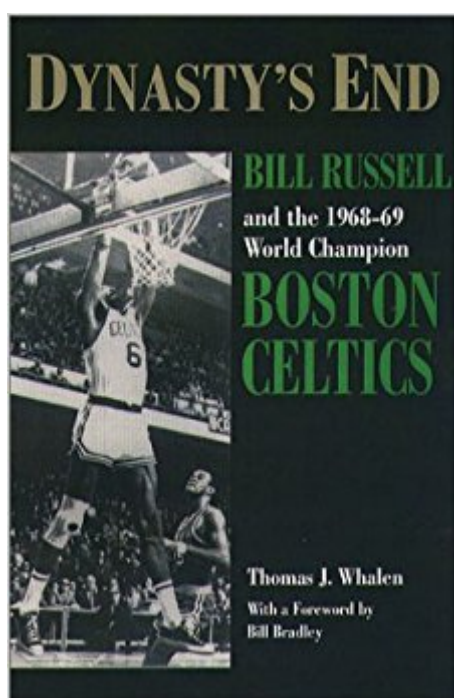


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Dynasty's End: Bill Russell And The 1968-69 World Champion Boston Celtics (Sportstown Series)



Synopsis

The Boston Celtics of the Bill Russell era were one of the greatest basketball dynasties in sports history. This vivid and lively account chronicles Russell's memorable last season and the Celtic's dazzling triumph in the closing seconds of the final game of the series.

Book Information

Series: Sportstown Series

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: Northeastern; First Edition edition (November 14, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1555535798

ISBN-13: 978-1555535797

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 6.4 x 1.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #2,131,385 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #76 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Basketball > Professional](#) #3603 in [Books > Sports & Outdoors > Miscellaneous > History of Sports](#)

Customer Reviews

During Bill Russell's 13-year NBA career, his Boston Celtics won 11 championships, the last in the 1968-69 season. Whalen explores how Russell rallied his aging teammates for that one last run at glory. He sets the context by examining how the Celtics--the first NBA team to start five black players and to hire a black coach (Russell)--were almost an afterthought in Beantown among the city's largely white fan base. Through first-person interviews, Russell's two memoirs, and newspaper accounts, Whalen explores the team dynamic that made this aging, often-injured group much more formidable than it should have been. The Celts limped into the playoffs as a fourth-place team but pulled off upsets against highly favored New York and Philadelphia to reach the finals against Wilt Chamberlain, Jerry West, and the Los Angeles Lakers. Whalen misses the mark slightly in his analysis of Boston's ambivalent relationship with its championship team but scores big in his examination of the pride, determination, and mutual respect that propelled these nearly middle-age men to one more title. Wes LukowskyCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

"A complete portrait of one of the great success stories in team sports . . . compelling portraits of both the players and the era that brim with colorful detail." --Sports Illustrated

I feel the book's strength is that you receive in-depth portraits of many of the star's who played for the Boston Celtics in addition to their announcer Johnny Most. In addition we are also provided with descriptions of Wilt Chamberlain and other NBA stars during this time period. Chamberlain, by the way, acquired his nickname "The Big Dipper" by having to often duck when entering through a doorway. However, the title suggests a concentration on the 1968-1969 season, and only the chapters on the playoffs at the end of the book provide us with this information. I enjoyed the book, but I found much of the same information in Bob Cousy's book and Red Auerbach's recent book. In addition, former St. Louis Hawks' superstar, Bob Pettit, the first man to score 20,000 points, had his name spelled incorrectly both times it appeared in the book and also in the index. If you enjoy the Celtics I'm quite sure you will enjoy the book, but I found it to be repetitious in what I found in other books. It is, indeed, unfortunate that this great Celtics team often played before a half empty Boston Garden before fans who really didn't appreciate what they had representing their city.

I heard about this book in a Sports Illustrated capsule. The subject matter has always fascinated me -- despite the fact they were defending champs and had won 10 of the previous 12 years, I still consider them the most unlikely (and for that reason compelling) champs in NBA history. The subject matter is no secret: the Celtics had won most improbably in 1968 by overcoming a 3-1 deficit against the defending champion Sixers - who still had Wilt, and were one year removed from their unbelievable 1967 season, which was arguably the greatest team ever assembled. In '69, the Celtics failed to win their division for the fourth straight year and were in fact the lowest seed in the playoffs. Not only were the Sixers still a force but Baltimore and New York were very much improved. Faltering down the stretch and injury-riddled, the team pulled together for one last run, culminating in an unthinkable game 7 win over Wilt, Jerry West, Elgin Baylor, and the Lakers in LA. Russell retired on top (and STAYED retired), as so few other athletes ever have. The book is well-written and the author does an excellent job of setting the tone of the era and the city, particularly its indifference to the Celtics and the racist environment that existed. Additionally, the principals' background information was interesting and informative. In short, if you are interested in NBA history in general or want to read an inspirational story of people working together to reach a common goal, get this book.

Any Celtic fan that followed the Russell years will love this book. The 1968-69 Celtics were one of their most interesting teams and certainly their most resourceful.

THIS IS ABOUT THE FINAL YEAR OF THE GREAT DYNASTY OF THE BOSTON CELTICS FROM 1950'S THRU THE 1960'S. ALONG THE WAY THE AUTHOR TELLS A LITTLE ABOUT EACH PLAYER INCLUDING GM RED AUERBACH. ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS DISCUSSED ARE THE RACISM GOING AROUND NOT ONLY IN BOSTON BUT IN JUST ABOUT EVERY MAJOR CITY IN THE USA. I ALSO FOUND THE COVERAGE CONCERNING RUSSELL VS WILT VERY WELL WRITTEN AND TO ME THE MOST INTERESTING PART OF THIS VERY GOOD BOOK. IT CENTERS MOSTLY AROUND BILL RUSSELL, AS WE FOUND OUT THAT HE IS INDEED VERY HUMAN ALONG WITH BEING THE ULTIMATE TEAM PLAYER. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS FOR ALL BASKETBALL AND ESPECIALLY CELTIC FANS. WELL WORTH READING.

One of the finest books chronicling the last season of the great Bill Russell and his Celtics. Describes the turmoil and racial problems of the sixties.

Good book except the middle came apart from the spine.

For those of us who were lucky enough to be around New England in the 1960's the incredible championship run of the Boston Celtics was a wonder to behold. Imagine winning 11 World Championships in 13 years! I really don't think many of us truly understood the magnitude of what was being accomplished. And needless to say, it's a pretty safe bet that there will never be anything like it again in professional sports. "Dynasty's End: Bill Russell and the 1968-69 World Champion Boston Celtics" recalls the incredible accomplishments of Bill Russell, Sam Jones, John Havlicek and the rest of the cast that completely dominated the sport for more than a decade. While the focus is ultimately on the Celtics improbable 1968-69 championship season author Thomas Whelan has done a nice job of filling us in on the history of this storied franchise. It is really quite stunning when you realize that for many years the Celtics were winning championship after championship on a shoestring budget and were rarely able to sell out the building. You begin to understand just how smart Red Auerbach really was. Whelan also recalls great fondness longtime Celtics radio announcer Johnny Most. He truly was one of a kind and really was an integral part of the Boston Celtics story. While Whelan gives us the lowdown on all of the significant Celtics players of the period he hones in on Hall of Famer Bill Russell. Here was a multi-talented player with an extremely

complex personality who toward the end of his storied career would have the distinction of becoming player-coach of the Celtics. Some of the stories and anecdotes about Russell are absolutely priceless. Whalen also profiles many of the Celtics key adversaries of the day including Elgin Baylor, Bill Bradley, Billy Cunningham and of course Bill Russell's arch-rival Wilt "The Stilt" Chamberlain. Suffice to say that Russell had his way with the 7'1" Chamberlain more often than not. "Dynasty's End" is a well written book destined to be enjoyed by history buffs and basketball fans alike. It is a snapshot of a different era in the country as a whole and professional sports in particular. A worthwhile read!

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