



# The Road to Omaha: Hits, Hopes, and History at the College World Series

*Ryan McGee*

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Every summer, college baseball teams from around the nation come to Omaha, Nebraska, to play pure move-the-man-over, run-manufacturing baseball in a series that's part college bowl game, part county fair. In the spirit of *3 Nights in August* and *The Last Night of the Yankee Dynasty*, veteran sports writer Ryan McGee goes behind the scenes, into the stands, and onto the field to reveal an exciting yet personal look at one of the hottest sports championships in the country---the College World Series.

In 2008, the ten-day, eight-team tournament was the scene of one of the greatest series in its illustrious history. And Ryan McGee puts the reader behind closed doors with the underdog champs, the Fresno State Bulldogs, as well as with their seven opponents, from the first batting practice session, to bus rides to the ballpark, to the locker room and the dugout. It's the CWS as few ever see it.

But *The Road to Omaha* goes far beyond the 2008 season. It's an in-depth look at the managing strategies and playing style of college baseball, as well as a series of profiles that examine the people behind and around the CWS---the players, coaches, and fans who keep that feeling of good-old-days innocence alive through their reverence for the Great American Pastime.

McGee also takes up residence at Rosenblatt Stadium itself, reliving its rich history and tapping into the electricity around it, from the tailgating fans to the surrounding neighborhoods. "The Blatt" is America's last real connection to the baseball belief that *Field of Dreams* can actually happen: a wooden-framed ballpark with cramped concourses where teams share locker rooms, change clothes in the parking lot, and sign autographs for kids until their fingers cramp. "The Blatt" is a monument to tradition---and the last of its kind to keep that tradition alive.

Thanks to Ryan McGee's quick eye for play-by-play action, as well as his deep love for sports, *The Road to Omaha* is a rare glimpse into the kind of baseball our grandfather's knew---a snapshot of the one of the last remaining vestiges of pure Americana: a hometown, baseball, and the people who shape it and are shaped by it in turn.

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