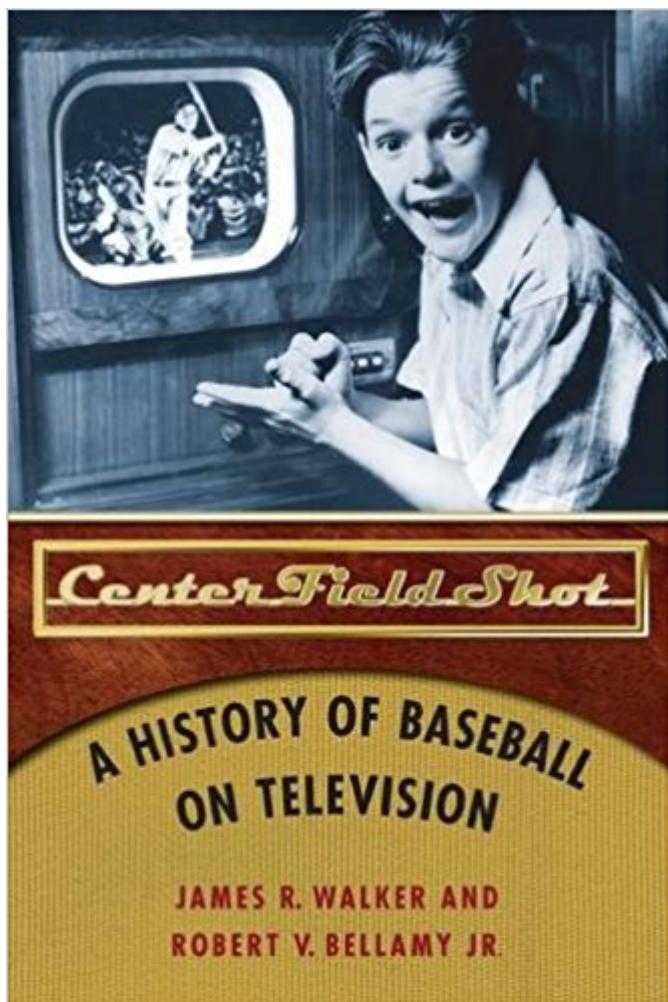


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# Center Field Shot: A History Of Baseball On Television



## Synopsis

In *Baseball Weekly*'s list of things that most affected baseball in the twentieth century, television ranked second—behind only the signing of Jackie Robinson. The new medium of television exposed baseball to a genuinely national audience; altered the financial picture for teams, owners, and players; and changed the way Americans followed the game. *Center Field Shot* explores these changes—all even more prominent in the first few years of the twenty-first century—and makes sense of their meaning for America's pastime. *Center Field Shot* traces a sometimes contentious but mutually beneficial relationship from the first televised game in 1939 to the new era of Internet broadcasts, satellite radio, and high-definition TV, considered from the perspective of businessmen collecting merchandising fees and advertising rights, franchise owners with ever more money to spend on talent, and broadcasters trying to present a game long considered “unfriendly” to television. Ultimately the association of baseball with television emerges as a reflection of—perhaps even a central feature of—American culture at large.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“*Center Field Shot* is a winner. It's smart, crisply written, and packed with eye-opening research and analysis. I learned something new on every page. Turn off the TV and start reading. I guarantee you'll be glad you did.”—Jonathan Eig, best-selling author of *Luckiest Man: The Life and Death of Lou Gehrig* and *Opening Day: The Story*

of Jackie Robinson's First Season (Jonathan Eig 2008-03-07) "At last an intensive analysis of this complicated and fascinating phenomenon has been produced. . . . Center Field Shot is at once a fun, engaging read that can be enjoyed in random five-minute snippets, and a serious full-length work of scholarship. Like the very best of television, it informs as it entertains." •Steve Treder, The Hardball Times (Steve Treder The Hardball Times 2008-05-27)"Center Field Shot: A History of Baseball on Television successfully tells the story of how the sport made a huge breakthrough arriving in people's homes. . . . Walker and Bellamy provide perhaps the definitive history of the evolution of baseball on television without ever getting too scholarly or slipping into fanciful nostalgia." •Josh Marks, Variety (Josh Marks Variety 2008-11-12)"A well-told story of owners and networks, businessmen and merchandizing. The best part of this history of baseball on television is its revelation of how broadcasters learned a new craft, a new art form." S. Gittleman, Choice (S. Gittleman Choice 2008-10-01)"More than just baseball history shot through a video lens, Center Field Shot is also a history of television shot through the lens of the national pastime." •Roberta Newman, NINE (Roberta Newman NINE)"Bellamy and Walker offer a cogent and sophisticated analysis of the consequences of television for baseball, both positive and negative. Their work contains much new information and synthesizes the old with the new in meaningful ways. . . . Center Field Shot is a must for anyone interested in the impact of television on American culture, and on baseball, an American sporting institution that once carried the designation of National Pastime." •Richard C. Crepeau, American Studies (Richard C. Crepeau American Studies)

James R. Walker is professor of communication and chair of the Department of Communications at Saint Xavier University. Robert V. Bellamy Jr. is an associate professor in the Department of Journalism and Multimedia Arts at Duquesne University.

This is a great introduction to baseball and the medium of television, but beware that it's pretty heady stuff. It doesn't take long before you have to wade into contracts and deals so complex that I still don't think I understand how they work. The later chapters especially, which deal with recent situations, can be pretty complex. My hope was that this would be about how TV has been used to cover the game, and the book does include that. But it ultimately has to spend a whole lot of time talking about where the money comes from and where it goes, especially once the basic logistics of covering a game were settled. I enjoyed it, but had to slog through the later chapters...

A well written book in which the authors discuss the still developing and burgeoning relationship between baseball and television. First discussed is local baseball telecasts of baseball (which were done well before any national coverage of baseball), the national coverage in terms of broadcast and cable channels, and how this "marriage" of baseball and television has been dysfunctional - various announcers are discussed, too. Many nice insights in this book - it gives THE best explanation for the declining attendance figures of the Fifties and the contraction of the minor leagues in the Fifties that I have read in my lifetime - it was almost like a light bulb went off in my head when I read that section. It's also fun to read about how few camera angles were used in those early local broadcasts of games, and how surprising it was to read that the center field camera shot was discouraged by MLB until the late Sixties. A book definitely worth getting - the chapters on the television rights are slow and tedious reading (X years contract for X million dollars, etc.) and the chapter references in this book (ie "see Chapter XX" or "discussed in Chapter XX") got a little annoying but all in all, a better book than I expected.

wonderful book ,tells about a part of baseball history that many fans are not aware of

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