

Fairly at Bat

*My 50 years in baseball,
from the batter's box to the broadcast booth*

by **RON FAIRLY**
with **STEVE SPRINGER**

Ron Fairly had an unbelievable 1958, in which he started the year playing baseball at the University of Southern California and ended it as a member of the Los Angeles Dodgers. And then it got better.

Fairly at Bat is a dramatic, funny, and altogether entertaining romp through a 50-year career as a player and broadcaster, including as a member of three World Series champion Dodgers teams in the 1950s and '60s.

All the stars of those great teams are here, not just as players, but as people, teammates and friends. The old guard from Brooklyn and the new stars in Los Angeles: **Gil Hodges, Duke Snider, Carl Furillo, Frank Howard, Don Drysdale, Sandy Koufax, Maury Wills** and so many more. How the Dodgers who came west made Los Angeles their own, even winning a World Series in a football stadium until Dodger Stadium was built.

Fairly takes you into the lives of baseball players of the 1960s and '70s, not only between the basepaths, but in off-hours before and after the games. His memoir includes not only the Dodgers, but players he faced such as Cardinals Hall of Fame pitcher **Bob Gibson**, or just met along the way, like Red Sox hitting star **Ted Williams**.

The incidents are famous, of course, like the 1963 World Series sweep of the New York Yankees, how a bad scouting report almost cost the Dodgers the 1965 World Series and what it was like to be swept by Baltimore in the 1966 Series. The way baseball was in a rougher time, with brushback pitches and even the infamous Marichal-Roseboro brawl in 1965.

Fairly pulls no punches, discussing his relationship with the Dodger management, including owner **Walter O'Malley**, general manager **Buzzie Bavasi** and manager **Walter Alston**. He includes an amazing story about Alston pulling a star pitcher after 10 pitches ... in batting practice!

So much more: why Fairly chose USC for college over UCLA, even though he was offered a

basketball scholarship by Bruins coach **John Wooden**, what Vero Beach was like in the heyday of Dodgertown and his post-Dodgers odyssey that included All-Star selections in Montreal and Toronto and stints in Oakland, St. Louis and a lucky final stop in Anaheim.

He made a very successful transition from player to broadcaster, but just as when he came up with the Dodgers, he had to learn a new trade. Being behind a microphone had its own challenges, much different than those of a player.

Fairly at Bat is a memoir shaped by his half-century in the game that originally started as a personal journal that has been transformed into 212 pages of fun that's easy to read and enjoy. Fairly worked with long-time *Los Angeles Times* sportswriter and author **Steve Springer**, a veteran of more than a dozen books, including best-selling biographies of Lakers owner **Jeanie Buss**, boxing champion **Oscar de la Hoya** and many others.

It's illustrated with Fairly's personal photographs, including those from his youth, and many locker room prank shots that showed teammates and friends having a good time as well as playing a game they loved.

Wrote Fairly, "In all my years in baseball ... I never felt like I had a job. It was more like going to the playground every day." And now, fans can go with him on his amazing, championship ride.

Fairly at Bat: My 50 years in baseball, from the batter's box to the broadcast booth includes a foreword by Hall of Fame manager **Tommy Lasorda**, a timeline of Fairly's career from youth baseball in Long Beach, California, to the broadcast booth until his retirement in 2012, and a statistical summary of his 20 years as a major leaguer.

"My worst day in a baseball uniform was better than the best day I could have had in any other career." Share those days with Ron in *Fairly at Bat*.

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Fairly at the Plate

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They said it about

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“Ron Fairly has hit a grand slam with his great anecdotes from on and off the baseball diamond! With flair and style, his behind-the-scenes baseball insights – as a three-time L.A. Dodger World Champion – open the door for readers to peek into a great era of the game.”

~ *Peter O'Malley, President, Los Angeles Dodgers, 1970-1998*

“Reading Ron’s joyful half-century journey thru baseball was my baseball card collection coming to life. Instead of flapping in the spokes of my Schwinn racer, there were Duke, Pee Wee, Koufax, Drysdale, Furillo and Campy as vivid as they were in my mind’s eye as they were on my Topps cards. Ron’s wonderful career as a player and broadcaster is a fun and breezy read.

~ *Charley Steiner, play-by-play announcer, Los Angeles Dodgers Radio Network*

“This book is full of great anecdotes throughout, but as a longtime TV-Radio sports columnist, I particularly liked the ones that offer a behind-the-scenes look at sports broadcasting. We learn what can happen when the people in the production truck pass along bad information to a broadcaster, and we learn that what may always work for Vin Scully doesn't always work for Ron Fairly. The anecdotes are the main reason this book is better than Fairly good.”

~ *Larry Stewart, former Los Angeles Times TV-Radio sportswriter*

“Loved it! Loved it! Loved it! So many wonderful memories that Ron brought to life from his playing days ... growing up with his father in Southern California, at USC with Rod Dedeaux, and most certainly his Dodger days in Vero Beach and Los Angeles, and with Donnie [Drysdale] and so many other important Dodgers! What a very important book for the history of baseball in Southern California and Dodger baseball in the early years, especially for ‘die hard’ Dodger fans!”

~ *Ann Meyers Drysdale, Olympian, UCLA All-American, Member of the Basketball Hall of Fame, widow of Don Drysdale*

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About Author Ron Fairly

After a 20-year career as a Major League player, including two All-Star Game selections and as a member of three World Series champion teams, Ron Fairly knows baseball.

He also knows how to tell entertaining stories about it, from the perspective of a player and also from 27 years as a radio and television broadcaster. *Fairly at Bat* is his first book, written in collaboration with best-selling sports journalist Steve Springer.

A standout player at the University of Southern California, Fairly was signed by the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1958 and played with his "home team" for more than a decade, during which the Dodgers won four pennants and three World Series titles in 1959, 1963 and 1965.

Fairly's stories from those days draw on a cast of characters and big-name stars such as Sandy Koufax, Don Drysdale and Duke Snider. The book also has a Foreword written by veteran Dodgers manager Tommy Lasorda.

Besides the Dodgers, Fairly played for Montreal, St. Louis, Oakland, Toronto and the California Angels, retiring in 1968 with a .268 career batting average, 215 home runs and 1,044 runs batted in.

He turned to broadcasting in 1979 and called games on radio for the Angels, San Francisco Giants and Seattle Mariners over the next 27 seasons. He was named to the USC Athletic Hall of Fame in 1997.

About Co-Author Steve Springer

As a 25-year staff writer for the *Los Angeles Times*, Steve Springer knows sports. *Fairly at Bat* is his 14th book about people in sports, including *New York Times* best-selling "American Son," a memoir written with boxer Oscar De La Hoya. Springer also achieved best-selling status in Southern California with his books about Lakers announcer Chick Hearn and Dodgers general manager Fred Claire.

Springer is a member of the Southern California Jewish Sports Hall of Fame and is a recipient of the Nat Fleisher Award, conferred by the Boxing Writers Assn. of America.