



## Lou: Fifty Years of Kicking Dirt, Playing Hard, and Winning Big in the Sweet Spot of Baseball

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**Lou: Fifty Years of Kicking Dirt, Playing Hard, and Winning Big in the Sweet Spot of Baseball** Lou Piniella , Bill Madden

In this candid, revealing, and entertaining memoir, the beloved New York Yankee legend looks back over his nearly fifty-year career as a player and a manager, sharing insights and stories about some of his most memorable moments and some of the biggest names in Major League Baseball.

For nearly five decades, Lou Piniella has been a fixture in Major League Baseball, as an outfielder with the legendary New York Yankees of the 1970s, and as a manager for five teams in both the American and National leagues. With respected veteran sportswriter Bill Madden, Piniella now reflects on his storied career, offering fans a glimpse of life on the field, in the dugout, and inside the clubhouse.

Piniella speaks from the heart about his teams and his players, offering a detailed, up-close portrait of the Bronx Zoo's raucous personalities such as Reggie Jackson and Catfish Hunter, as well as his close friendship with Thurman Munson and his unusual relationship with George Steinbrenner. He also delves deep into his post-Yankee experiences, from winning a World Series for the controversial owner of the Cincinnati Reds, Marge Schott, to transforming the perennial cellar-dwelling Seattle Mariners into one of the league's best teams. Some of the game's brightest stars are here: Ken Griffey Jr, Randy Johnson, and Alex Rodriguez, Piniella's supremely talented and controversial protégé.

## Lou: Fifty Years of Kicking Dirt, Playing Hard, and Winning Big in the Sweet Spot of Baseball Details

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## From Reader Review Lou: Fifty Years of Kicking Dirt, Playing Hard, and Winning Big in the Sweet Spot of Baseball for online ebook

### Tim Kline says

This may have been about the fastest I have ever read a book. I could not put it down as I loved reading about the progression of Lou Pinella's life in MLB as a player, coach, Manager, General Manager, broadcaster, and finally advisor. He has so many great stories to tell, especially being a part of the Yankees during the Stienbrenner years along with all the happenings that came with that. So many great stories, many funny, many interesting, some sad, and some just plain unbelievable.

I loved how Lou was so honest and open and how he gave ample time to putting quotes in from other players who were connected to him, telling their side about Lou and a particular incident.

Here is a snippet from when Lou became manager of the Yankees in 1986. " I was in a bad mood to begin with and looking to take my frustrations out on somebody when I remembered something that Mr. Steinbrenner had told me when he hired me as manager: " Remember baseball is entertainment, and if you get kicked out of a game, put on a nice show!" I knew he'd be watching the game, and when a close call at first base went against us in the 6th inning, I charged out of the dugout, hollering and kicking dirt and quickly getting ejected, at which point I then flung my hat to the ground and began kicking it as well. As my tirade continued , our bat boy picked up my cap, which was one of my props, and handed it to me. "Put that cap down!" I screamed at him. "You're ruining my show!" Terrified, he dropped the cap and scampered back to the dugout. After the game, which we lost, 6-5, in 10 innings, I happened to mention that it was Anita's birthday(Lou's wife) and when the writers got back upstairs to the press box, they called her to ask if she'd seen my performance on national TV. "All I can say," she said, sighing, "Is that I'm forty-three years old today and I feel like I'm married to a four-year old."

His insight into Billy Martin, the Boss, Marge Schott, Alex Rodriquez, Ken Griffey jr., Bobby Murcer, Thurman Munson, Earl Weaver, etc, is all a treat.

As a huge Baseball fan and a Cincinnati Reds fan I love what Mr. Pinella has done and is doing for Baseball. I will never forget the 1990 year with the Reds. I knew when he was hired that good things will happen, and it did very quickly. Thank you Lou!

I loved how Mr. Pinella finished up his book. ".. And while I would be honored to someday join so many of my contemporaries in Cooperstown, I am comforted by the fact that in my family's eyes, I am already in the Hall of Fame as a husband, father, and grandfather. I also realize that, approaching my midseventies, I am in the ninth inning of life, winning the game because of my faith- and that is the greatest comfort of all to me."

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### Mike Kennedy says

I listened to the audio version of the book. Lou Piniella has had a long and interesting life in baseball where he crossed paths with many of the games greats. In this book he retells all of it. Parts of this book are really good. When Lou goes into this thoughts or details behind the events this book is a five star. Unfortunately too many times he is just recounting what happened or is making excuses as to why he or his teams failed. Despite the fact that he spends too much on the last sentence, this is still a fascinating book. It was great to get Lou's insight on people he dealt with such as George Steinbrenner, Billy Martin, Ken Griffey Jr, Marge Schotts, and Alex Rodriquez. If you are a fan of baseball from the 70's to today, you will enjoy this book. It was a good book, but it had a chance to be a great one. Too bad.

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## Devyn Duffy says

Lou is a wonderful baseball memoir full of anecdotes, recollections of games, season recaps, and quotes that make this book an engaging read for fans of baseball and its history. If you grew up watching Lou Piniella play and/or manage, his memoir will take you back to those days and maybe even rekindle your interest in a sport that lost a lot of its flavor in the Steroid Era of 15-14 scores and 70-homer seasons.

Piniella and his co-author, Bill Madden, paint a colorful picture of Piniella's life and career and his dealings with some of baseball's interesting characters, like George Steinbrenner (depicted as a well-intentioned micromanager), Billy Martin (as a brilliant tactician whose emotions were his downfall), and Marge Schott (as Plan 9 From Outer Space). Piniella is also candid about players he played with (like Thurman Munson, who Piniella idolized) and managed (like Alex Rodriguez, whose use of performance-enhancing drugs was a bitter disappointment to Piniella). And at the end of the story, Piniella gives a few opinions about things in the game that trouble him (such as over-reliance on sabermetrics and pitch counts) and offers a few all-time teams (teammates, opponents, players he managed, hot-tempered\* players, and even umpires).

From Piniella's somewhat humble beginnings as the son of Spanish immigrants in Tampa to his retirement from managing to take care of his ailing mother, the memoir's blend of family life, personal relationships, and baseball history make for a good story. For me, even his retelling of the Reds' 1990 World Series championship was bearable because he kept the nightmare that was the 1990 National League Championship Series to less than two pages. But whatever team you cheer for, this memoir should get you ready to watch some baseball.

\*[Piniella uses a more colorful term.]

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## Amy says

I thoroughly enjoyed this book!

I originally thought I would just skim or skip through to the highlights, but I ended up reading this from cover to cover and the quality that was put into this book is what you would expect from the caliber of manager that Lou Pinella is.

One of the first things I learned in this book (that I did not know) was that Pinella was from Tampa, which was and still is a "baseball hotbed." Players such as Lou Pinella, Tony LaRussa, and Ken Suarez in the 60's, and later Fred McGriff, Luis Gonzalez, Wade Boggs, Dwight Gooden, Lance McCullers, Tino Martinez, Gary Sheffield, Rich Monteleone, and Pinella's cousin, Dave Magadan, all made it from the Tampa sandlots to the big leagues.

Pinella's history and the history of baseball during this period was especially fascinating. I loved when he talked about helping A-Rod with his swing in a hotel room in the EARLY hours of a morning to help get him out of a slump.

His relationships were wonderfully poignant. I cried as I read about his love / hate relationship with George Steinbrenner. Steinbrenner definitely had a way about him . . .

His close friendships with Thurman Munson, Catfish Hunter, and Bobby Murcer ... It's sad that they are all gone, now.

I also loved reading about all of his "Lou-Pinions," especially in relation to steroids (on which we disagree), sabermetrics, instant replay, etc.

Excellent!

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### **Chris Jaffe says**

Perfunctory. If I had to describe this book in one word - that's the one. Perfunctory.

Piniella covers all the points you'd expect: his days as a player with the Bronx Zoo Yankees, his dealings with Steinbrenner, his championship victory as Reds manager, that time he threw a base, the fight with Rob Dibble, etc. All the stuff you'd expect to be in here is in here.

But it never really comes to life. It all feels ... perfunctory. "OK, I've gotta hit these marks, so here's a few seconds reflection on them." Several times in the book, he'll quote a player by saying, "in an interview done for this book, ex-jock so-and-so says...." and then have a two paragraph extended quote. Yeah, it's nice to get someone's thoughts, but I don't recall other autobiographies so blatantly telegraph other people's quotes like that, and then so extensively. Normally they focus on telling their own tales. At least the good bios do.

Wanna know how perfunctory this book can get? When he gets to his years as Cubs manager, Piniella consistently refers to the team's Japanese outfielder as "Kosuke Fukodome." Er, Lou? It's spelled Fukudome. Two "u"s, not two "o"s.

Yeah, it's that sort of book.

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### **Bryan Watt says**

Excellent book written by one of the hardest playing Yankee outfielders of all time. I feel Lou does a great job of capturing his career in a little over 300 pages. It was great to read about how he helped so many players grow in their careers and his endless battles with George Steinbrenner. All in all it shows how hard Lou Piniella worked to get to where he got to in his career as a player and a manager.

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### **Carrie says**

Disappointingly bland, especially coming from someone known for spectacular outbursts. He hits all the main points of his career, but every time he comes up against something controversial, it's quickly acknowledged, and then immediately followed up with "but they're a great guy and I really respect them as a person/player/manager."

I mean, Steinbrenner sounds like an absolute nightmare to work for. He flat out admits he was miserable working for him half the time. But then he's all oh, I really respect him. No. Stop. Don't do that.

I think my favorite part was when he was like, *I really needed to take a break from baseball, because I was in some pretty serious financial trouble. Then I developed a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Then I started managing the Devil Rays.* Um, wait, can we go back a little here? How about a couple more

sentences about that serious financial trouble? That sounds interesting.

Also, the audiobook narration? Not into it. I know Johnny Heller's an Audie-award winner and all, but I will actively avoid anything else he narrates because I disliked this one so much.

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## **Tom Stamper says**

I appreciate that Lou doesn't mind telling who he dislikes in baseball. You get the impression the list is shorter now than it would have been 10 or 15 years ago. He even tells you about fights that have since healed. He chronicles his sporting life from minor league days in the 1960s through his playing and managing days with a synopsis of moments and anecdotes throughout. He and Bill Madden also interviewed others for the recollections of those moments and those quotes are sprinkled about here and there.

It's not a classic like Durocher's Nice Guys Finish Last or Whitey Herzog's You're Missing a Great Game, but it's solid throughout and I spent the better part of a Sunday starting and finishing it. Those books were part memoir and part baseball strategy. Lou does mostly memoir here except for the chapter near the end where he shares opinions on the game.

I read Lou's first book when I was a kid in the 1980s. It was mostly about his playing career. The one thing that stuck with me is what good friends he was with Thurman Munson and Bobby Murcer. Growing up watching the Yankees I always assumed they were all great pals. I didn't know that baseball had its cliques and personalities and head cases. Now I'm surprised to hear that any GM is on good terms with his field manager.

There is a great section about his time in Cincinnati working for Marge Schott. She was like no baseball owner I have ever heard chronicled. She didn't interfere like George and neither did she spend any money to win, but she was an eccentric. She was so cheap she served vodka that tasted something like paint thinner so when Lou brought a bottle of Absolute she wanted to save it for a special occasion. Those Cincy teams had some fun players. Eric Davis, Barry Larken, and Chris Sabo would have been interesting enough but then you also have the Nasty Boys bullpen characters.

The Seattle portion wasn't quite as interesting for me despite the great players he had there. I just hated that 1995 team that beat the Yankees in the playoffs and kept Don Mattingly out of the World Series. Still you get his take on Junior, Arod, Big Unit, Edgar, Buhner etc.

The book finishes with his time in Tampa and Chicago followed by his musings and opinions on the game. It was an altogether enjoyable book that is worth reading if you are fans of any of his teams.

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## **Dave says**

A good book about one of the favorites of mine. Recounts his playing career, and career as a manager it spans over 50 yrs of his life. Baseball fans of the 1970's through the 2000's will enjoy the stories and the event that this book chronicles.

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## Nick says

I really enjoyed this auto-biography of Lou Piniella. Lou tells the story of his life in baseball and it does not disappoint. We see a side of Lou that you wouldn't have guessed he had if you only watched him on TV. I've been a die-hard Cubs fan for as long as I can remember, but any fan of baseball history should read Lou's book. He's been in the game for 50 years and has won three world series! As Lou once said of an opponent that was chiding him, "I've forgotten more about baseball than he knows!"

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## Mike says

A winningly written book but a little bland and tame, considering that Lou Piniella was a man famous for profane outbursts and ejections in his managerial career. Call me old fashioned, but reading a grown up book, I chafe when I come upon the abbreviation "F-n." Does anyone imagine Steinbrenner or Piniella or Billy Martin actually talk that way? F-n? Fuck no.

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## Mark Mitchell says

Lou Piniella spent fifty years in Major League Baseball: sixteen as a player, and many more as a coach and manager. To say that Piniella has seen a lot of baseball would be a colossal understatement. His book reviews his career from his days as a youth baseball player in Tampa through the end of his managing career.

Piniella spends a lot of the book reviewing particular seasons, with considerable detail about who had what ERA at the All-Star break, or how many games back his team was in August. But, the on-field baseball aspects of the book are not particularly interesting or illuminating, despite the occasional amusing anecdote. Much more interesting are Piniella's personal reflections and the ways in which his personal and professional lives were intertwined: his marriage (50 years and counting), the ways that life on the road was a strain when he had family that needed him at home, financial follies that lead to him feeling it necessary to take a job that he might not have otherwise desired, his love/hate relationship with the infamous George Steinbrenner, and his deep affection for — and frustration with — Alex Rodriguez.

Piniella's reputation as a "red-ass" (his own term for himself) comes through in his writing. He does not pull punches when being critical of players, managers, umpires, owners, or himself. He seems to feel a modicum of shame over some of the antics resulting from his legendary temper — but also pride in the fact that he played the game with passion. At the very end of the book, he the strength of his personality shines through when he offers some "Loupinions" (also his term) about the modern game including the impact of steroids, instant replay, and defensive shifts.

Piniella's autobiography will be enjoyed by dedicated baseball fans who recall significant portions of his career — but probably few others.

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## Tom Gase says

Not bad, but it doesn't really seem to have a flow to it. The book is about Lou Piniella, a manager of some great teams, and some bad ones but he does have a lot of stories. This book also talks about his playing days

with the Yankees in the mid to late 1970's/early 1980's. It also talks about him managing the Yankees, Reds, Mariners, Rays and Cubs. These are the best parts of the book in my opinion, as his days with the late 1970's Yankees have been discussed in books so much I feel I know what happened even more than the players. But it was refreshing to hear about the 1990 Reds (which I hated, but, heh, they were good) and the 2001 Mariners to name a few of his teams he managed. I had a pre-edited book, so maybe the edited one flows a little better? I don't know. A fun read, but nothing mind-blowing. At times it felt rushed even. Still, makes me think that maybe he should be a Hall-of-Famer as a manager? I think he's borderline, one more World Series title would have clinched it. Bill Madden also helped with this book, and he's written some good ones on Don Zimmer and the 1954 season.

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### **Ross says**

For baseball fans, particularly Yankee fans, a Home Run by the former Mariners, Yankees, Cubs, Reds and Rays manager. Great story telling and wonderful insights from Lou's 50 year career in baseball. Not the greatest piece of literature, but the stories read as if the Man himself is sitting with you, regaling you with his experiences with the Game. A must read for baseball fans!

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### **Don Gorman says**

(2 1/2). For Baseball and major sports enthusiasts only. There is a little bit of wisdom and life's learnings here but this is mostly a play by play of a storied baseball career. Sweet Lou covered all the bases (sorry about that) as a player, manager and more. He starred on the big stage in New York and turned things around in places like Seattle. The presentation gets pretty dry with all the details on occasion, but there is enough color in here to make it readable. Lou is quite the character. I always liked him.

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