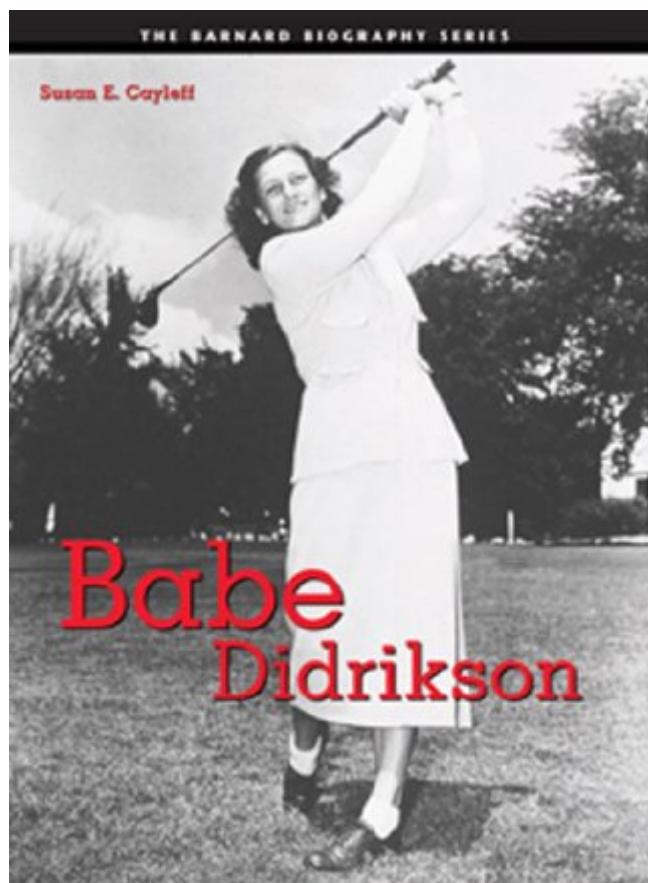


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# Babe Didrikson: The Greatest All-Sport Athlete Of All Time (Barnard Biography Series)



## **Synopsis**

A gold medal Olympian, Babe Didrikson was arguably the greatest athlete of the twentieth century, excelling at every sport she tried: running, jumping, javelin throwing, swimming, basketball, golf, and baseball, to name just a few. Gifted and controversial, the Babe's athletic prowess and personality took the country by storm from the 1930s to the 1950s. Following the U.S. Women's soccer team's victory in 1999, Babe was mentioned repeatedly as a sports icon for female athletes everywhere. Her achievements, though vast, were cut short at age forty-three when she died from cancer, but Babe set the bar for every female athlete in her wake and opened the world's eyes to what one empowered woman can achieve! The Babe's biography will inspire young adult readers--embracing the current surge of Girlpower--who resonate with her quest for the American Dream, her efforts to compete in a male world, her battle to overcome discrimination against female athletes, and her struggle with identity. Author Susan Cayleff, whose adult biography of Babe Didrikson was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize, now brings Babe's rousing true-life story to young women, for whom she stands as a powerful role model.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

### Great Read

I gave this to my boss who is an avid golfer on year. She loves it and it's a prized possession in her library.

For anyone interested in sports, especially women's sports this is required reading. The "Babe" is probably the greatest athlete this country has ever produced.

I loved reading about this gregarious and complicated athlete. This is a biography intended for young adults, but everyone will like it. Cayleff's original adult biography says she spent ten years researching Babe's life, interviewing surviving family and friends, etc., so her story is the real thing. It's also an important story, since she was the only female mentioned in the top 10 of "the greatest 20th century athletes" lists by ESPN, etc. I particularly enjoyed how Babe had a talented story-telling "changeling" quality to remake herself when she wasn't getting what she wanted. She was a physically strong "Texas tomboy" trying to make it in a time and place that liked girly-girl athletes. What struck me most was the irony that her tombstone reads "It's not whether you win or lose, it's how you play the game," yet Babe always said "I don't see any point in playing if I don't win. Do you?" She had a few different images going for her, and she used all the tricks! Get it; I'm assigning it to my community college students to learn about both women and American culture in the 30s-50s. They'll enjoy reading it while learning.

Written on a sophomoric level, this brief biography of Babe centers on the highlights of her life but ignores Babe's life-long emotional roller-coaster. After reading this book, you may think Babe enjoyed her life as an outcast and her distinctive masculine character was merely a promotion gimmick; that her 'tomboy' nature disappeared when her sexual identity was questioned. It completely ignores the many questions about her sexual ambiguity and promotes her marriage to George Zaharias as the real thing. If it was a 'for real' marriage, why did George promote constant 'out-of-town' excursions, rarely joining her, seemingly content to be separated for long time periods? This book is like a biography written about pre-AIDS Rock Hudson or Liberace. It does not examine the real Babe .... a gifted athlete ahead of her time who tried to fit in. Sports probably kept her sane. This book does not tell you who the Babe is or what she was up to; only what she achieved.

Bought as gift, so don't know.

Susan Cayleff, presents the factual information in a clear and comprehensive manner. It is unfortunate that the life of Babe, reads like a sophomore book report.

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