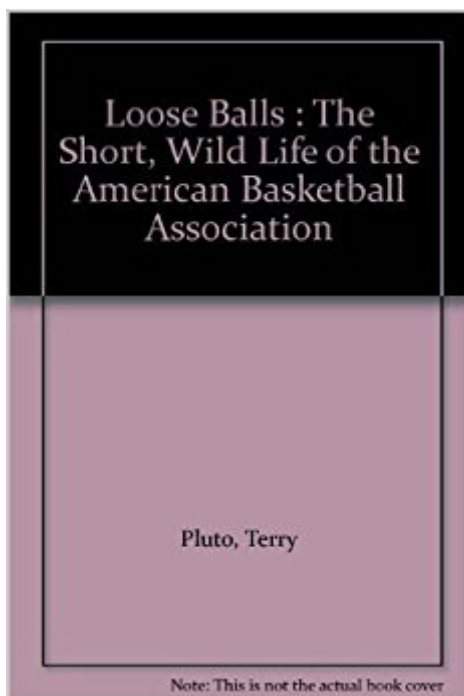


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Loose Balls: Short, Wild Life Of The American Basketball Association



Synopsis

What do Julius Erving, Larry Brown, Moses Malone, Bob Costas, the Indiana Pacers, the San Antonio Spurs and the Slam Dunk Contest have in common? They all got their professional starts in the American Basketball Association. What do Julius Erving, Larry Brown, Moses Malone, Bob Costas, the Indiana Pacers, the San Antonio Spurs and the Slam Dunk Contest have in common? They all got their professional starts in the American Basketball Association. The NBA may have won the financial battle, but the ABA won the artistic war. With its stress on wide-open individual play, the adoption of the 3-point shot and pressing defense, and the encouragement of flashy moves and flying dunks, today's NBA is still—decades later—just the ABA without the red, white and blue ball. Loose Balls is, after all these years, the definitive and most widely respected history of the ABA. It's a wild ride through some of the wackiest, funniest, strangest times ever to hit pro sports—told entirely through the (often incredible) words of those who played, wrote and connived their way through the league's nine seasons. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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Customer Reviews

Pluto, sports journalist for the Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal, coauthored such bestsellers as *Forty-Eight Minutes*, with Bob Ryan, and *Tark*, with Jerry Tarkanian. This time, however, he will disappoint his readers. The story of the ABA--which lasted from 1967 to 1976, spawned such stars as Julius Erving and Moses Malone, and originated the three-point shot as well as the annual slam-dunk contest--should be an absorbing one, but it falls victim to Pluto's odd approach. Having

interviewed many of the owners, managers, players, officials and commentators involved in the league, he cuts up their comments into short snippets (some only two or three sentences long) and arranges them according to a roughly chronological scenario. The resulting discontinuous, herky-jerky text is difficult to follow. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The ABA was born in 1967 and in nine tumultuous seasons introduced such legendary stars as Julius Erving, Connie Hawkins, George Gervin, and Moses Malone. Pluto, a basketball writer for the Akron Beacon Journal, spins an irreverent history in interview format of the league with the three-point shot, the slam dunk contest, the red, white, and blue ball. The ABA saga includes unsettled finances, ever-changing teams, and constant war with the more established National Basketball Association. As well as the stars, we meet the owners (Earl Foreman, John Y. Brown, and Charles O. Finley), the coaches (Hubie Brown, brother Larry Brown, Bob Bass, and Slick Leonard), the bad boys (Warren Jabali and John Brisker), the characters (Wendell Ladner and Marvin Barnes), and dozens of others. Well-told by participants, this is a history laced with humor from a league filled with fun. A must for any basketball fan and highly recommended for all libraries.- Boyd Childress, Auburn Univ. Lib., Ala. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Loose Balls was written by Terry Pluto in 1990 documenting the short but eclectic life of the American Basketball Association. I read this book two years ago but I had to do a review. This book was very entertaining. Anyone who enjoys basketball from the 70's should pick it up. It is an easy read detailing the wild ride by players and owners of the upstart ABA. While not specifically written in a comedic manner the shenanigans pulled during the life of the ABA can't help but make you smile and even laugh. The book does a great job in detailing what went on in a league with crazy characters, future NBA stars, teams that were lucky to last a full season, and where nothing surprised you if it happened. This isn't a long review and is short on details but again pick it up if you have any interest whatsoever in basketball of that era, the ABA, or the NBA. You won't be disappointed.

The best sports book I have read in years and a contender for the best ever. Great nostalgia trip for guys in their 50's who remember the ABA. What I didn't expect is how much I would laugh at all the great anecdotes from the people who were actually involved with the ABA. I got a comprehensive history of the ABA and one of the funniest reads at the same time. As they say, "Truth is

stranger than fiction".

Wonderful book - one of the best, informative sports books I can recall reading. Incredible information on all the zany characters, marketing efforts, ongoing franchise changes/relocations. Everything here including many famous NBA players who got their start in the ABA. Gilmore, Erving, McGinnis, Barry, Bobby Jones, Malone, etc - all figured greatly in this wonderful, brief league. ABA deserves a HELLUVA lot of credit for making NBA product better league when they merged the Spurs, Nets, Pacers and Nuggets into the league in 1977. The NBA was better for it...plus my 76ers were one of the chief beneficiaries with McGinnis, then Erving, and then Bobby Jones coming on board. In fact, the '82-83 NBA Champion Philly 76ers' best players were ALL former ABAers (Erving, Malone and Jones). Pluto does amazing job here...DEFINITELY read this if you're hardcore, old school (ie 60s/70s) pro basketball fan. Tremendously informative.

This is one of those rare books that over delivers. Delightful read as the memories of long lost innocence are revealed in rich detail by the participants. The memories of these halcyon days are quickly fading as there is so little video/film/photo evidence of this outrageous outlaw league that changed the game and professional sport forever. Some of the most flamboyant players of the era (Doc, Artis, Mount, Berry, Marvin Barnes, Ice, Spencer Haywood) were the circus performers in the league that invented the all star celebration, 3 point shot, the slam dunk contest, the red white and blue ball). Outlaw owners and creativity ruled the league and pushed the conservative NBA to not only merge with the ABA but above all welcomed the players to "let their freak flag fly!" Long live the ABA. The Will Ferrell comedy "Semi-Pro" brilliantly captured the mad cap under dog madness-and this book brings you inside the true story of an American Revolution. 5 Stars!!

If you're a hoops junkie, this is a must read. There is such a limited amount of info available on the ABA, not much video, and no real reading materials or summaries of those great days of professional basketball. This is the only book out there that I've been able to find that covers the ABA in fantastic detail from its inception to the great merger with the NBA. I won't call it the demise of the ABA because many of our favorite players from that era became stars and superstars in the NBA. You will be surprised how many household names got their start in the ABA in one form or another - playing, coaching, broadcasting, reffing, team management, etc. The writing style is a little unique, it is written in interview format. Don't let that deter you from getting the book, this adds to the authenticity. The author went to painstaking lengths to track down all these old characters and get

their stories directly from them. The stories are as incredible as the characters themselves. Total pleasure reading here, it's a must-get.

I just finished reading this book. While I feel like I have learned a lot about the ABA and even NBA I think the book could have been written much better. The writing style got boring and jumbled. The book reads more like a transcript at times. Chapters open up with just blocks of text that look like run on sentences with no paragraphs or breaks. Basically when the writer actually had to write about a topic and not just copy what someone else said the writing was poor. I read the book Rebel League about the World Hockey Association before Loose Balls and the former set the bar high (that book was great). I would recommend this book to anyone that wants to learn about the ABA. I am glad I read the book but I just couldn't give a higher rating given the writing style, I feel it could have been so much better.

I wish I could crawl into this book & relive those days! Love the "oral history" format. Terry Pluto has done his homework! I lived in Indianapolis & went to many Pacers games & the book enlightened me on many things I was not aware of. I laughed out loud numerous times reading this book. A lot of great memories were stirred up. Important historical information saved for posterity also.

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