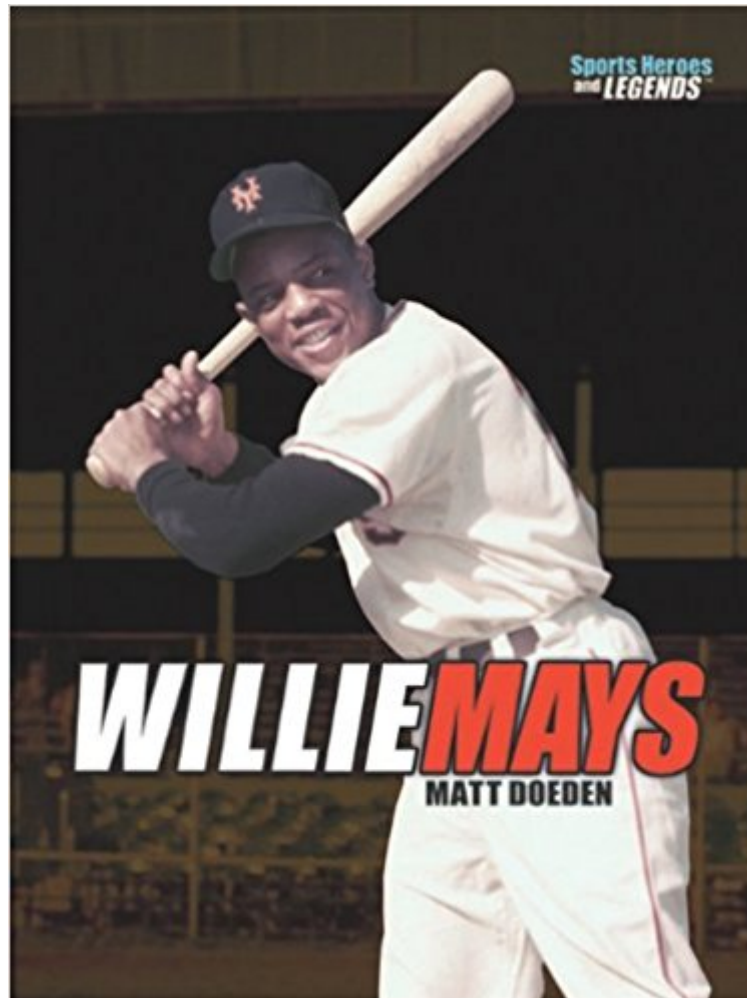




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Willie Mays (Sports Heroes & Legends)



Synopsis

"Think you know all there is to know about Willie Mays? Well, did you know that: *He once batted .477 in the minor leagues? *He won twelve straight Gold Glove awards? *He was the first African American team captain in major-league history? Willie Mays started his baseball career in the little-known Negro Leagues in 1948. He crossed over to the major leagues with the New York Giants in 1951. During the 1954 World Series, Mays stunned the baseball world with an unbelievable over-the-shoulder catch. That play launched him into superstardom. He stayed with the Giants for more than twenty years, first in New York and then in San Francisco. Along the way, he earned his place in the record books, tallying the fourth-highest home run total in major-league history. Find out how Willie Mays made it to the top of his game and stayed there. "

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Matt Doeden was born in southern Minnesota and lived parts of his childhood in Golden Valley, Minnesota, and Madison, Minnesota. He studied journalism at Mankato State University, where he worked at the college newspaper for three years. In his senior year, he served as the paper's Sports Editor, which put him in charge of the entire sports section, the sports writers, and the photographers. He covered mostly college sports, but also the Minnesota Vikings, who held training camp at MSU. His work allowed him to meet and interview people like Dennis Green, Cris Carter, Robert Smith, and more. Matt went on to work as a sports writer for the Mankato paper, and then he got a job as an editor with a small children's publisher called Capstone Press, and in 2003 he

decided to start his own business as a freelance writer and editor. Since then Matt has written and edited hundreds of books. Lots of them are on high-interest topics like cars, sports, and airplanes. He also writes and edits on geography, science, and even math.

If you simply run your fingers down Willie Mays' stats in the back of this book, you can only imagine the excitement his fans felt as he played game after game building them. William Howard Mays Jr. was the first of the superstars, perhaps given the subtle differences in the actual playing field, one of the best ever. He was what you would call a "five-tool player," a "player [who] excels at all facts of the game." When he was a young boy growing up in Westfield, Alabama, he was the type of boy who was a contender in not only baseball, but also football and basketball. It could be said Willie cut his teeth on baseball because as a babe he learned to walk by chasing a baseball. And he started walking at the age of six months. His parents separated when he was quite young and family circumstances left him in the care of his father who raised him with the help of two aunts. He wasn't destined to be an only child because his mother remarried and gave him eleven half-siblings. Baseball was his father's passion as well and William Sr. played semipro ball, where his son eventually joined him. Willie Jr. lasted one hot night as a dishwasher and decided playing baseball was infinitely more appealing. He was a young man who had what it took to be a major contender in the game, but he had a few things to learn and one of them was that he had to play his own game and quit imitating his idol, Joe DiMaggio. Piper Davis, the manager of the Birmingham Black Barons, said "he had to get over his fascination with DiMaggio and play like Willie Mays." Young Willie easily made an impression in the Negro Leagues, but as luck would have it, he was spotted by Eddie Montague. Montague was sent to scout Alonzo Perry, but his eye was soon on a young twenty-year-old whiz kid. In the blink of an eye Willie found himself signed with the New York Giants. He received jersey number twenty-four and was third in the lineup. There were some unexpected obstacles. The "fans were verbally abusive" and he needed to loosen up some. By the end of the year he was the National League Rookie of the Year. In this book you'll be taking a good look at the man behind the legend. You'll learn about The Catch, his discouraging military service, family tragedies, his awards, his marriages, how he felt when "his honeymoon with the New York fans" was over, you'll learn about what happened when the team moved to San Francisco, and you'll get to take a look at many other fascinating aspects of his career. Young baseball fans everywhere will love taking a look at sports legend, the great Willie Mays. This very well written and researched portrait focuses more on the baseball career of Willie Mays than his personal life. Although we get a glimpse what his life was off the ballfield, the facts are brief and are not gone into

in great depth. I liked the balance the book made between his personal life and his game. I expected to find a "baseball bio" and was certainly not disappointed. For example I loved reading about things like how he became the "Say Hey Kid," how he made that infamous catch, how he fine-tuned his swing, how he encountered racism, and other game related vignettes. In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, personal statistics, regular-season statistics, defensive statistics (outfield), postseason offensive statistics, source notes, a bibliography, and additional recommended website resources to explore.

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