Blacks In Baseball Essay, Research Paper

Jackie Robinson Jackie Robinson was one of the best players that proffesional baseball has ever

seen and greatly helped major league baseball accept African American players that otherwise

would not have palyed.

Jack Roosevelt Robinson was born January 31, 1919 in Cairo, Georgia (Hill 1). Jackie’s

grandfather was a slave and his father a sharecropper (1). His mom and dad got a divorce when

Jackie was just a baby (1). He, his mother and four siblings moved after his parents got a divorce

(1). His mother took all the children and moved to Pasedena, California (1).

Not long after the family moved to Pasedena, Jackie’s mother enrolled him into Pasedena Junior

College (”Robinson, Jackie”). He went on to University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) (1).

Jackie was a standout in school sports at UCLA, he played football, baseball, basketball, and track

(1). He later left college in the middle of his junior year to join the Army in 1941 (1). Four years

after entering the Army Jackie was discharged because of a confrentation with another officer when

he would not give up his seat on a military bus (1). He was discharged as a first Lieutenant (1).

After leaving the Army Jackie wanted to play baseball, his favorite sport. He tried out for many

teams and was drafted by the Kansas City Monarchs Negro League Team (Hill 1). The Negro

League schedule was very tuff. The team was always on the road playing games. Jackie did not like

the life style of being on the Monarchs (”Robinson, Jackie”). He and his teammates would have to

withstand the racial tensions everywhere they went (Ward, Burns 285) . While Jackie was playing in

the Negro Leagues, Branch Rickey, the Los Angeles Dodgers manager was secretly sending out

scouts to look at Jackie and other players in the Negro leagues that stood out above the rest fo their

baseball talent (Hill 1). Rickey made the excuse to the scouts that he wanted to put together an all

black baseball team called the “Brown Dodgers” (2). He was really looking for the right black

player that would break the color barrier in professional baseball (1). Rickey looked at all his

options and he chose Jackie Robinson of the Kansas City Monarchs (1). He chose Jackie because

of his skills in baseball and his courage (1).

Branch and Jackie met on August 28, 1945 to discuss his signing to the LA Dodgers (1). The

meeting was very important because rickey wanted to make sure Robinson would not retaliate

against the racist comments that he will be facing if he was moved up to the LA Dodgers (2).

Rickey sent Robinson to the semi-professional team the Dodgers had, the Montreal Royals

(”Robinson, Jackie”). While Robinson was with the Royals, he was he was an athletic standout with

a lot of talent for playing professional baseball (Hill 1). He enjoyed playing on the Montreal Royals

because race was not really an issue in Canada and he was very popular all over the country

(”Robinson, Jackie”). He led the Royals to the minor league championship (Rydell 86).

The next season Robinson got moved up to the Los Angeles Dodgers professional team late in

spring training, only five days before the Dodgers first game (86). This gave the critics not much time

to react to the new player in the league (86). On April 15, 1947 Jackie became the first black

player to play major league baseball in the United States (87). Robinson’s moving to the team

caused national outrage between coaches, teams, and fans (87). His new teammates signed a

petition to get him off the team just because he was black (Ward, Burns 283). The general

managers and head coaches of the Dodgers including Branch Rickey and Pee Wee Reese kept him

on the team and encouraged him to stay and ignore the racial slurs and name calling (Ward, Burns

283). Other teams tried to boycott, but it did not work (Rydell 86). Robinsons first games were the

hardest (86). He had many death threats made against him (”Robinson, Jackie”). The hotels that

Robinson went to with the team would not serve him because blacks were not allowed (”Robinson,

Jackie”). Even though he would not get served at restaurants and hotels, he always kept his

composier and never lost his temper (Ward, Burns 283). Robinson was always called names but he

just ignored them and took a non-violent approach to the situation (”Robinson, Jackie).

After many games Robinson started winning the respect of his fellow teammates, other teams, and

fans by not fighting back (Rydell 86). Not only was Robinson the only black player in the major

leagues, but he was also one of the best. Stadiums filled with record numbers of fans came to watch

him play baseball (Hill 2). By the end of his first year, he was a major league superstar (1).

Robinson led the majors in stolen bases and was second in scored runs (1). He was voted Rookie

of the Year for the 1948 season (2).

Robinson had a very successful baseball career. He proved all of his critics wrong, they said Rickey

only wanted him because he was black and not how well he could play baseball (Rydell 87). He

proved his critics wrong the very first game he played with the LA Dodgers(87). He had four hits,

including one homerun and two stolen bases (87). After his spectacular first game Robinson started

getting death threats, but ignored them and he kept on playing (Hill 1).

After leading a successful career in baseball Robinson retired from the game in 1957 (Ward, Burns

289). The LA Dodgers also retired his number (Ward, Burns 289). He opened a chain of

restaurants in New York and moved on to persue another dream, to help other black people

become successful like he did (Hill 2). He first joined the National Association for the Advancement

of Colored People (NAACP) and was on the board of directors (Ward, Burns 289). In 1963 he

started getting involved with the civil rights movement (Enders 1). Robinson teamed up with Martin

Luther King Jr. and went to Birmingham, Alabama to speak out against racism. King and Robinson

went to many gatherings around the Birmingham area to speak out against racism (Enders 1). The

two had a very hard time getting people together to speak to them because of all the violence that

was happening as a result of the racist south and the black movement (Enders 2). In 1963, while

Robinson and King were going from church to church speaking they learned that an NAACP officer

Medgar Evers was murdered (2). Shortly after the murder Robinson sent a letter to President John

F. Kennedy asking him to give Martin Luther King secret service protection (3). Kennedy gave

them the protection and later on August 28, 1963 Robinson took his family to see Martin Luther

Kings famous “I have a dream” speech (3).

Later in 1964, the Governor of New York and Republican presidential candidate Nelson

Rockefeller asked Robinson if he wanted to be one of his campaign directors (3). He worked on

the campaign for a short while until Rockefeller lost Barry Goldwater (3). In 1967 while Robinson

was getting angry with the NAACP and he resigned because he thought they were not radical

enough to take charge of the movement (3).

While Robinson was still very frustrated and not satisfied with the way things were going, he got a

call from Hubert Humphery. He was a presidential candidate from Minnesota. Humphery asked

Robinson to campaign along side him and give speeches about the black rights movement. But

Humphery lost to Richard Nixon (3). One reason why the two candidates that Robinson went with

ended up losing was because America still did not like politicians that helped black people and that

went along with their views (4). After the elections time was wearing down Robinson and he went

back home to live with his family (4). At his old age Robinson had endured a lot of pain. Many of

the close friends he had and family members had died including, John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther

King and Malcom X who were all assassinated. Also his mother Mallie, Branch Rickey, and his son

Jackie Junior who died in a car accident at the age of 24 (Hill 2). Near the end his life, Robinson

was invited to throw the first pitch of the 1972 World Series. He died of a heart attack ten days

later at the age of 53 (2).

Jackie Robinson was a great baseball player and an equally great civil rights leader. Although he

never got to see the integration of black people in the United States, his efforts helped a lot of

people. He was one of the great American heroes and is an American legend. His courage gave the

strength to other black athletes to persue their dreams.

————————————————– Outline

Thesis Statement Jackie Robinson was one of the best players that professional baseball has ever

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would not have played.

I. Early Years A. History 1. School 2. Background B.Family 1.Five Siblings 2. Son of a Share

Cropper

II.School A.College 1. Pasadena Junior College 2. UCLA B.School Sports 1. Baseball favorite 2.

Excelled in four sports

III. Baseball A.Semi Pros 1. Monarchs 2. Royals B. Pros 1. LA Dodgers 2. Retirement

IV.Civil Rights A. Civil Movement 1. Martin Luther King 2. Birmingham, Alabama B. NAACP 1.

On board of directors 2. Resigned

V. Later Years A. Diseases 1. Diabetes 2. Heart Problems B.Deaths of loved ones 1. three friends

assassinated 2. Family members ————————————————–

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“Robinson, Jackie” Computer Software. Encarta. Microsoft Corporation, 1996. IBM