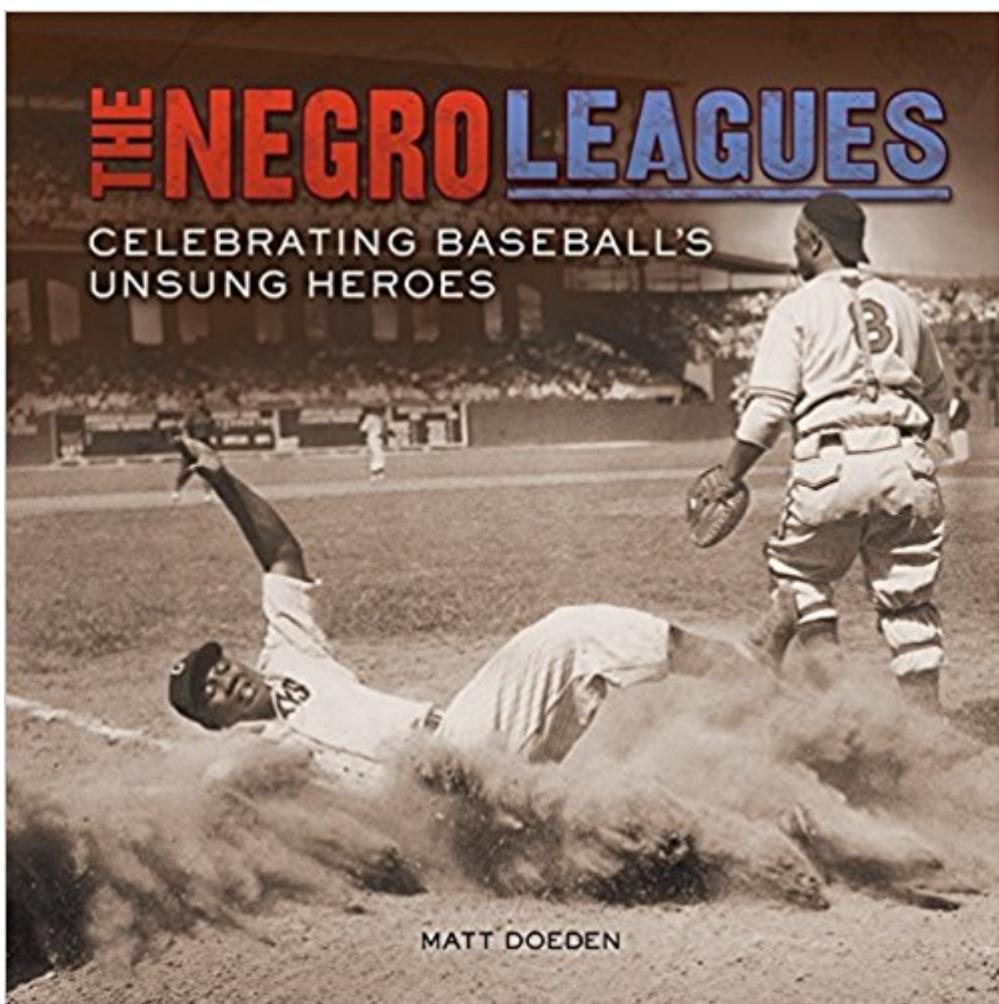


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The Negro Leagues: Celebrating Baseball's Unsung Heroes (Spectacular Sports)



Synopsis

After the Civil War (1861-1865), the earliest seeds of professional baseball began to sprout. While racism was rampant, some early teams featured black and white players competing side by side. But by 1900, segregation forced African Americans to form their own teams. Black players traveled around the country on barnstorming tours, taking on all challengers. In 1920, baseball's Negro leagues started, and for more than three decades, they offered fans a thrilling alternative to Major League Baseball. Explore the riveting history of the Negro leagues, including some of baseball's greatest (and most unheralded) players, biggest games, and wildest moments.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Most kids know the bare-bones history of many sports, including baseball, but what they might not realize is the true history of the sport of baseball. The modern-day era of the sport began in 1901, and the year the American League emerged. The era of decent record-keeping began, but what about the participation of the African American player before those records were kept? The history, particularly the oral history, painted a much different picture than most of us can even imagine. The game really took off after the Civil War when the earliest seeds of professional baseball began to sprout. What was really amazing was the fact that play was often integrated. Integration, of course, wasn't across the board because while racism was rampant in the South, some early teams featured black and white players competing side by side. So what was

the problem and why did integration fall by the wayside? Racist Cap Anson had something to say about integrated teams as the manager of the “Chicago White Stockings (the present-day Chicago Cubs).” Anson reportedly shouted racial slurs demanding that rival pitcher George Stovey leave an exhibition game. He would have nothing to do with the practice of integration and it was from July 14, 1887, the International League voted to avoid such situations in the future. Both the National League and the American Association agreed that “no further contracts would be offered to black players.” It was an end to an era, one in which black players and other minorities were no longer welcome to play alongside white players. Segregation had been an unwritten rule and that’s the reason “the vast majority [of black players] played on all-black teams.” An attempt by the National Colored Base Ball League in 1887 failed to take off, primarily because teams were “lacking home stadiums. What did take off were fabulous barnstormers like the Cuban Giants who played exhibition games around the country. The Giants often challenged and defeated big-league opponents.” The barnstormers know that “entertainment and spectacle were every bit as important to ticket sales as the play on the field.” Exhibition was one thing, but there were some real greats in the ranks of these teams. These players wanted to play serious ball, but how was that going to happen if no one really believed they could play? In the 1910s black player Rube Foster believed that to be taken seriously, black players needed to abandon the antics and focus only on baseball. An “all-black major league” could be the solution serious players needed. In 1920 Rube’s dream was realized when the National Negro League (NNL) was born. In this book, you’ll read about the league and the evolution of the game with black and minority players from the 1920s to the present-day. This is a fascinating book about the Negro League era fans of all ages will love. Like many people, I knew very little about the rich history of the leagues. I’ve read several of Matt Doeden’s books and find them all to be quite well-written and researched and this one is no exception. Mostly books for this age group gloss over these teams, lightly touching on the history. Familiar names like Satchel Paige and that of Jackie Robinson always seem to grace the pages of books, however, this one contains the unknown or less familiar players. Moses Fleetwood Walker, Bud Fowler, Rube Foster, Oscar Charleston, Biz Mackey, Pop Lloyd, José Martínez, Scrip Lee, and many, many more are discussed. The layout of the book explodes with a wide variety of photographs of players and teams

of a mostly-forgotten era. And, of course, there's a photograph of Cap Anson, the racist who opposed integrated baseball. There are numerous informative sidebars that add a great deal to the text. For example, one discusses the "super team," Los Dragones. One chapter of high interest is the one featuring some of the legendary players of the Negro Leagues, some virtual unknowns to many young readers. In the back of the book is an index, a glossary, source notes, and additional recommended book and website resources to explore.

Age Range: 10 to 13 years
Grade Level: 5 to 9

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