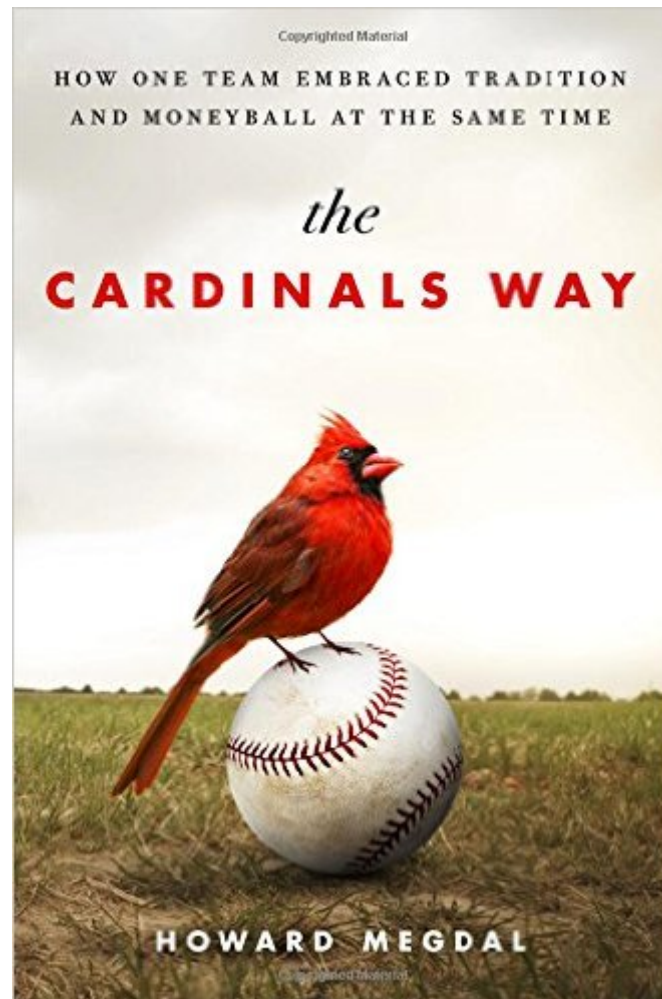


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The Cardinals Way: How One Team Embraced Tradition And Moneyball At The Same Time



Synopsis

The St. Louis Cardinals have experienced the kind of success that is rare in baseball. Regarded by many as the premier organization in Major League Baseball, they not only win, but do so with an apparently bottomless pool of talent, one that is mostly homegrown. Despite years of phenomenal achievements, including going to the World Series in 2004 and again in 2006, the Cardinals reinvented themselves using the "Cardinal Way," a term that has come to represent many things to fans, media, and other organizations, from an ironclad code of conduct to the team's cutting-edge use of statistics and analytics, and a farm system that has transformed baseball. Baseball journalist Howard Megdal takes fans behind the scenes and off the field, interviewing dozens of key players within the Cardinals organization, including owner Bill DeWitt and the general manager John Mozeliak. Megdal reveals how the players are assessed and groomed using an unrivaled player development system that has created a franchise that is the envy of the baseball world. In the spirit of *Moneyball*, *The Cardinals Way* tells an in-depth, fascinating story about a consistently good franchise, the business of sports in the twenty-first century and a team that has learned how to level the playing field, turning in season after successful season.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Although most will see this as a sports book, it's really more so a leadership book about how to run and transform an organization that happens to be a sports team. I was interested in it being a big St. Louis Cardinals baseball fan. I was impressed at the access that the author had to key personnel, including the managing partner and chairman (Bill DeWitt Jr.) and General Manager (John Mozeliak) of the team. Megdal's writing style reminded me positively of the writing of John

Feinstein, as he does an excellent job in helping you to get to know the characters involved. If I had a criticism, it would be that he sometimes goes into too much detail, especially leading up to and during the 2014 draft, that some readers may not care about. But that's a minor criticism. Although the Cardinals have been a very successful franchise over the past twenty years, the author shows that the values of the franchise have been in place for a much longer time. In fact, he states that the phrase "The Cardinals Way" comes from a manual, written originally by George Kissell, a coach whom the Cardinals employed from 1940 until his death in 2008. The author's main point is that the Cardinals of today are both the manifestation of a vision Branch Rickey had a hundred years ago, and how much of the team's current business model both fits what Rickey envisioned and is practiced by direct followers of Rickey himself. The book details how it happened -- from Rickey and DeWitt to DeWitt and Mozeliak. Here's how it happened, from George Kissell's insight and training to Jeff Luhnow's, Sig Mejdal's and Michael Girsch's revolution to Dan Kantrovitz and Gary LaRocque's implementation.

Ever since Michael Lewis' *MONEYBALL* blew onto the scene in 2003, there has been a boom in books that describe how other teams have embraced the business paradigm that relies increasingly on statistical and game analysis and less on what might be described as the human factor as emblemized by the image of the grizzled scout. In 2011, Jonah Keri published *THE EXTRA 2%: How Wall Street Strategies Took a Major League Baseball Team from Worst to First*, and in 2015, Travis Sawchik delivered *BIG DATA BASEBALL: Math, Miracles, and the End of a 20-Year Losing Streak*. The former dealt with the relatively new Tampa Bay Rays, the latter focused on the Pittsburgh Pirates, a charter member of the National League. *THE CARDINALS WAY* describes a team that's something of a hybrid. Like the Pirates, the Cardinals have been around since the 1880s. They have fielded some of the greatest teams in the sport, including the Depression-era Gashouse Gang and the progressive mid-1960s, which broke down racial barriers. The Cardinals also had the good sense to hire a young general manager by the name of Branch Rickey in 1919. Rickey has been credited with "inventing" the farm system, which used the minor leagues as a funnel for future big leaguers. Of course, he is also known as the man who signed Jackie Robinson, thereby breaking the "gentleman's agreement" to keep African Americans out of organized baseball. Howard Megdal --- whose previous books include *THE BASEBALL TALMUD* and *TAKING THE FIELD: A Fan's Quest to Run the Team He Loves* (he also wrote *WILPON'S FOLLY*, released only as an eBook) --- goes deep behind the scenes to prove that the Cardinals moved forward to adopt some of those *MONEYBALL* methods, but maintained the principles that made the

franchise so successful.

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