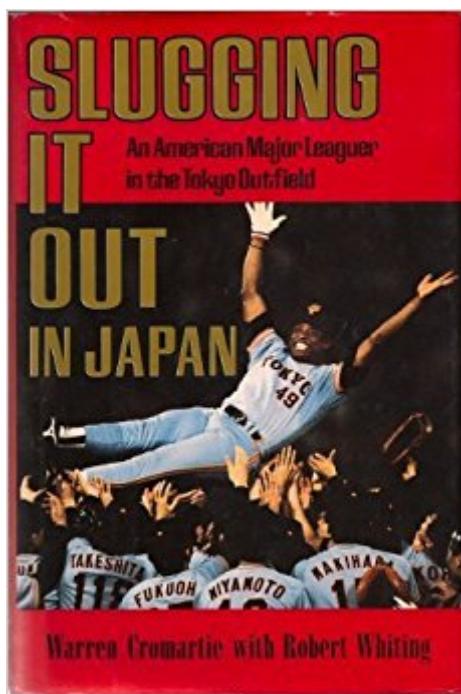


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Slugging It Out In Japan: An American Major Leaguer In The Tokyo Outfield



Synopsis

Black, headstrong, and opinionated, Warren Cromartie hardly seemed the likely choice to play baseball in Japan. He was a loner. He was also a slugger. During his fifth year with the Tokyo Giants he was named most valuable player, and his teammates voted unanimously that he not retire. This is the triumphant story of Cro's sometimes angry, sometimes humorous, introduction to the Japanese way of doing things; the values and idiosyncrasies which are a part of the Japan of today.

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Customer Reviews

This is a great book!! I love Japanese Baseball and while it is a bit dated I highly recommend it!!! I read this whole book in 2 days. Its a great narrative about playing baseball and living in Japan. Great source of info on Cro, Yomiuri, and Sadaharu Oh too.

Warren Cromartie had one of the most enduring baseball careers of any North American to have played in Japan. His book is a detailed insight into his life and baseball journey in the U.S. and Japan. Cromartie may strike some readers as at times presenting a blustering disposition. However, he is humble enough to admit that his attitude is influenced by his own egotism at times. His story draws light to the fact that baseball across the world has its own local brand, and whilst he found Japan at times racially and culturally challenging, he was able to learn many great new skills and attain considerable success from his effort. Nicholas R.W. Henning - Australian Baseball Author

Warren Cromartie was accepted by Japan as a gaijin because he accepted Japan himself. Thru his book you will feel his ups and downs while playing for Japan's highest profile baseball team: The Kyojin's aka The Yomiuri Giants. I strongly believe that Cro stuck out 6 years in Tokyo, not because of the big bucks but his bonding and friendship with the legendary Sadaharu Oh. Thank you Cro, for sharing your experience and journey. Don't delay if you are a baseball fan, get the book today!

Cromartie played long enough in Japan to actually develop moments of affection for the experience, a statement not normally made of foreign players. His description of the normalcy of race prejudice there will stun people from countries where such prejudice is not considered acceptable. He tells a lot about Japanese life as well as Japanese baseball from the perspective of a man who earned the respect of his Japanese teammates as a leader. I find his commentary very revealing and strongly recommend this book.

I grew up watching Warren Cromartie play for the Tokyo Yomiuri Giants during the late '80s. Cromartie was one of very few gaijin players who left a great impact, not only by the way he played the game, but also by his cocky attitude and behavior. For the Japanese media who love to stereotype American players as brashly self-arrogant, lazy, and powerful, Cromartie was such a perfect fit. Of course, they would not report on his side of story, this biography may be of a greater interest for those who viewed him as a gaijin those days. To me, the reader may miss the most interesting points if she just reads this book just as an account of "bizarre" experiences that an American went through in one of the most exotic places in the world. With the presence of such colorful personalities as the manager Sadaharu Oh (whose career homerun record of 868 surpasses the American counterpart), his teammates, and old-fashioned traditionalists who would be labeled downright racists in many other civilized nations, the story never seems to bore the reader. Unlike many other player biographies ghost written by mediocre sport writers, this is surprisingly an engaging book. Robert Whiting does a great job of incorporating his own views on cultural disparities between Japan and America into Cromartie's endeavor as a gaijin player. Many opinions expressed in the book overlap Whiting's other works on baseball, such as "You Gotta Have Wa" and "The Chrysanthemum and the Bad," but "Slugging It Out in Japan" is probably the most emotionally involved pieces of all.

While he does a very good job concerning the ups and downs of an American playing ball in Japan, this is not a book for kids. There are times when the f-bomb can be used to strongly emphasize a

point but he goes way overboard in the use of the f-bomb. If it was "horrible weather" it does not have to be F----in' horrible weather.

A pretty good book. Interesting, but didn't wow me. Answered questions I had for the most part.

It's a good book for those with some knowledge or basic interest in Japanese professional baseball, but for those who are only Major Leagues fans this can be very interesting too. Throughout the course of Cromartie's stay, a number of major leaguers and American players came into picture. Bill Gullickson became a teammate for a couple of seasons. Dick Davis (who later got deported for pot possession), Randy Bass, Doug DeCince, Dwight Smith, etc. were also there. There are interesting opinions and episodes about other players: Sanchez (Cal. Angels) was a teammate for 1/2 season but could get along with anyone; Shinozuka, a hitting machine and a friendly teammate; Cro's friendship with Oh; how Japan and especially the teams treated Randy Bass, who had the best single season offensive stats but was walked 4 times in the last game so he could not tie the homerun record; Kuwata, a pitching ace who befriended Gullickson; Egawa, another ace pitcher who often feigned injury to protect himself from overworking; Cro's infamous punching of a pitcher who beaned him; how most Japanese players never had much real education, as high schools were more like minor leagues, so the player mostly read mangas (comic strips) on bus rides. The issue of race and racism is also addressed: how gaijins are perceived -- which is different for Asians (especially Japanese-Korean players) and Americans, and whites and blacks. He also noted how devastated Gullickson felt after being barred from entering a restaurant because of his nationality. The span of 8 years covers a lot of insight and observations and anecdotes. Cromartie came back to the States and played his last season with the Royals as a pinch hitter/1B and finished the season with a .307 average as a part time player. Get this book. It's worth it.

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