

# on Kammie First

## Baseball's Dottie Kamenshek

BIOGRAPHIES FOR YOUNG READERS



**Michelle Houts**

---

### Q&A with author Michelle Houts

*What made you think that Dottie Kamenshek's life and career would make a good biography?*

Dottie faced a lot of challenges in life. She was the daughter of immigrants and grew up during the Depression. She lost her father when she was very young, and then lost her stepfather. She was shy. Despite difficulties, she managed to make a career doing what she loved—playing baseball. And Dottie didn't just play. She excelled and became a leader among her peers. Everyone who knew her respected her, on and off the diamond.

*We've seen that the movie, "A League of Their Own," has a character named Dottie Hinson, played by Geena Davis. Is that supposed to be Kammie?*

That's a question that took months of research to answer. Most of the characters in the movie, including Dottie Hinson, are composite characters, meaning they are a combination of several players. Over the years, there were seven different women named Dorothy who played for the Rockford Peaches. There are even some who believe the character was based on other players with other first names. There's no doubt, though, that the character played by Geena Davis was a quiet leader and one of the best players in the AAGPBL. For those reasons, many feel strongly that person was Dottie Kamenshek.

*What was the most interesting thing you learned about the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League or the players?*

With a limited understanding of the AAGPBL, I once believed the league was more a source of entertainment than a gathering of serious athletes. It didn't take long to realize that the girls of the AAGPBL were gifted athletes and serious competitors. They played to win. The crowds who gathered to watch were just an added bonus.

*We've seen the uniforms the AAGPBL players wore. Why did they play baseball in skirts?*

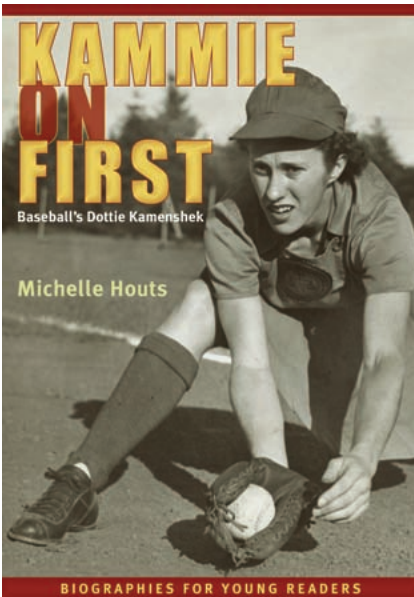
The uniform was an important part of Philip Wrigley's vision of a women's softball/baseball league. He wanted his players to play like men, but still look like ladies. Many players protested when they saw the uniforms, but Wrigley wouldn't budge: Wear the skirt or go home. For those who stayed, a few scrapes and bruises were a small price to pay to play baseball on a professional level.

*The summer of 2014 saw a few examples of girls whose abilities on the baseball diamond attracted national attention. I'm thinking of Mo 'Ne Davis and Chelsea Baker, two young pitchers. How should today's young players see Dottie Kamenshek?*

Dottie and her AAGPBL league-mates were pioneers. They played baseball when girls only played softball. Mo 'Ne and Chelsea are also pioneers, playing baseball in a male league. I hope young readers will recognize that Dottie helped pave the way for these talented young ladies.

*Is Kammie on First a book that will appeal to both girl and boy readers?*

Certainly. *Kammie on First* isn't a "girl" book or a "boy" book. It's a baseball book. It's a look into a moment in history when girls did many things that, until then, only males had done. They worked in factories. They farmed the fields and took care of livestock. And they played baseball. Any sports fan, history buff, or biography reader will enjoy Kammie's story.



"The fanciest-fielding first baseman I've ever seen, man or woman."

Wally Pipp, former New York Yankee first baseman

"A truly engaging account of the life and times of an exceptional woman athlete."

Merrie A. Fidler, author of *The Origins and History of the All-American Girls Professional Baseball League*

### **Kammie on First**

*Baseball's Dottie Kamenshek*

By Michelle Houts

October 2014

148 pages · 7 × 10 in. · 61 b&w photos

Paperback · 978-0-8214-2130-7 · \$14.95

Hardcover · 978-0-8214-2133-8 · \$28.95

Also available in electronic edition.

### **To schedule events:**

[michellehouts.com/author-appearances](http://michellehouts.com/author-appearances)

### **Reviewers and producers:**

Contact Samara Rafert at [rafert@ohio.edu](mailto:rafert@ohio.edu) and (740) 593 1160 to arrange an author interview or to request a reviewer copy.



**OHIO  
UNIVERSITY  
PRESS**

**OHIOSWALLOW.COM**