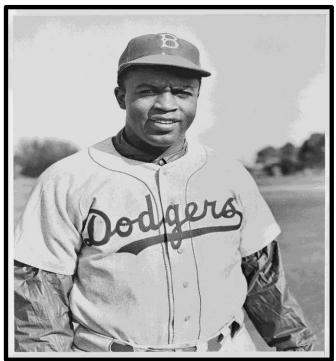


Jackie Robinson





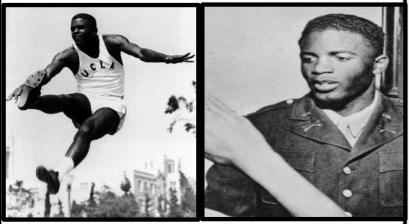






Jackie Robinson

Jackie Roosevelt Robinson was born on January 31, 1919 in Cairo, Georgia. His middle name was given to him in honor of President Teddy Roosevelt. He was the youngest of five children and was raised by his mother, Mallie. Everyone in his family was athletic, including Jackie. He grew up in California watching his older brothers excel in sports. Jackie followed in his brother's footsteps. In high school, he ran track and played several other sports. He was the guarterback on the football team and the star of his school's baseball team. Though he was a talented athlete, Jackie experienced racism while in high school. He would be cheered for his ability on the field, but was still treated unequally outside of sports.



Jackie went to college at UCLA and played four sports: track, baseball, football and basketball. He was the very first UCLA athlete to earn letters for achievement and performance in all four sports. He even won the college championship in the long jump. After college, Jackie played professional football for a short time until he was drafted in the Army during World War II. During the war, he served in an all-black unit because they weren't allowed to fight alongside whites.

Once he left army in 1944, Jackie returned home and played baseball for the Kansas City Monarchs in the African-American Baseball League. At that time blacks were not allowed to play in Major League Baseball. He continued to play well for the Monarchs. Many saw how talented Jackie was. The Dodgers recruited him to play Major League Baseball, even though he was black. He knew he would face a lot of racism for being the first colored player in an all-white The Core Coaches 2016 league.



The Dodger's manager knew it would be a challenge but he wanted Jackie to help them win pennant, the Major League Baseball the championship. The manager told Jackie that he couldn't fight back against those who would be prejudice. Jackie said, "Are you looking for a Negro who is afraid to fight back?" The manager said, "Robinson, I'm looking for a ballplayer with the guts enough not to fight back."

As Jackie played for the Dodgers, he experienced severe racism. Other teams refused to play against the Dodgers because of Jackie. Baseball fans yelled and threw things at him. They threatened him, even with death threats. Through it all, Jackie had the courage to hold in his anger and play the game the best he could. That year in 1947, the Dodgers won the pennant and Jackie was named Rookie of the Year.

Jackie played Major League Baseball for 10 years and is still known as one of the best players in baseball. During his career he hit 137 home runs and stole 197 bases. He was named to the All Star Team six times and was awarded the National League MVP in 1949. His dedication to creating equality in professional baseball paved the way for other black players to follow him. He once said, "A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives." He was elected to the MLB Hall of Fame in 1962. Jackie died on October 24, 1972.

To honor this American hero, the baseball league retired Jackie's number (#42) in 1997. Every April 15th is Jackie Robinson day and all Major League players wear the number 42 in honor of him.







