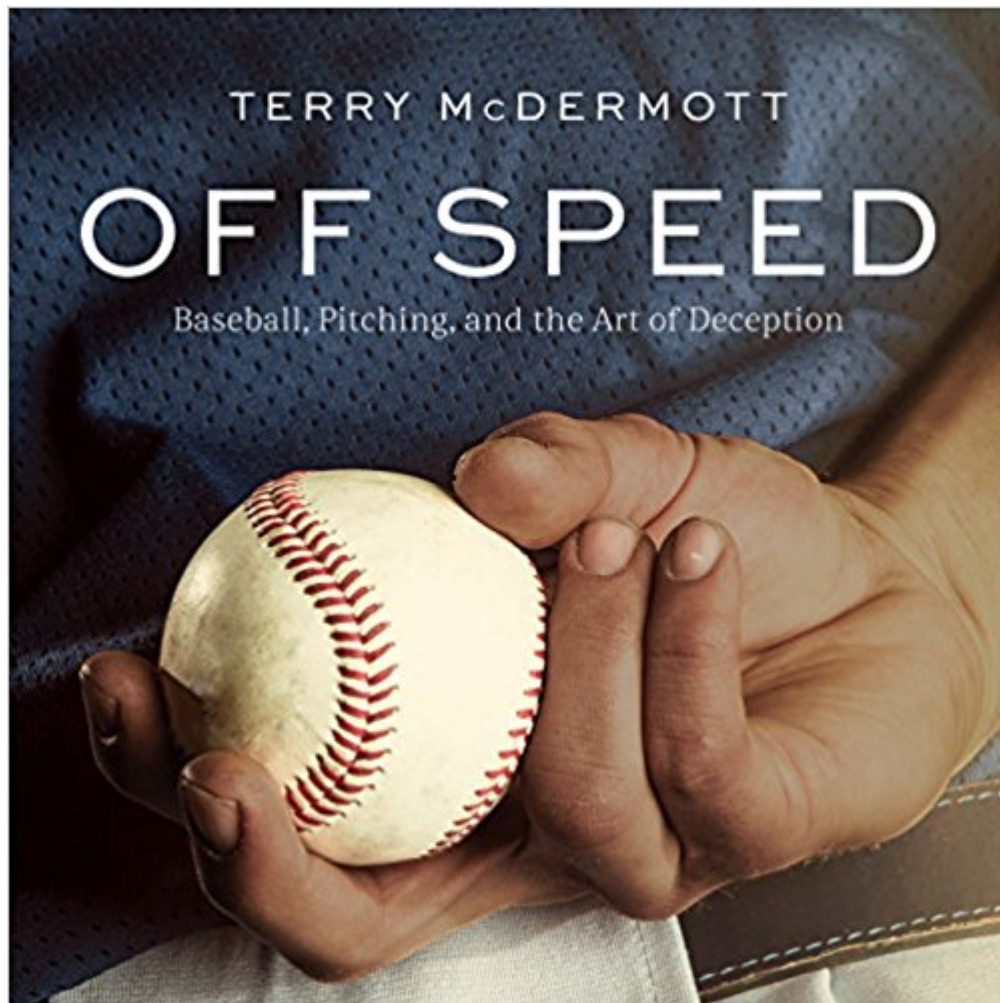




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Off Speed: Baseball, Pitching, And The Art Of Deception



Synopsis

Tracing the evolution of pitching and the pitcher's art of deception, Terry McDermott tells the fascinating story of baseball's 150-year hunt for the perfect pitch. Using the framework of a single game (nine chapters, nine innings, nine pitches), he explores the history of every type of pitch, combining the folk wisdom of the players with the enormous wealth of new data brought to the sport by the growing legion of statisticians who are transforming many of the sport's once sacred beliefs. As a lifelong baseball fan, McDermott approaches his subject with the love every fan brings to the park plus the expertise of a probing journalist, exploring with irrepressible enthusiasm and curiosity both the science and the romance of the game.

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Customer Reviews

“McDermott describes nine pitches, weaving player and coach interviews into an absorbing examination of this arcane art.”
—Daniel M. Gold, *The New York Times Book Review*
“A deeply felt portrayal of the men on the mound.”
—Will Leitch, *The Atlantic*
“A nostalgic and witty tribute to the cunning and craft of baseball pitchers. . . . Engaging. . . . Delightful. . . . A treat for statistics junkies [and] readers who appreciate the human dimension of the sport. . . . McDermott is a wonderful person with whom to share a baseball game.”
—Tom Zelman, *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis)
“McDermott . . . explores with great affection and insight the art of pitching.”
—Chris Foran, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*
“A literate and knowing little gem.”
—George Vecsey, author of *Baseball*
“What lover of the game will not delight in McDermott’s”

field-of-dreams nostalgia for the baseball he played and watched growing up in his small Iowa hometown? No one passionate about America's national pastime will leave these pages disappointed.

• Booklist (starred review) "A lovely memoir of the game as it is played from Iowa sandlots to the Kingdome, along with a fascinating and absorbing history of pitching. A terrific book for both beginners and longtime fans.

• Kevin Baker, author of *America the Ingenious* "Nine innings, nine pitches, one hell of a book. *Off Speed* is a must-read for any fan of the magic that can be found at the intersection of New School data and Old School romance.

• Ian O'Connor, author of *The Captain: The Journey of Derek Jeter* "Off Speed is baseball magic. As soon as Terry McDermott set down thirteen deft definitions of pitches, with which I happily began to quibble, then gave me Willie Stargell likening the attempt to hit Sandy Koufax to trying to drink coffee with a fork, I fell into a flow state that held to the last chapter.

• David James Duncan, author of *The Brothers K* "A fascinating history of pitching mixed with scientific facts, psychological insights, delightful digressions about small-town American life, and the heart-thumping play-by-play of Felix Hernandez's march to perfection. I always knew that King Felix was great, but now I know why.

• Zack Hample, author of *The Baseball* "A paean to baseball from the perspective of an experienced fan. *Off Speed* is the rare book that goes deep inside the sport with an approach accessible to insiders and novices alike. Its crisp writing offers historic foundation while conveying, in full bloom, the depth of the author's passion.

• Jason Turbow, author of *Dynastic, Bombastic, Fantastic* --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Terry McDermott, a former reporter for the Los Angeles Times, is the author of *Perfect Soldiers: The 9/11 Hijackers-Who They Were, Why They Did It*. Joe Barrett has been a working stage, screen, and recording booth actor since 1974 and an award-winning and eight-time Audie Award-nominated audiobook narrator since 1999. He also practiced law for five years-but don't hold that against him. Joe is married to actress Andrea Wright, and together they have four children.

This book is a lovely mixture of insight into the art of pitching, history of baseball, and memoir by a thoughtful fan. McDermott explains masterfully, in a way bound to appeal to the baseball fan and novice alike. It is the story of a perfectly pitched game, organized into nine chapters, one per inning. But it is so much more than that. Great read, and clearly a work of passion on the author's part. Books often are a little too long, but this was a happy exception. "Off-Speed" is a full-length book, but if anything it could have been even longer. I found myself disappointed when it was over

because I wanted still more.

This book is successful because the author successfully builds drama by alternating chapters from every inning pitched by Felix Hernandez during his perfect game with the art of pitching and a brief bio of his dad's minor league career. McDermott's description of the battle between pitcher and hitter strikes just the right chord between drama and detail.

Any book about Felix Hernandez gets special attention from me. Hernandez has been an outstanding pitcher for a struggling baseball team for most of his career. The book reads easily, and it contains plenty of information about the craft of pitching a baseball. Even though we all know how the book is going to end (it's about Hernandez' no-hitter) McDermott succeeds in keeping the reader engaged.

This book got better as it went on. The beginning was very slow. It contained a little too much personal story and family history. The best part was the research he did on the history of pitching and the interviews he got, especially with catcher Jaso. Only read if you REALLY love baseball, because there's not enough there for the casual fan.

This is a minor book, even a minor baseball book, to be sure, but it is a delight to read. If you are a fan of the sport, even a casual fan, I think you will enjoy reading it. It is full of good stories and baseball lore.

Fantastic book for diehard fans. McDermott recounts King Felix' remarkable perfect game in great detail. But intersperses the narrative with the science behind his stunning array of pitches. I loved the book.

Witty, insightful and just plain fun. McDermott's writing style is engrossing and simply hard to put down. As an avid San Francisco Giant's fan since Candlestick day's, any viewer of these comments will understand when I say that this book WILL be approved by Marty Lurie! Read it now so you can call in or talk it over with him and Pecan on the patio during some weekend home stand.

Easy read. Great insights into pitching for anyone who loves baseball. Have passed it on to grandsons to share.

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