

More Than a Game



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The best work of one of Alabama's longest-serving and most beloved sports journalists. Although he spent 43 years at the same job, Alf Van Hoose was not a man limited by the boundaries of his profession. As Birmingham News sports editor for 21 years and a columnist for a decade before that, Van Hoose helped define a city, a state, and a region largely known for sports. He was the writer of record for some of the biggest sporting events and personalities in the state of Alabama in the last half of the 20th Century. Wayne Hester, Van Hoose's successor as sports editor of The News, in 1990, said, "To many sports fans over the years, Alf Van Hoose has been The Birmingham News." But he was also much more than the "sports guy," as older generations of Alabama sports fans who read this book will remember and younger ones will learn. He was a man for all seasons, not just those where balls get kicked, hit, or thrown around.

A native of Cuba, Alabama, and a veteran of the Third Army campaigns in WWII (where he won both the Bronze and Silver Stars), Van Hoose became a sportswriter on The News in 1947. He remained in that role until retirement in 1990, with only short breaks to serve as a Vietnam war correspondent, and to reflect on the lessons learned while

serving with George Patton. Van Hoose died in 1997 at the age of 76.

This volume contains 90 of Van Hoose's best columns, selected not only to showcase his characteristic style, but also because of the enduring importance and interest of the topics—football and baseball, of course, but also golf, high school heroics, auto racing, and Van Hoose's special favorites: Rickwood Field and its various tenants, especially the Birmingham Black Barons.

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