



# Stolen Bases: Why American Girls Don't Play Baseball

*Jennifer Ring*

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Far from being strictly a men's sport, baseball has long been enjoyed and played by Americans of all genders, races, and classes since it became popular in the 1830s. The game itself was invented by English girls and boys, and when it immigrated to the United States, numerous prominent women's colleges formed intramural teams and fielded intensely spirited and powerful players.

Jennifer Ring questions the forces that have kept girls who want to play baseball away from the game. With the professionalization of the sport in the early twentieth century, Albert Goodwill Spalding--sporting goods magnate, baseball player, and promoter--declared baseball off limits for women and envisioned global baseball as a colonialist example to teach non-white men to become civilized and rational. And by the late twentieth century, baseball had become serious business at all levels, with female players perceived as obstacles to rising male players' stakes of success.

*Stolen Bases* also looks at American softball, which was originally invented by men who wanted to keep playing baseball indoors during cold winter months but has become the consolation sport for most female players. Throughout her analysis, Ring searches for ways to rescue baseball from its arrogance and exclusionary entitlement and to restore the great American sport's more optimistic nickname: the people's game.

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