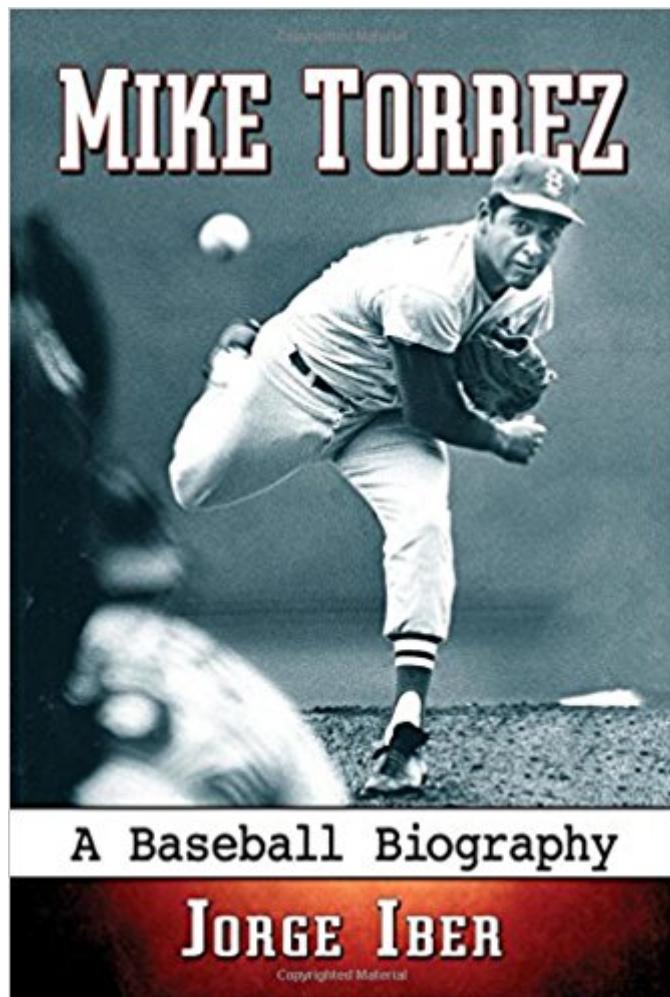


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# Mike Torrez: A Baseball Biography



## Synopsis

The history of baseball is filled with players whose careers were defined by one bad play. Mike Torrez is remembered as the pitcher who gave up the infamous three-run homer to Bucky "Bleeping" Dent in the 1978 playoffs tie-breaker between the Red Sox and Yankees. Yet Torrez's life added up to much more than his worst moment on the mound. Coming from a vibrant Mexican American community that settled in Topeka, Kansas, in the early 1900s, he made it to the Majors by his own talent and efforts, with the help of an athletic program for Mexican youth that spread through the Midwest, Texas and Mexico during the 20th century. He was in the middle of many transformative events of the 1970s--such as the rise of free agency--and was an ethnic role model in the years before the "Fernandomania" of 1981. This book covers Torrez's life and career as the winningest Mexican American pitcher in Major League history.

## Book Information

Paperback: 268 pages

Publisher: McFarland & Company (July 29, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786496320

ISBN-13: 978-0786496327

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 6.2 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #294,027 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #287 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Specific Demographics > Hispanic American Studies #451 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball

## Customer Reviews

Jorge Iber is a professor of history at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. His research focuses on the role of Latinos/-as in U.S. sports. He is the author of numerous works on this topic.

great story

Was hoping for a book that covered his unique career, filled with lots of highs and lows, in great depth and detail. Instead, much of the focus was on his Mexican American heritage and his impact on Mexican American sports & culture in the Midwest. Interesting subject for some, but not why I

purchased this book. Only about 2/3 of the book was on Torrez's career, and most disappointingly, there was only one player (by my count) that the author interviewed for the book ... that was Dennis Eckersley, who was maybe quoted twice. The rest of the book seemed to come from old newspaper articles and box scores. Finally in the last chapter you got to hear some of Torrez's feelings about 1978, but they were second hand and by then, too little too late.

There is much more to the Mike Torrez story than just the pitch to Bucky Dent. Torrez won more games than any Mexican-American pitcher in baseball history (more than the more famously remembered Fernando Valenzuela). His career also encompassed many important events and characters from the 1960s and 1970s, including the World Champion St. Louis Cardinals of Bob Gibson, Lou Brock and Curt Flood, the swinging A's of the seventies, the Bronx Zoo Yankees of 1977 and the cursed Red Sox of 1978. He also figured prominently in the new economic climate of the seventies and the dawning of free agency. This book covers it all in fine detail along with the author's area of expertise--the Mexican-American experience and its impact on baseball, which is vital to the understanding of Mike Torrez and where he came from. Mr. Iber obviously did a large amount of research and has turned out a fine addition to the baseball literature of the era.

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