



The House That Ruth Built: A New Stadium, the First Yankees Championship, and the Redemption of 1923

Robert Weintraub

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The untold story of Babe Ruth's Yankees, John McGraw's Giants, and the extraordinary baseball season of 1923

Before the 27 World Series titles--before Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle, and Derek Jeter--the Yankees were New York's shadow franchise. They hadn't won a championship, and they didn't even have their own field, renting the Polo Grounds from their cross-town rivals the New York Giants. In 1921 and 1922, they lost to the Giants when it mattered most: in October.

But in 1923, the Yankees played their first season on their own field, the newly-built, state of the art baseball palace in the Bronx called "the Yankee Stadium." The stadium was a gamble, erected in relative outerborough obscurity, and Babe Ruth was coming off the most disappointing season of his career, a season that saw his struggles on and off the field threaten his standing as a bona fide superstar.

It only took Ruth two at-bats to signal a new era. He stepped up to the plate in the 1923 season opener and cracked a home run to deep right field, the first homer in his park, and a sign of what lay ahead. It was the initial blow in a season that saw the new stadium christened "The House That Ruth Built," signaled the triumph of the power game, and established the Yankees as New York's--and the sport's--team to beat.

From that first home run of 1923 to the storybook World Series matchup that pitted the Yankees against their nemesis from across the Harlem River--one so acrimonious that John McGraw forced his Giants to get to the Bronx in uniform rather than suit up at the Stadium--Robert Weintraub vividly illuminates the singular year that built a classic stadium, catalyzed a franchise, cemented Ruth's legend, and forever changed the sport of baseball.

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