It Ain't Over 'Til It's Over
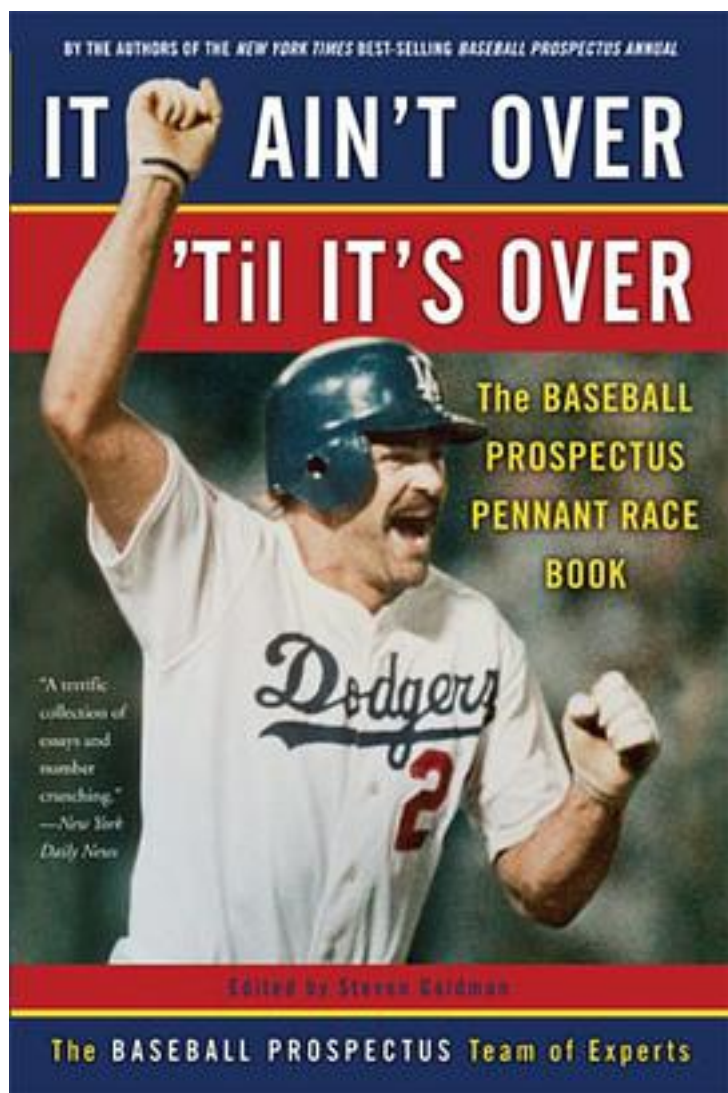

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The best team in baseball statistics takes on one of the great unanswered questions: Why do teams win pennant races?

Pennant races are arguable the most important aspect of baseball. Players, teams, and franchises are all after one goal: to win the pennant and get into the post-season. But what really determines who wins?

Statistical analyses of baseball abound: different ways of breaking down everyone's individual performance, from hitters and pitchers to managers and even owners. But surprisingly, team success--what makes some teams winners over an entire season--has never been looked at with the same statistical rigor.

In It Ain't Over 'Til It's Over, The Baseball Prospectus Team of Experts introduces the Davenport Method of deciding which races were the most dramatic--the closest, the most volatile--and determines the ten greatest races of modern baseball history. They use these key races (and a few others) to answer the main question: What really determines who wins? How important are such things as mid-season trades, how much a manager overworks his pitchers, and why teams have winning and losing streaks? Can one player carry a team? Can one bad player ruin a team? Can one bad play ruin a team's chances?

This is a fascinating and illuminating statistical analysis of the game that will change our perception of it.

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