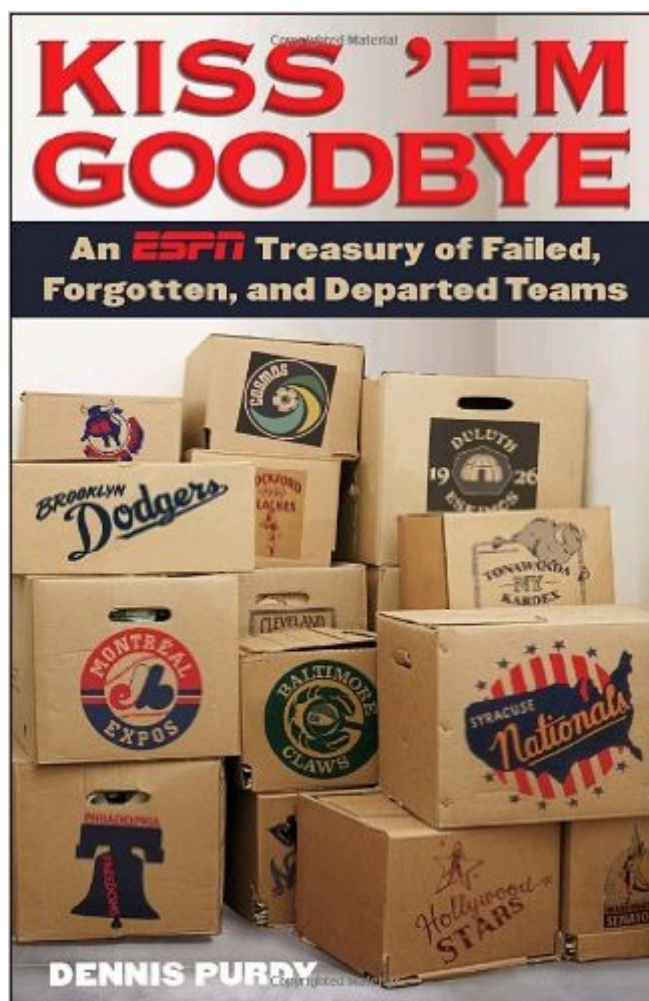


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Kiss 'Em Goodbye: An ESPN Treasury Of Failed, Forgotten, And Departed Teams



Synopsis

THEY'RE GOING, GOING, GONE. . . Their names roll off the tongue, a litany of the damned: the Providence Steam Roller, the Wilmington Quicksteps, the Cincinnati Porkers. They are the lost squads of professional sports history—teams forsaken by fans, fleeced by owners, or forgotten by time. Until now. Kiss 'Em Goodbye unearths the real stories of dozens of vanished teams that once graced—and often disgraced—North America's big leagues. Like the St. Paul Apostles, the only major league team never to have played a home game; Card-Pitt, the NFL's World War II doormat; and the Philadelphia Quakers of the NHL, a team owned jointly by bootleggers and a retired boxer who climbed back into the ring to help meet payroll. In obituaries for both big-city franchises that skipped town (the Baltimore Colts, the Brooklyn Dodgers) and small-town teams that had their brief moment of glory (the Tonawanda Kardex, the Pottsville Maroons), Kiss 'Em Goodbye commemorates mysterious fires, waterlogged basketball courts, fields tended by goats (cheaper than mowers!), and uniforms that broke team budgets. It's all here in a fascinating, hilarious, page-turning celebration of teams that prove it's not whether you win or lose, but that you once played the game.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Every major sporting league (and every minor league, for that matter) has a number of franchises that have a colorful past. And that's *all* they have, because they don't exist any longer in their original form. Dennis Purdy sets out to recall these stories in his book *Kiss 'Em Goodbye: An ESPN Treasury of Failed, Forgotten, and Departed Teams*. Even my current locale (Portland Oregon) has

a mention with its brief foray into "major league" football with the Boston/New Orleans/Portland Breakers of the United States Football League. With each chapter ranging from three to seven pages, this is a fun and convenient book to pick up for a few minutes when you want a break. And you'll definitely be amazed with what passed for "professional" over the years...Without taking the time to break down the numbers by sports, it seems like many of the chapters cover baseball teams from the late 1800's to almost current times. For instance, the Baltimore Orioles of the National League existed by that name and ownership from 1892 to 1899. The team was known for some "interesting" tactics, like keeping the grass in the outfield long so that extra balls could be hidden for the outfielders to find if they lost the actual ball in play. The Boston Braves were a longer-lived franchise, existing from 1876 through 1952, when they became the first NL team in the 20th century to relocate to a new city (Milwaukee). Interspersed throughout the team stories, you find out that there was little regulation of the sport back then. Gambling and game-fixing was common, as were deals designed to raid players from other teams. Teams could play as many or as few games as they wanted, and there was no predetermined way to tell actually who ended up as the league champion.

"Kiss 'Em Goodbye" is billed on the back cover as a "fascinating, hilarious, page-turning celebration" of defunct teams. In actuality, it's not too fascinating. It's not the least bit funny. But it is page-turning, because I couldn't wait to get through it and move to the next book. Author Dennis Purdy has put together a rather strange collection of mini-histories of teams that aren't with us any more. That should be a rich source of fun reading, because strange things happen to sports teams -- particularly the ones who disappear. But it falls quite short. A few things go wrong here. There are more than 80 teams represented here, spread over 360 pages. That's a lot of teams if you aren't writing an encyclopedia, and this doesn't qualify. A little editing to get the number of pages under 300 would have been helpful. The selection of teams is also a little strange. A great many of the teams come from 19th century baseball. The stories start to read the same way after a while at least in the broad reasons for their demise. They run out of money, lose a bunch of games, and fold. The early days of the National Football League are well represented here as well, and it's a similar story to the baseball teams. The chapter on the Tonawanda Kardex, a team that lasted one game in the NFL, may have been fun because of the odd circumstances. Otherwise, it just became tough for the small towns to go up against the big cities. So it was farewell, Portsmouth Spartans and Providence Steam Roller. Minor league baseball teams in the Los Angeles area and in San Francisco are covered for some reason -- think you can guess why they went out of business in 1957?

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