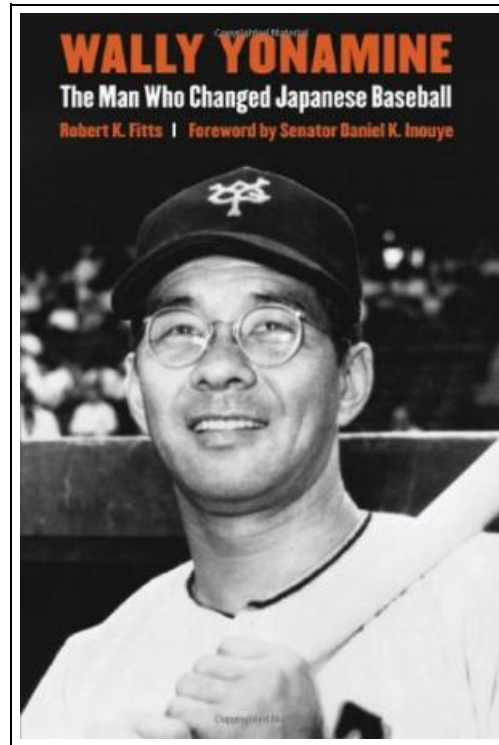


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University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 2008. Hardcover. Condition: New. 368 pages. Hardcover with dustjacket. New book. SPORTS. Wally Yonamine was both the first Japanese American to play for an NFL franchise and the first American to play professional baseball in Japan after World War II. This is the unlikely story of how a shy young man from the sugar plantations of Maui overcame prejudice to integrate two professional sports in two countries. In 1951 the Tokyo Yomiuri Giants chose Yonamine as the first American to play in Japan during the Allied occupation. He entered Japanese baseball when mistrust of Americans was high and higher still for Japanese Americans whose parents had left the country a generation earlier. Without speaking the language, he helped introduce a hustling style of base running, shaking up the game for both Japanese players and fans. Along the way, Yonamine endured insults, dodged rocks thrown by fans, initiated riots, and was threatened by yakuza (the Japanese mafia). He also won batting titles, was named the 1957 MVP, coached and managed for twenty-five years, and was honored by the emperor of Japan. Overcoming bigotry and hardship on and off the field, Yonamine became a true national hero and a member of Japan's Baseball Hall of Fame. Robert K. Fitts is the author of *Remembering Japanese Baseball: An Oral History of the Game*, for which he won the 2005 Sporting News-SABR Award for best baseball research. "I got to know Wally in 1977 while he was still managing the Dragons, but wish I had seen him play 25 years earlier. Reading this biography is the next best thing. [Robert] Fitts leaves no stories untold about Yonamine's life in this excellent book." Wayne Graczyk, *Japan Times* "2005 Sporting News-SABR award winner Fitts deserves high marks for bringing forth this..."



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