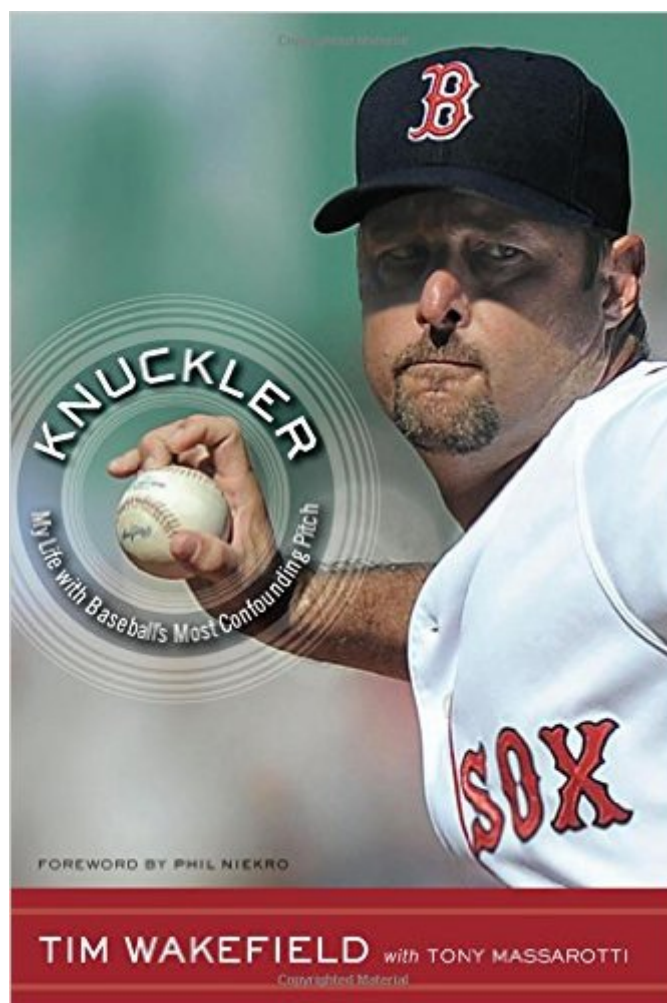


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Knuckler: My Life With Baseball's Most Confounding Pitch



Synopsis

At forty-four years old, Tim Wakefield is the longest-serving member of one of baseball's most popular franchises. He is close to eclipsing the winning records of two of the greatest pitchers to have played the game, yet few realize the full measure of his success. That his career can be characterized by such words as dependability and consistency defies all odds because he has achieved this with baseball's most mercurial weapon—the knuckleball. *Knuckler* is the story of how a struggling position player bet his future on a fickle pitch that would define his career. The pitch may drive hitters crazy, but how does the pitcher stay sane? The moment Wakefield adopted the knuckleball, his career sought to answer that question. With the Red Sox, Wakefield began to master his pitch only to find himself on the mound in 2003 for one of the worst post-season losses in history, followed the next year by one of the most vindicating of championships. Even now, as Wakefield battles, we see the twists and turns of a major league career pushed to its ultimate extreme. A remarkable story of one player's success despite being the exception to every rule, *Knuckler* is also a lively meditation on the dancing pitch, its history, its mystique, and all the ironies it brings to bear.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tim Wakefield longed to be a major league baseball player but his hitting skills weren't enough to vault him into the big leagues. Desperate, Wakefield began honing his knuckleball skills. Little did he know that his ability to pitch the knuckleball would propel him into an incredible career that featured not only several low moments (including being released by the Pittsburgh Pirates) but also several highlights (including two World Series wins). "*Knuckler*" tells the story of Wakefield's storied,

somewhat improbable career. While "Knuckler" claims to be written by Tim Wakefield with Tony Massarotti, it is written in the third person and it is clear that Mazz did the writing. That actually fits in with Wakefield's personality - he never forgot how close he came to not making it into the big leagues and he quietly does his job and while he appreciates the accolades he doesn't go after them. Because of this, he may seem an odd choice for an autobiography until you start looking at his numbers and realize that despite the uncertainty of the knuckleball, Wakefield has put up some impressive numbers and is, in fact, one of the all time winningest pitchers in Red Sox history. "Knuckler" looks not only at Wakefield's career but other knuckleball pitchers. This is interesting, as is the story of Wakefield's early life and baseball playing career, including his brief stint with the Pirates. The book dwells only briefly on Wakefield's private life - more on his childhood than his adult life off the field - this is again fitting for Wakefield's personality. As a red Sox fan, for me the most interesting parts of the book were the ups and downs of Wakefield's Red Sox career.

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