



The Art of a Beautiful Game: The Thinking Fan's Tour of the NBA

By Chris Ballard

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In *The Art of a Beautiful Game*, Chris Ballard, the award-winning *Sports Illustrated* writer who has covered the NBA for the past decade, goes behind the scenes to examine basketball in ways that will surprise even die-hard fans. An inveterate hoops junkie who played some college ball, Ballard sits down with the NBA's most passionate, cerebral players to find out their tricks of the trade and to learn what drives them, taking readers away from the usual sports talk radio fodder and deep into the heart of the game.

Ballard talks to Dwight Howard, a prolific shot-blocker, about the enervating feeling of meeting another man at the height of his leap; challenges Steve Kerr to a game of H-O-R-S-E to understand the mentality of a pure shooter; reveals the roots of Kobe Bryant's unmatched killer instinct; and spends time with LeBron James to better understand both his mental game and his seemingly unlimited physical skills. He tracks down renowned dunkers from Dominique to Shaq to explore the impact of the dunk on the modern game, shadows Shane Battier during his preparations to defend LeBron, takes lessons from a freethrow shooting guru who once hit 2,750 in a row, and attends an elite NBA training camp to feel the pain that turns a prospect into a pro.

Packed with lively characters and basketball history, and grounded in superb writing and the reportage that is the hallmark of *Sports Illustrated*, *The Art of a Beautiful Game* is an often witty, always insightful look at the men like Steve Nash, Yao Ming, and Alonzo Mourning who devote themselves to this elegant and complicated sport. It ultimately provides basketball fans what they all want: an inside read on the game they love.

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The Art of a Beautiful Game: The Thinking Fan's Tour of the NBA By Chris Ballard Bibliography

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Editorial Review

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Starred Review The conventional wisdom among casual NBA fans holds that the game is an improvisational, formless shoot-a-thon played by undisciplined athletes whose abilities are the product of genetics rather than practice. To which Sports Illustrated reporter Ballard replies, "Ha!" He explores such topics as killer instinct in a chapter on Los Angeles Lakers' star Kobe Bryant in which it's revealed that his legendary competitiveness can be traced back to a summer league where, as a 12 year-old matched against NBAers and collegiates, he didn't score a single point. Never again. He also explores the big man's world by examining the games of Shaquille O'Neal, Yao Ming, and Hall-of-Famer David Robinson. There are chapters revolving around pure shooters (Ray Allen), point guards (Steve Nash), and rebounders (Ben Wallace). In his examination of the free throw, he profiles Tom Amberry, a retired podiatrist who, in 1993 at 71, made 2,750 consecutive free throws over 10 hours in front of 10 paid witnesses. Amberry's feat and the Steve Nash profile are worth the price of the book. Ballard's previous foray into book-length basketball journalism was *Hoops Nation*, a 1999 Booklist Top 10 sports book. The titular thinking fans will find their admiration confirmed; casual fans will see the light and find themselves converted. Hallelujah! --Wes Lukowsky

Review

"People love to claim that pro athletes never have anything interesting to say, but that's because they're usually asked stupid, nonessential questions. Yet ask any talented man about the details of his craft and he will inevitably tell you everything you need to know, including who that man truly is. And that's what Chris Ballard has done. This is a basketball book for people who actually care *about basketball*." -- **CHUCK KLOSTERMAN, AUTHOR OF *EATING THE DINOSAUR***

About the Author

Chris Ballard is a senior writer at *Sports Illustrated* covering the NBA and writing features. He has written profiles of people with offbeat professions for the *New York Times Magazine* and is the author of *Hoops Nation*, which was named one of *Booklist's* Top Ten Sports Books of 1998, and *The Butterfly Hunter*. He lives in Berkeley, California.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dorothy Shuler:

Reading a e-book can be one of a lot of exercise that everyone in the world likes. Do you like reading book so. There are a lot of reasons why people enjoyed. First reading a e-book will give you a lot of new details. When you read a book you will get new information mainly because book is one of numerous ways to share the information or even their idea. Second, studying a book will make you more imaginative. When you reading a book especially fiction book the author will bring someone to imagine the story how the character types do it anything. Third, you can share your knowledge to some others. When you read this The Art of a Beautiful Game: The Thinking Fan's Tour of the NBA, you are able to tell your family, friends as well as soon about yours reserve. Your knowledge can inspire others, make them reading a guide.

Sheldon McLean:

Reading a book to be new life style in this season; every people loves to examine a book. When you study a book you can get a lot of benefit. When you read publications, you can improve your knowledge, simply because book has a lot of information onto it. The information that you will get depend on what types of book that you have read. If you wish to get information about your study, you can read education books, but if you act like you want to entertain yourself you can read a fiction books, these us novel, comics, along with soon. The The Art of a Beautiful Game: The Thinking Fan's Tour of the NBA provide you with a new experience in examining a book.

Shawn Hernandez:

On this era which is the greater man or who has ability in doing something more are more treasured than other. Do you want to become one of it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you must do is just spending your time not very much but quite enough to possess a look at some books. One of several books in the top checklist in your reading list is actually The Art of a Beautiful Game: The Thinking Fan's Tour of the NBA. This book that is certainly qualified as The Hungry Hills can get you closer in becoming precious person. By looking way up and review this guide you can get many advantages.

Lawrence Pomerleau:

What is your hobby? Have you heard in which question when you got pupils? We believe that that question was given by teacher with their students. Many kinds of hobby, Every person has different hobby. Therefore you know that little person including reading or as looking at become their hobby. You need to understand that reading is very important and book as to be the matter. Book is important thing to provide you knowledge, except your current teacher or lecturer. You discover good news or update in relation to something by book. Different categories of books that can you go onto be your object. One of them is this The Art of a Beautiful Game: The Thinking Fan's Tour of the NBA.

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