

BASEBALL HALL OF FAME NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Database of Negro Leagues Statistics Makes Online Debut at Baseball-Reference.com

*-- Searchable History: a Product of Comprehensive Study of African Americans in Baseball;
Hall of Fame Partners with Website to Make Data Available for First Time --*

(COOPERSTOWN, NY) – For more than a century, African Americans made history on the baseball diamond prior to Jackie Robinson’s breaking of the color barrier in the major leagues.

Beginning today, that history – in the most complete form ever assembled – is available to a world-wide audience through one of the game’s premier statistical websites.

Statistics on Negro Leagues players are now available through the Hall of Fame’s website partner, www.baseball-reference.com. The website, which has become the go-to resource for baseball statistics throughout the industry, will publish biographical and statistical information on all Negro Leagues players who were identified in a groundbreaking study commissioned by the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum a decade ago.

“The data that forms the basis of these statistics is the result of years of tireless research by a dedicated team of historians,” said Jeff Idelson, President of the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. *“We are so proud to have been able to facilitate this research, and equally pleased that our partner, baseball-reference.com, is able to make this information available to the public. This history that once was lost is now alive to help tell the story of the great African-American baseball heroes of the early 20th Century.”*

The Negro Leagues statistical database is the most comprehensive study on African-American Baseball ever produced; a team effort of “**The Negro Leagues Researchers/Authors Group**” deputized by the Hall of Fame Board of Directors in 2001 and led by Dr. Larry Hogan, Dick Clark, and Larry Lester. Major League Baseball provided the Baseball Hall of Fame with a \$250,000 grant in July 2000 in order to initiate a comprehensive study on the history of African Americans in Baseball, from 1860-1960.

The research resulted in a raw narrative and bibliography of nearly 800 pages and a statistical database, which includes 3,000 day-by-day records, league leaders and all-time leaders. The research was culled from box scores from **345 newspapers** of sanctioned league games played from **1920-48**.

“We are drowning in information . . . but starving for knowledge.”

"There have been a number of books capturing oral histories, biographies written about players, and team histories, but few mediums tackle the statistical challenge of compiling data from the Negro Leagues," said Larry Lester. *"The Negro Leagues Researchers/Authors Group was tasked with this challenge in 2001, and a decade later we present, via www.baseball-reference.com, a sampling of our findings. More data will be released, once a complete audit has been done, that will demonstrate the talent of men who played before Jackie Robinson entered the Major Leagues."*

The study includes sanctioned league game box scores from almost 100 percent of games played in the 1920s, in excess of 90 percent of the box scores from games played in the 1930s and box scores from 50-70 percent of games played in the 1940s and 50s, during which time the various leagues began to disband and newspapers ceased to report game information. The end result is the most comprehensive compilation of statistics on the Negro Leagues that has ever been accumulated.

The compiled statistics will be accessible at baseball-reference.com like the data from the 17,000-plus men who have played Major League Baseball. There were no formal or official statistics from the various Negro Leagues, but the numbers in the database represent league-sanctioned games from 1920-48 for which there is a viable box score. Exhibition games and other related events are not included.

"This treasure trove of information on the Negro Leagues fills in a major gap of the historical record of the game of baseball," said Sean Forman, the founder of baseball-reference.com. *"The research provided from the study, along with the technology that allows it to be published and accessed, will result in a greater understanding of the Negro Leagues, and ultimately more research on the subject."*

For more information, please visit www.baseballhall.org.

The National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum is open seven days a week year round, with the exception of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day. The Museum observes regular hours of 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. from Labor Day until Memorial Day Weekend. From Memorial Day Weekend through the day before Labor Day, the Museum observes summer hours of 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. Ticket prices are \$19.50 for adults (13 and over), \$12 for seniors (65 and over) and for those holding current memberships in the VFW, Disabled American Veterans, American Legion and AMVets organizations, and \$7 for juniors (ages 7-12). Members are always admitted free of charge and there is no charge for children 6 years of age or younger. For more information, visit our Web site at baseballhall.org or call 888-HALL-OF-FAME (888-425-5633) or 607-547-7200.

For More Information, Please Contact:

Brad Horn, Senior Director of Communications and Education
607-547-0287, bhorn@baseballhall.org

Craig Muder, Director of Communications
607-547-0227, cmuder@baseballhall.org

Larry Lester, chairman of SABR's Negro Leagues Committee
816-589-7940, NTresearch@comcast.net



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