



Pete Rose: An American Dilemma

Kostya Kennedy

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Pete Rose played baseball with a singular and headfirst abandon that endeared him to fans and peers, even as it riled others--a figure at once magnetic, beloved and polarizing. Rose has more base hits than anyone in history, yet he is not in the Hall of Fame. Twenty-five years ago he was banished from the game for gambling, then ruled ineligible for Cooperstown. Today, the question "Does Pete Rose belong in the Hall of Fame?" has evolved into perhaps the most provocative in sports, a layered, slippery and ever-relevant moral conundrum.

How do we evaluate the Hit King now, at a time when steroid cheats appear on the Hall of Fame ballot even as Rose is denied? What do we make of this happily unrepentant gambler, this shameless but beguiling showman whose post-baseball journey has led him to a curious reality show and to the streets of Cooperstown to hawk his signature, his story, himself?

Best-selling author Kostya Kennedy delivers an evocative answer in his fascinating re-examination of Pete Rose's life; from his cocky and charismatic early years through his storied playing career to his bitter war against baseball's hierarchy to the man we find today--still incorrigible, still adored by many. Where has his improbable saga landed him in the redefined, post-steroid world? Do we feel any differently about Pete Rose today? Should we?

"Kennedy's book on the tarnished and enigmatic Rose is exceptional. Like the best writing about sport-Liebling, Angell-it qualifies as stirring literature. I'd read Kennedy no matter what he writes about."

—**Richard Ford**

"Kostya Kennedy has given us the real Pete Rose at last. Perhaps Pete does not deserve him, but baseball fans and readers who appreciate superb and subtle writing will be grateful." **-David Maraniss**

"This is a wonderful, clearly written book about a dark and complicated tragedy that continues to beset the purity of our national pastime. The whole story is here: the deeply talented, passionate ball player, 'Charlie Hustle,' and the deeply morally challenged hustler who bestrides essential questions about our national game." **-Ken Burns**

"Pete Rose is too rich a character to fit on a bronze plaque. He requires a good, trenchant, poignant (ah, Petey) book, and this is it." **-Roy Blount Jr.**

Kostya Kennedy is an assistant managing editor at *Sports Illustrated* and the *New York Times* bestselling author of *56: Joe DiMaggio and the Last Magic Number in Sports*, winner of the 2011 Casey Award and runner-up for the 2012 PEN/ESPN Award for Literary Sports Writing. He lives with his wife and children in Westchester County, N.Y. For more, visit kostyakennedy.com

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