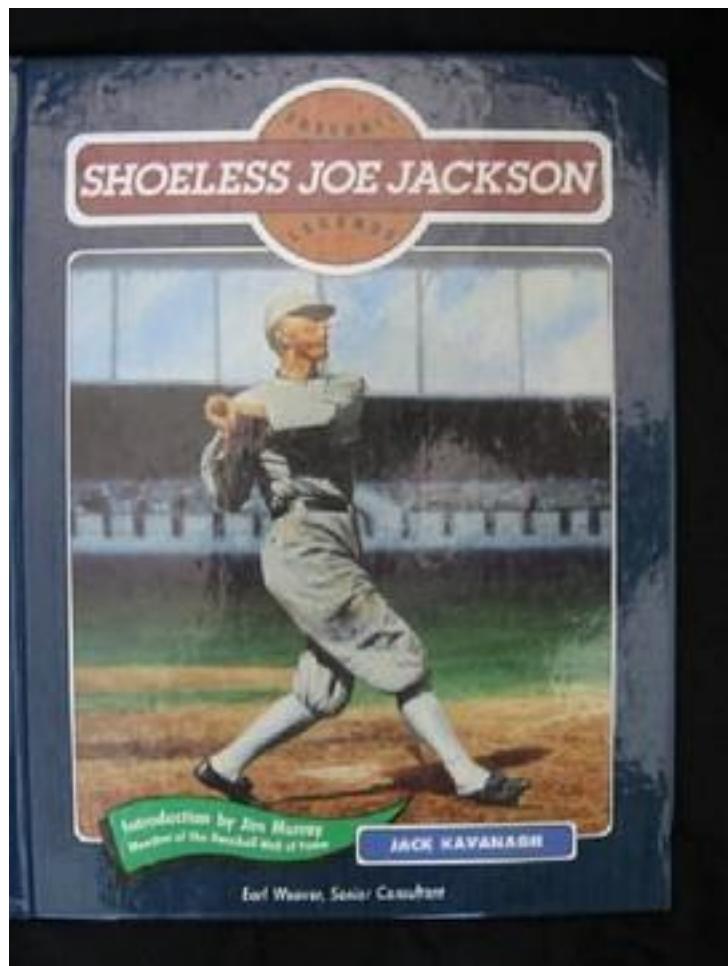


Shoeless Joe Jackson Baseball Legends



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Perhaps the greatest natural hitter in baseball history, Shoeless Joe

Jackson is also among the game's most controversial figures. Some consider him a simple soul who was led astray: others say he shamelessly betrayed the nation's fans.

Born in rural South Carolina in 1887, Jackson went to work in a local textile mill at the age of six. He never learned to read or write, but his remarkable athletic talent won him a spot on the mill's baseball team. By the age of 17, he graduated to semipro ball, where he starred as a fearsome slugger and a rifle-armed outfielder.

Playing his first full major league season for the Cleveland Naps in 1911, Jackson batted .408, the highest ever for a rookie. Following his 1915 trade to the White Sox, Shoeless Joe became the toast of Chicago, leading his team to a world championship in 1917. After 13 big league seasons, Jackson's average stood at .356, the third highest in baseball history.

Jackson's world came crashing down in 1920, when he was accused of plotting to throw the 1919 World Series. Though acquitted by a jury, Jackson was among the eight "Black Sox" banned from baseball in 1921. After three decades as a small-town businessman, Shoeless Joe Jackson died in 1951, leaving a legacy of brilliance and heartbreak.

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