



# It's A Very Simple Game! The Life and Times of Charley Eckman

*Charley Eckman, Fred Neil*

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**It's A Very Simple Game! The Life and Times of Charley Eckman** Charley Eckman, Fred Neil  
The Unique Charley Eckman, The Babe Ruth of Basketball Referees, NBA Coach and Sportscaster. Charley was the funniest man to make a living in sports. This book not only tells the story from Charley's viewpoint but retells the stories that have made his listeners laugh aloud.

Charley Eckman became a professional basketball referee at age 16. Top rated in the Basketball Association of America and its successor professional league, the National Basketball Association (NBA), he officiated in the first NBA All Star Game in Boston. Later, he stepped off center court to fire up players and fans alike, stirring excitement as the winning coach of one of the All Star games.

Eckman is the only one ever to go from basketball referee to professional basketball coach. As coach of the Pistons, he led his team to two Conference Championships and tied for second in his third year. He brought George Yardley off the Piston bench and made him a regular. Yardley entered the Basketball Hall of Fame in 1996.

He returned to officiating in the powerful Atlantic Coast Conference and other college conferences. He was a regular at major tournaments, including the National Invitation Tournament (NIT) and the National College Athletic Association (NCAA).

In the 1960s, Eckman launched a new career as an award-winning sportscaster. Starting with WCBM and then WFBR, he spent 23 years regaling sports fans with stories and insights on the world of sports competition. A popular figure wherever he appeared, his frequent speaking engagements won raves. He was also a legendary figure at thoroughbred race tracks throughout the Mid-Atlantic States.

Eckman was featured three times in Sports Illustrated, and also in the Saturday Evening Post, Sport Magazine, and Newsweek.

Charley was married 53 years to the former Wilma Howard. They had four children, three grandchildren, and one great grandchild. Charley succumbed to cancer on July 3, 1995.:

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