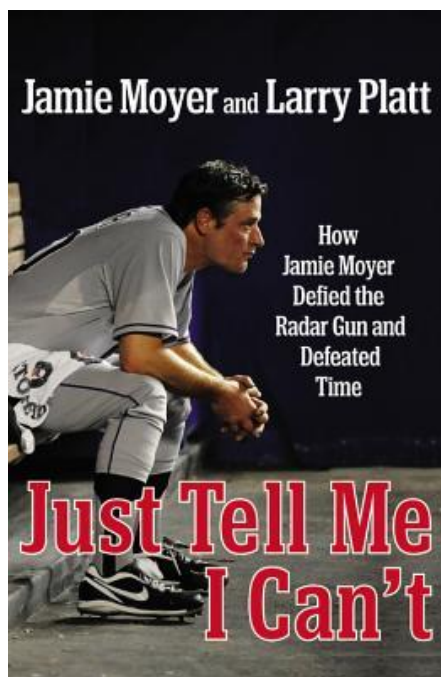




Just Tell Me I Can't: How Jamie Moyer Defied the Radar Gun and Defeated Time

Jamie Moyer , Larry Platt

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Long-time fans of the National Pastime have known Moyer's name for more than 25 years. That's because he's been pitching in the bigs for all those years.

With his trademark three pitches - slow, slower, and slowest - the left-handed Moyer is a pinpoint specialist whose won-lost record actually got better as he got older -- from his 20s to his 30s and into 40s. He's only a few wins shy of 300 for his amazing career.

But this is where the book takes an unusual turn. Moyer was just about finished as a big leaguer in his mid-20s until he fatefully encountered a gravel-voiced, highly confrontational sports psychologist named Harvey Dorfman. Listening to the "in-your-face" insights of Dorfman, Moyer began to re-invent himself and reconstruct his approach to his game. Moyer went on to become an All-Star and also a World Series champion.

Yogi Berra once observed that "Half of this game is 90% mental." And Moyer's memoir proves it.

Just Tell Me I Can't: How Jamie Moyer Defied the Radar Gun and Defeated Time Details

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Tiffany says

In the introduction, Platt describes this book not so much as the "This is how this athlete started, these are the teams he played for" sports biography, but, as he says, "moments of critical challenge throughout [Moyer's] long career: in short, a chronicle of his continuing education." Not just about Moyer, though, the book "is also the story of what pitching *is*--the mystery and mastery of it, as seen through the eyes of its most cerebral, seeking student. It's a story deep inside the ever-elusive mental side of sports."

In fact, not only is this book about Jamie Moyer and his journey, but it also ends up being a tribute to Harvey Dorfman, a "mental skills coach," as Wikipedia calls him, who worked with a lot of athletes, so he's sort of a sports psychologist. Through Jamie's recounting of what he learned from Harvey -- control what you can control, focus on one task at hand, etc. -- this book could almost be considered a self-help guide to positive thinking, outwitting bad thoughts and negative energy, and turning any situation into a winnable mental game.

By the way, Baseball Writers/Hall of Fame voters: Moyer's stats and his longevity, and the fact he did it with his dominating changeup and his "Ooh, la-la" 81 mph fastball, should get him into the Baseball Hall of Fame. #MoyerHOF

And for your viewing enjoyment, my favorite Moyer/Mariners commercial:
<https://youtu.be/gjH5sf2RedI> (The old Jamie Moyer changeup. You *gotta* swing at that!)

Jim says

JUST TELL ME I CAN'T is the story of Jamie Moyer and how he was able to succeed as a major league pitcher. Moyer never had the blazing fastball that major league scouts want to see. What he did have was a tremendous drive to win, an analytical mind that he devoted to bettering his craft, and the ability to locate his pitches so as to minimize a batter's strength. Unfortunately for Jamie, early in his career he would sometimes give in to self doubt and pitch without conviction, that is until he began following the inner mental game of sports psychologist Harvey Dorfman. Basically, Harvey was able to get Jamie to be more confident and aggressive with the skill set that he possessed. Dorfman got Jamie to pitch inside to batters, to use his change-up as a weapon and believe in his ability to get batters out no matter who he was facing. Jamie's slow, slower, slowest pitching style frustrated batter after batter and led to a twenty five year career in the major leagues.

Living in Seattle, I was able to see Moyer at his best when he played for the Mariners. It was amazing to see all of the weak fly balls and ground ball outs he was able to induce by getting batters to swing at the pitches he wanted them to hit--pitches that were always just a little out of the hitters zone and with a slightly different tempo. Moyer out thought the batters he faced by seeing their reaction to every pitch he threw and planning the next pitch based on that reaction. It was a thing of beauty to watch. As Greg Maddux said, "Pitching isn't about who throws the hardest. It's about who can keep the ball in front of the outfielders the best." This is a wonderful book for any fan of America's pastime; a story that makes you recognize that the route to success is sometimes the road less traveled.

Injuneer says

perhaps the best baseball book I've read.

Jay says

Early on in Jamie Moyer's autobiography, we are introduced to a character, a sports psychologist, in much the same way that the Soprano's started with Tony's appointment with Dr. Melfi. I recall the main theme of the Soprano's was the mobster/psychiatrist relationship -- how openly talking about business was not allowed in Tony's profession, yet the therapy offered a way to learn about himself and to fix his anxieties. I got that kind of vibe in this book as well. Moyer's Melfi is Harvey Dorfman, who works with Moyer on the mental side of his game and who shows up time and again throughout the book, in person, through quotes, and with remembrances of those who knew him. Dorfman's teachings on taking responsibility for your situation and mindfulness were illustrated here with many Yoda-like quotes, so many I started picturing Dorfman as looking like Yoda. This is Moyer's autobiography, but Harvey should be credited for at least 20% of the ink, so much that it started to feel almost religious by the end.

This should tell you this book is focused on the mental game, the details of how Moyer pitches, practices, and talks himself into coming back pitch after pitch, game after game, injury after injury. There is a lot of detail on this process throughout the years, yet the writing kept this interesting to me. Also mixed in were stories about Moyer's charity work, and this was quite touching. The book is not chronological, yet I found it easy to read. It was quite odd to find Moyer pitching for a different team almost every time a chapter changes, but for someone as well travelled, it is to be expected. As a Cub fan, there wasn't much on the Cub years, and for good reason -- he wasn't the pitcher that he grew into later.

When I was growing up, I heard that baseball was a young man's game, and I guess that stuck with me. I decided that as long as I was younger than a professional baseball player, I'd still be considered young. And I posted that as my birthday status on Facebook for a few years -- still young because Moyer, who is a few months older than me, was still pitching. I cheered on his last comeback in 2012 and was disappointed when he walked away from the Las Vegas AAA team he was pitching with later that year. This book, taken in its entirety, explains that episode better than the articles I read at the time. And while I'm still looking for a new status message for my birthday, Moyer's story gives hope that while age will do its damage, thoughtfully playing the game holds it back a while. As in baseball, so in life.

Clint says

I usually speed through baseball autobiographies, but this one on the oldest MLB pitcher to record a win was not that compelling. A good portion of the first part of the book dwelt with the pitcher's mental guru. And though it claimed to be written by the pitcher in question, Jamie Moyer, it was written as a biography by the co-author. I admire Moyer but not so much this book.

Thom says

Really excellent book, not at all the standard linear sports bio and tell-all. Juxtaposes key points in Jamie's career with the psychology he learned from Harvey Dorfman. Showcases and explains the determination of this pitcher to own his game and recover from injuries and surgeries.

When I heard about this book, I knew I wanted to read it. I followed Jamie's career in Seattle and often umpired his oldest son in Magnolia youth baseball - he even attended some of those games. If you had told me then that Moyer would go on to become the oldest pitcher to record a major league win, I wouldn't have been surprised.

Rehab from Tommy John surgery is the main narrative, with flashbacks to earlier key points in his career. The lessons he learned from Dorfman are placed in context, and are more powerful because of it. He frequently references *The Mental Game of Baseball: A Guide to Peak Performance* and *The Mental ABC's of Pitching: A Handbook for Performance Enhancement*. The story does get down to batters faced at times, but this is not catalog of games. The appendix covers his career stats and his five easiest and toughest batters faced.

This book was hard to put down, and primarily that was to umpire baseball games. The story was interesting and well told. I can really appreciate the positive approach Moyer takes to his craft, and just how much of this game is really mental. Highly recommended!

Aaron Dutton says

I am a huge Jamie Moyer fan, having watched him plan for the Seattle Mariners. I loved that he had such "slow" pitches but was able to consistently get batters out. Such a contrast to the flamethrowers of the day.

I wouldn't recommend this book to anyone who didn't have a decent knowledge of his playing—as a biography it seems to lack a lot of background. I suspect that is partly because it switches between past and present a lot.

I am now intrigued to learn more of Harvey Dorfman and the mental game of baseball.

Kristen says

Not your typical sports bio!

Theresa says

I have been a long-time fan of Jamie Moyer's for his work both on the diamond and off. My son has been a beneficiary of Moyer's Camp Erin. Nevertheless, I wasn't sure I could get through reading a memoir of a professional athlete's life. In the end, nothing in this book did anything to dampen my respect for Jamie Moyer and I learned a great deal about baseball and pitching. I have new respect for the mental game of baseball and I think this is a must read for anyone who plays the game or loves the game.

Devin says

Early on in this book, Larry Platt recounts how Jamie Moyer had some reservations about this project. He had read memoirs by other players and wasn't sure he was a memoir kind of guy. But this isn't your typical sports saga and this book does tease out many of the things that make Jamie Moyer such a compelling subject. Not the least of which is that he is a genuinely likable human being. Never flashy, but so rewarding to root for (as I learned as a Seattle Mariners fan). This recounting of how Moyer struggled and mastered the mental side of baseball brings insights that are widely applicable to any endeavor. Often inspiring me to reflect on how I approach the challenges in my own life as well. All of this is combined with his ability to keep things in perspective.

Aside from a few proofreading errors, the writing is sharp and delivers this material with a great sense of pacing and respect for the people involved in this story.

It's a cliché to insist that a baseball book is more than a book about baseball. And this one is. One doesn't need to be a fan to get a lot out of this book, but being one will allow one to appreciate what this one is about. The lessons Moyer learned about the "mental game" will stay with me for a long time after encountering them here.

Tom Gase says

Not bad. For some reason I forgot Moyer is the oldest player to ever win an MLB game. I always just figured with was Satchel Paige. The book is different from a typical memoir as it goes back and forth from 2011/2012 when he was attempting one last comeback with the Colorado Rockies and a few minor league teams, to also going through his MLB career, which started in the mid 1980s and took him through trips with clubs such as the Cubs, Rangers, Orioles, Mariners and Phillies. He had the most success with the Mariners and Phillies and I enjoyed reading that portion of the book the most. The parts of the book where Moyer and author Larry Platt talk about Moyer's approach to the game made the book a little different, but also boring at times as it seemed to have a little overkill. Overall, it seems that Moyer is not only a very good pitcher for years, but also a good person. An inspiring book in that just because you're old, doesn't mean your dreams die. He won over 150 games after the age of 35.

Annette Walker says

Jamie Moyer is one of my heroes. Good insight into the need to work hard, the importance of the mental game, and the strength of character needed to get past all the naysayers who tell you you can't do something because you do not match the current paradigm.

Zach Koenig says

More often than not, sports memoirs can be a bit dull and cover some of the same old tropes over and over again. Fortunately, "Just Tell Me I Can't" breaks that mold by delving deep into the topic of sports

psychology (a big part of Jamie Moyer's career) in order to help understand the motivation behind a man pitching until the age of 49.

This book tells two concurrent narratives all the way through. First, it introduces Jamie Moyer just as he is severely injuring his arm during the 2010 season. He is in his mid-forties and yet still trying to rehab and make a return for the 2012 season. As that story unspools, the narrative flashes back to certain key points that happened earlier in Moyer's career.

As I said, this is no ordinary sports memoir, primarily because Jamie Moyer is no ordinary athlete. Besides the whole old-age angle, Moyer's story is actually most interesting when dealing with his relationship with notably sports mentalist/psychiatrist Harvey Dofrman, whose insights turned a struggling journeyman pitcher into an All-Star and eventually World Champion. It is utterly fascinating to hear Moyer describe the unique link between his performance and his mental state/thoughts.

Simply put, this is a book that hooked me in from the very beginning and didn't take me all that much longer to finish! After reading relatively boring or unimaginative bios on figures like Mariano Rivera & Pedro Martinez in recent months, "Just Tell Me I Can't" was a breath of fresh air, as it not only gave a great accounting of Moyer's career, but did so in such a way that followed a new/interesting narrative structure that made it an exciting story. I wish more sports memoirs would take this kind of approach.

Dave says

I read part of this book at Safeco field when Moyer was on hand for Griffey's number retirement ceremony, which was quite cool. The book is framed incorrectly however, as Moyer's writer inexplicably disparages Favre and Clemens in the intro, saying they were "diminished" by their comebacks, (Favre was a top 5 QB in the 2nd year of his comeback and went to the NFC title game; Clemens led the league in ERA and went to the World Series. Clearly Moyer's writer has a different definition of "diminished" than most), and then spends every other chapter cataloging Moyer's comeback as a 49-year old who had missed more than a year with injury. Moyer's comeback was quite bad with an ERA over 5 and a WHIP near 2, making the whole "diminished" angle baffling, as the subject of the book did not exactly help himself by making one last try.

The good part was the history of Moyer before the Rockies - a guy with average stuff who was handed his hat twice by MLB and whose father-in-law offered to get him a job selling RVs ... all before he then went on to pitch another 15 seasons and establish himself as an above average pitcher by mixing speeds and painting the corners, good enough to win 269 games and to earn entry into the mythical Hall of Very Good. That said I think most people around Moyer would describe him as a better person than player, with a large family and a huge foundation for kids who've lost a parent. Moyer's a very likable guy for whom I was happy to cheer as he won a World Series in his mid-40s. The book itself - just OK.

Larry Hostetler says

I picked this up to read a baseball book. I put down a book about life and fortitude and how to fight stinkin' thinkin'.

Jamie Moyer's baseball career was indubitably unique. Never a "power" pitcher, he made it to the big leagues, and didn't have great success initially. But once he began to conquer the negative thoughts we all have his career began to turn around, to the point where he retired on his terms having set several baseball

records. His career illustrates the wisdom of the late Yogi Berra's quote "Baseball is 90% mental and the other half if physical." It was not the physical that made Moyer an elite pitcher, it was the mental.

I have always enjoyed baseball, because so much of life can be compared to baseball, and vice versa. This book adds to that paradigm, showing how alone a pitcher can be and how important personal confidence and the right thought processes are to success.

This is a book I will give to my wife to read. As a mental health counselor who is knowledgeable about baseball but hardly a fan she will likely enjoy it for a different reason, but certainly fear of failure and lack of confidence is a large part of what she encounters in human nature.

A quick read, I wavered between four and five stars; the only difficulty I had with the book was in the moving back and forth in time from Moyer's last comeback to other key points in his career. It was distracting and in a couple of cases I had to look twice to see where we were in the story. I would have given a 4.8 stars because it really was not a major distraction and the story was compelling, the insights into baseball and a pitcher's mind were interesting, and the book a good read.
