



The Nats and the Grays: How Baseball in the Nation's Capital Survived WWII and Changed the Game Forever

David E. Hubler, Joshua H. Drazen

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On a chilly Sunday, December 7, 1941, major league baseball's owners gathered in Chicago for their annual winter meetings, just two months after one of baseball's greatest seasons. For the owners, the attack on Pearl Harbor that morning was also an attack on baseball. They feared a complete shutdown of the coming 1942 season and worried about players they might lose to military service. But with the support of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, the national pastime continued.

The Nats and the Grays: How Baseball in the Nation's Capital Survived WWII and Changed the Game Forever examines the impact of the war on the two teams in Washington, DC—the Nationals of the American League and the Homestead Grays of the Negro Leagues—as well as the impact of the war on major league baseball as a whole. Each chapter is devoted to a wartime year, beginning with 1941 and ending with the return of peacetime in 1946, including the exciting American League pennant races of 1942-1945. This account details how the strong friendship between FDR and Nationals team owner Clark Griffith kept the game alive throughout the war, despite numerous calls to shut it down; the constant uncertainties the game faced each season as the military draft, federal mandates, national rationing, and other wartime regulations affected the sport; and the Negro Leagues' struggle for recognition, solvency, and integration.

In addition to recounting the Nationals' and the Grays' battles on and off the field during the war, this book looks beyond baseball and details the critical events that were taking place on the home front, such as the creation of the GI Bill, the internment of Japanese Americans, labor strikes, and the fight for racial equality. World War II buffs, Negro League historians, baseball enthusiasts, and fans of the present-day Washington Nationals will all find this book on wartime baseball a fascinating and informative read.

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