

After four excruciating months without the world's greatest game, baseball is right around the corner! Brenna is probably sick of me randomly blurting out, "I want to watch baseball!" during every lull in conversation. I've been watching video clips of last season's greatest moments but that only scratches some of the itch. Sure, I could easily submerge myself in a spring training game and watch the game's future stars fight for a spot on their team's opening day roster but I like to wait for the day when I can kick up my feet, throw a few hot dogs on the grill and watch as much baseball as I possibly can. While Opening Day is March 28 this year, the first Major League Baseball game happened on March 20 when the Los Angeles Dodgers took on the San Diego Padres in the first ever Seoul series. That would have been so much fun to watch if I wanted to tune for the first pitch at 6:05 a.m. EST. I watched a few innings while I got ready to come to the library, but I definitely didn't put hot dogs on the grill... or did I?

I know what you're thinking, "How much more baseball content does the library possibly have that you haven't already covered in your columns?" But luckily for all of us, the KTL has a higher number of baseball related items in our catalog than the number of runners batted in by Hank Wilson in 1931. (That's 207 items to his 191 RBIs). The Kirkland Town Library's collection features movies, documentaries, novels, an extremely (but not surprising) high number of Yankees related material, children's books, and even coaching guides. And all of that is without including the baseball collections at other libraries in the Mid York Library System or available in electronic format.

First up to bat this year is *Baseball: A Literary Anthology* (2002), in which Nicholas Dawidoff curates a collection of essays, stories, memoirs, news reports, and poems of the game from very prolific writers. Featured in the anthology is Stephen King's "Head Down" which follows his son's little league baseball team as they navigate their 1989 season, with a fun twist that it's written as if he's a sports writer for a Major League club and not a team full of 12 year olds. There is also a great essay by Robert Frost and the anthology's journey through time as described by an assortment of writers makes it a treat and a necessary read for baseball fans.

This one's for you, Yankees fans! Arguably the most beloved manager of all time, Joe Torre, along with Tom Verducci, take us behind the scenes of the winningest (yes, that's a real word) franchise in their book *The Yankee Years* (2009). The book starts off with Torre's hiring in 1996 and follows him through six World Series appearances and four World Series wins to the end of his career. Even this Atlanta Braves fan thinks Torre could be the best manager of all time, and that comes from someone who grew up watching the legendary Bobby Cox.

I alluded to this next title in my January column, but it's worth mentioning again. *Why We Love Baseball: A History in 50 Moments* (2023) by Joe Posnanski is a must read. Most baseball books are difficult to read, boiling America's favorite pastime down to dry facts and stats. Not this one. Posnanski narrates his list of the 50 greatest moments in baseball history with style, wit, and inspiration. He counts down these greatest moments by showcasing the game's humanity, particularly featuring heroes that aren't quite as godlike as Babe Ruth, Willie Mays, or Hank Aaron, and giving smaller, yet magical, moments their due.

I can talk about baseball for a long time, and it's more than thrilling to learn more about my favorite sport or to submerge myself in all things related. During the month of March leading up to Opening Day, Brenna and I sit down to watch our favorite baseball movies. Usually I come up with our lineup (pun intended and necessary), but this year Brenna will be the manager of the movies due to a bet I lost concerning the outcome of a reality television show that we watch to fill the time as we wait for the world's greatest game to come back. Until then, please swing by the Kirkland Town Library to check out our baseball collection!