



## 27 Men Out

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Like many baseball writers, Michael Coffey compares baseball with life. We admire perfection in both because we are never in complete control over events and moreover there are so many different ways to make mistakes. He points out that the odds against seeing a perfect game are staggering. Since the merger of the American and National leagues in 1903, there have been over 150,000 games in the Major Leagues, but only fourteen pitchers have attained complete perfection by retiring all twenty-seven batters in order. Coffey does a wonderful job by placing each perfect game in relation to the individual pitcher's career, but he also points out what was then going on in professional baseball and in American society as a whole.

Coffey has presented readers with biographies of fourteen different pitchers. Readers should not be entirely surprised that some perfect games were thrown by famous pitchers such as Cy Young, Sandy Koufax, and Catfish Hunter, but many perfect games were thrown by pitchers such as Len Barker, Charlie Robinson, and Don Larsen, who would be unknown today had it not been for their day of perfection. He points out that some perfect games gave spectators a diversion from traumatic events. Sandy Koufax threw his perfect game in Los Angeles shortly after the Watts Riots of 1965 and David Cone pitched his perfect game in 1999 on the very weekend when Americans were profoundly depressed by the tragic deaths of John F. Kennedy, Jr. and his wife Carolyn Bessette in an airplane accident. This is a delightful book that will bring pleasure to many baseball fans. This book was written and published before Randy Johnson's perfect game on May 18, 2004.

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