

before readers get any direct analysis of curses, information which would have been much more useful earlier in the book. Throughout the book, many references to the curse tend to be passing questions (i.e., after losing to Atlanta in the 1997 playoffs, Bogen wonders, “would it have made a difference if Sam Sianis and his goat had gone to Atlanta with the team?” [127]) or stretches of logic—even for an illogical subject like curses. One picture of Harry Caray interviewing Sam Sianis and his goat leads Bogen to question whether Caray was part of the curse too. Even photos from the 1930s of a Cubs player posed with a goat are implied to be pictures of Sianis’s goat because the author can find no other references in Cubs history to a goat.

Other organizational and editorial issues also cause problems for the reader. A chapter titled “Goodbye Mr. Frey” mentions 1984–85 Cubs manager Jim Frey only once—when he is fired in the first two lines of the chapter. The remainder of the chapter is about the 1989 Cubs led by Don Zimmer. Later, two chapters on the proposed 1994 exorcism of Wrigley Field are separated by ten chapters from the log of the 1994 season. Several typographical errors (Cubs ace Carlos Zambrano becomes “Zombrano” while LaTroy Hawkins has his first name spelled three different ways) make it easy to question the veracity of other points.

Bogen’s work is interesting at times and certainly enjoyable for Cubs fans but falls short as a history of losing and as an analysis of curses and superstitions, especially when held up against previous works on other sports curses to which it will likely draw comparisons.



Marilyn Cohen. *No Girls in the Clubhouse: The Exclusion of Women from Baseball*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2009. 228 pp. Cloth, \$35.00.

Jennifer Ring. *Stolen Bases: Why American Girls Don’t Play Baseball*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009. 224 pp. Cloth, \$24.95.

Leslie Heaphy

Women’s baseball scholarship is a new and growing field. Marilyn Cohen and Jennifer Ring’s new books add greatly to this burgeoning area of research. While the general topic is similar in both texts—why women don’t play much baseball in the United States—the approaches used are different. Jennifer Ring’s book takes a more traditional and historic approach to exploring the

reasons for exclusion, while Cohen looks more closely at anthropological and feminist views to discover why women play softball more than baseball. Part of the reason for the differences comes from the disciplines of the authors and the questions they are asking. Ring is a political scientist, Cohen is a sociologist, and both have women's studies backgrounds.

In *No Girls in the Clubhouse*, Cohen explores the reasons why girls seem to gravitate more towards softball than baseball. She points out early in her text that her interest is solely in players and not umpires, coaches, owners, etc. She says other books have explored those avenues, and she wants to see how society affects players' decisions. For example, how do constructions of the female body affect young girls' choices?

In the first chapter of her book, Cohen explores some of the "patriarchal myths" in society that have helped to push girls towards softball, sometimes without their being aware it is happening. By opening her book with two stories of children who strive to play baseball but who end up in different places, Cohen makes her overall point. She says talent should drive players, but, unfortunately, gender is the deciding factor. Alta Weiss had all the support in the world to play baseball but still struggled because of the barriers society placed in her way. Gender is socially constructed and varies over time, Cohen says, but it is always used to assign people their place in society, even in sports.

After establishing her theoretical base, Cohen begins to examine the stories of individuals during different periods in history to see how these ideas about gender led to the inclusion or exclusion of female ballplayers. During the late-nineteenth century, the notion that women were inferior and dependent on men was a given. As a result, the role of women in baseball reflected these feelings and led to race and class also being emphasized as reasons for some playing and others staying away. Girls at Vassar who played baseball did so with their first thoughts being about maintaining Victorian ideals of womanhood; learning baseball skills came second. In almost all accounts of these early players and teams, the emphasis in reporting was on image not skill.

Cohen points out the changes that allowed for the creation of more bloomer teams in the early-twentieth century as Victorian ideals were challenged. The Progressive Era and war years provided new roles for women in the public realm and helped them challenge the notion of women's inferiority. This did not eliminate all the barriers to playing baseball, as Cohen rightly points out, using stories of Maud Nelson, Sister Miriam Cecil, and Alma Korneski. Coverage of these women and others revealed the conflicting views of femininity in society.

The AAGPBL from 1943 to 1954 holds a unique place in women's baseball history, and Cohen says it is mainly because the league was to be temporary.

The league was not advocating major changes in feminist ideals but rather a lessening of restrictions because of war needs. Women entered the work force in new fields and in larger numbers, so it was harder to argue they could not play baseball, even though the All-American league did start out more as softball than baseball. And even when they were playing baseball the players attended charm school for a year and wore skirts to play.

The opportunities provided by the All-American league mostly did not extend beyond white women and did not result in ongoing opportunities after the league folded in 1954. African American women got a small chance to play in the Negro leagues, but then softball took over as the norm and women's baseball virtually disappeared until the 1980s and 1990s. The Sun Sox and the Colorado Silver Bullets were started to challenge the idea that baseball is a game of strength. Instead, the promoters tried to sell the idea that baseball is a game of speed and finesse, which no gender has a monopoly on. Using interviews and lots of research, Cohen explains the troubles faced by these teams and their players, including stars like Ila Borders. No matter how good they were, they were an exception rather than the rule.

The longest chapter in the book focuses on the role of Little League Baseball. As an organization designed to introduce and teach young people baseball skills, this organization has had the ability to give young ladies a chance, and they have not. In fact, even when mandated by the courts, Little League established softball leagues and baseball leagues to meet the challenge of providing opportunities to play. Even for young girls, the perception of female inferiority is hard to overcome.

While Cohen does a nice job of explaining the challenges facing American girls who try to play baseball, her book does not look at women's baseball in other parts of the world where the opportunities are greater. It would have been interesting to explore why Japan, long considered a strongly patriarchal society, can have so many more women playing baseball. Does this suggest it is not just image at play?

Although Jennifer Ring's title suggests she is going to focus on American girls, her book does talk about the less developed baseball structure in the United States compared to Japan, Canada, and Australia. In these countries, women play at all levels, from young girls through college and beyond. Ring's historical approach to why women don't play baseball relies more heavily on traditional research and less on oral histories than Cohen. As a result, her concerns are more focused on the barriers presented by the lack of college opportunities or scholarships for female ballplayers. In Japan and other countries, girls do not have to switch to softball, because there are baseball opportunities that continue at all levels.

Ring follows the same historical periods that Cohen does in trying to determine what has made it so difficult for women to play baseball. Her emphasis is on economic factors as well as the cultural and historical. One key area Ring focuses on is how the development of baseball as America's national pastime has kept women out of the game much the same way English women were excluded from playing cricket. Ring has an interesting chapter looking at English women's struggles and successes to show that change is still possible with perseverance.

Ring also focuses on race and class as factors that have historically influenced stereotypes and expectations for both genders. What is expected of upper-class white women has been different than other groups in all aspects of society, not just baseball. For example, in the late-nineteenth century, people did not seem as surprised to see working women on bloomer-girl teams as newspapers commented that good girls would not be traveling and making spectacles of themselves in public. Girls at Vassar played, but not in front of the general public. Their games were more acceptable because they were on school grounds and generally against other classes at the school, so dignity and proper behavior could be maintained.

Ring says that over the course of history not much has changed for women's baseball. Even with the passage of Title IX and other court cases ending discrimination, women's baseball opportunities come and go. One still cannot find coverage of women's baseball in the mainstream press, even though there is a U.S. National Team and tournaments all over the United States and the world. Economically, women's baseball is still not viable, and therefore opportunities come and go.

For those interested in the history of women's baseball since the middle of the nineteenth century, both books are excellent resources, with Ring giving a broader history than Cohen. There is some overlap and repetition, but it is necessary for them to make their arguments. Although they take a slightly different approach, the end result is the same: women in the United States continue to struggle against a variety of barriers, real and constructed, in order to play baseball.

