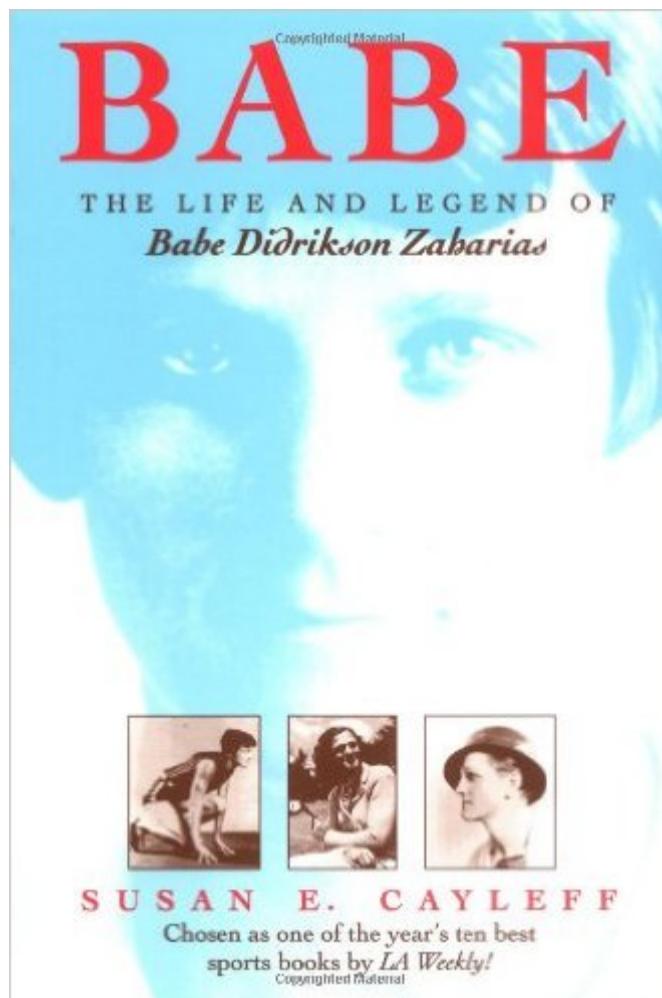


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Babe: The Life And Legend Of Babe Didrikson Zaharias (Sport And Society)



Synopsis

One of the most gifted athletes of all time, Babe Didrikson Zaharias dominated track and field, winning two Olympic gold medals and a controversial silver in 1932 before going on to compete in baseball, bowling, basketball, tennis, and particularly in golf. An American public smitten with her wit, frankness, and "unladylike" bravado helped her become an American legend. In *Babe*, Susan Cayleff offers a comprehensive, in-depth biography of a woman who was a great athlete at a time when women's roles and opportunities were severely limited. Through interviews with Babe's friends and family, golf peers, and medical personnel, Cayleff sensitively reveals the life and probes the legend of this unusual American hero. Included is a for-the-record discussion of the remarkable love Babe shared with Betty Dodd, the young golfer who was her constant companion in her last years. Stricken with cancer in her prime, Babe went public as a self-help role model able to beat the disease. Her bravery further endeared her to the American public.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Cayleff has thoroughly researched and documented Babe's life and times. She conducted extensive interviews with surviving members of Babe's family, friends, and partner (Betty Dodd). Cayleff also incorporated massive amounts of journalistic accounts--sports writers, magazines accounts, etc. This is not a fluff biography--the book will teach you about what it meant to be a woman in Babe's time, what it meant to be a female athlete, and how Babe managed--and manipulated--these things. Babe fans will learn more about her, and scholars will be able to follow up on Cayleff's work through

her extensive endnotes. This is the first book to tell of Babe's relationship with Betty Dodd, but Cayleff does not label it "lesbian." That is because Babe herself never did. Remember that this was the 1950s. They were life partners, spouses. They loved each other. Cayleff's book is important for bringing this relationship to light, as well as many other hidden realities of Didrikson's life--her heroism as an "out" cancer patient (when it was taboo to talk about it), as well as how Babe manipulated the press. As dozens of published book reviews have stated (see quotes above at this cite), this is absolutely THE most extensive research ever done on Babe. I've seen rave reviews of the book in *SOJOURNER*, *WEST COAST WOMAN*, *WOMEN'S REVIEW OF BOOKS*, and *SPORTS HISTORY REVIEW*, among many others.

THis is one of the best sports biographies I have read. Its very well written, very unbiased, sensitive and portrays an accurate picture of this amazing human being. Its also a fun read and reveals a side of the Babe, her pranks, egocentric often annoying style, that few knew. In my mind she surely was the greatest woman's athlete and this book truly does her justice. You won't be disappointed.

Since I am from Beaumont, Texas (South Park) and a fan of the BABE, I found the book a very interesting read. I was unaware of the Babe's relationship with Betty Dodd; however, I feel that an individual's sexual life is their own business. I can't help but wonder how the author could have been sure of their special relationship without ever being in the same bedroom with them??? Changing her colostomy bag is hardly a sexual act, but the type of action from a nurse, close relative or friend.

Anybody interested in the history of women in sport should read up on Babe Didrikson. "The Babe" was truly an amazing athlete and interesting character, unparalleled in both competitive excellence and chutzpah. While this book contains an abundance of colorful information, Cayleff's writing doesn't quite do Babe justice. Besides being way too long, the book contains more than a few statements bordering on the ridiculous, way too many distracting footnotes, and at LEAST one factual error. In the last chapter, Suzy Favor is cited as the 'outstanding swimmer' from University of Wisconsin who won a Babe-inspired award. In fact, Ms. Favor (now Mrs. Hamilton) is a nine-time NCAA champion **RUNNER**. This error did not inspire confidence in the book's other assertions--foremost being that Babe's efforts to be more outwardly feminine in her later years were a facade to conceal her lesbianism. By the end of the book, I couldn't help thinking that perhaps Babe actually LIKED lipstick, skirts and perhaps even marriage.

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