sluggers and slap hitters, fundamentals well executed and others thoroughly botched, shrewd managerial moves an a few dubious ones."

Two games he watched "from the comfort of my living room, with the sound off... not as much fun as going to the ballpark, and it makes it tougher to follow some aspects... such as the defense, but TV is the perfect way to watch the pitch selection and analyze an at-bat." And analyze he does, one pitch at a time.

If he's made my post-season more enjoyable, I'll increase the rating. Promise.

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## **Richard says**

Just what the subtitle says. The author breaks a couple of games down pitch by pitch. At times a bit much for the casual fan, but you really do learn a lot about the game.

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## **Leonard Pierce says**

This is one of my very favorite sports books: Hernandez, who's a surprisingly engaging writer, watches two games (an AL and an NL) and breaks each one of them down, pitch by pitch. Incredibly detailed, with a rare insider's view.

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## **Bill Braun says**

If you love the nature of the game of baseball - it's structure, it's strategies, set plays, and what is going through the minds of every player and manager on the field - reading this book is an unparalleled experience. Kieth Hernandez covers two games - Philadelphia versus Atlanta in the National League and Detroit versus New York in the American League - played one week apart in June, 1993.

In this case covering the games means a pitch by pitch commentary on what is going on in the game. It is fascinating to hear his descriptions, critiques, and his guesses on what is going to happen next.

Hernandez takes side trips to explain some elements of baseball, including a 10 page explanation of the hit and run.

I am reading this for the second time, and enjoying it all the more. Hernandez has a good sense of humor, writes in a light-hearted but knowledgeable way, and shows both his love for and knowledge of the game.

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## **Ray says**

Keith Hernandez breaks down two regular seasons games from 1993 pitch by pitch and interjects anecdotes and lessons learned from his own 17 year career. I've read a lot of baseball books but this was a unique perspective and it totally works because Hernandez is an excellent observer and teacher of the game, as evidenced by his work announcing Mets games with former teammate Ron Darling (who he surprisingly criticized a bit about nibbling with two strikes in this book).

I've read both Hernandez's and Darling's books this off-season and while Darlings was a nice read about the inner workings of the game regarding pressure and failure, Hernandez's was far more interesting of a deep dive into baseball strategy that will actually change the way I look at certain strategies during a game this season.

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**Roger Shaw says**

On a third re-reading, bumped up a star. Essential reading for fans of baseball.

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**Ron says**

Easily one of the best baseball books I've ever read. Hernandez has credibility because he played in the majors for so long. The most interesting game is the one he attended in person (Phillies/Braves); his insights into the game are excellent, even for people who've watched the game for decades. This is from 1993, and even though there have been many changes in baseball, the relationship between pitcher and batter is timeless, so this book is relevant today.

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