While The Big O: My Life, My Times, My Game will not disappoint basketball purists longing for Oscar Robertson's play-by-play of favorite games, the attraction of this autobiography is Robertson's perspective on the evolution of the sport and on the racial struggles that were the context of his formative years. Called by many basketball experts the greatest all-around player ever, Robertson earned an astonishing array of honors including an Olympic gold medal, 12 NBA All-Star appearances, the NBA Rookie of the Year award, and the 1964 NBA MVP award. Most remarkably, Robertson remains the only player in basketball history with a triple-double season (double-digit averages for scoring, rebounds, and assists). While Robertson could have easily candy-coated his impressive record for his retrospective, he devotes large sections of his book to the racial battles he faced off court, and his final chapters recount his controversial efforts as an NBA union leader to create free agency, a pension plan, and disability protection for players. In telling his life story, he lays bare the racism and mistreatment he suffered at the hands of individuals and institutions throughout his career, from the Mayor of Indianapolis and Cincinnati University to the NBA and CBS Sports. At times, his critiques can seem excessive (e.g. his discussions of the distortions in the film Hoosiers, while interesting, are repeated a bit too often), and some sections (like his attempts to compare himself to contemporary players) border on self-indulgence. Yet, he seems justified in arguing that his achievements--largely accomplished on second-rate teams, against a back-drop of unprecedented racial strife, and before the modern era of sports-media saturation--are easily underrepresented. In the end, The Big O offers a complex, human portrait to complement a spectacular sports career. --Patrick OKelley

My Personal Review:
Oscar Robertson tells it like it was as this book is as much about racism as it is about basketball. I played briefly against Oscar and we were both raised in the hot bed of Indiana basketball. Trying to become an
accomplished player was one thing and dealing with discrimination back in the 1950s was quite another. Oscar tries to paint a picture for the reader showing what it was like to muster enough courage to play while being discriminated against. He performed brilliantly despite the bigotry, hatred and prejudice and, perhaps unknowingly to him at the time, used basketball as an instrument of change just as Jackie Robinson used baseball before him.

Oscar Robertson's book, The Big O should be looked upon not only as a sports book, but as a history book. If readers would like to add to their understanding of the trials and tribulations players went through in the Golden Era of Indiana basketball they might also enjoy my just published book titled Growing Up in Indiana: The Culture & Hoosier Hysteria Revisited.

For More 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price:

The Big O: My Life, My Times, My Game by Oscar Robertson - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!