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LESTER, LARRY. *Baseball's First Colored World Series: The 1924 Meeting of the Hilldale Giants and Kansas City Monarchs*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland and Co., 2006. Pp. 261. Photographs, appendices, and index.

Finding information related to the Negro Leagues has become easier in recent years as more and more texts and articles have been written. Readers can find basic biographies of many players and concentrated works on some of the stars such as Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Rube Foster, and Jackie Robinson. The Kansas City Monarchs, Chicago American Giants, Indianapolis ABCs, and Hilldale Giants have books devoted to their achievements. The most recent contribution to the literature involves the umpires with a book written by Bob Motley. One of the key areas lacking until recently was the Negro League World Series. Larry Lester's text fills that gap and gives fans and researchers a well-documented look at the 1924 series.

Larry Lester is well qualified to tackle the subject, and he does so with lots of photographs, statistics, and stories. As you follow the two teams through the 1924 season you get to know the players and their teams. The book does not just give a running commentary of what happened in each series contest. Instead, the primary focus is on showing the reader how the Monarchs and Giants got to the World Series and then why the Monarchs were able to triumph.

As the author begins, he sets the context for how this series came into being in the first place. He places the Negro Leagues in American history and then gives a brief but colorful overview of some of the key figures involved in the creation of the league, such as Elisha Scott and Rube Foster. It is then explained why Ed Bolden decided to jump ship and start his own league, thereby creating the structure that made a World Series possible.

Readers can then follow the 1924 season and see just how the Hilldale and Kansas City teams came out on top. League standings and rosters for the two clubs provide a look at who the key players were. The comparison of the proposed starting line-ups for the two teams is a unique feature not found in other Negro League texts. For example, the season stats for Nip Winters and Bullet Rogan are seen side by side so comparisons of the two aces can be made.

The third section of the text is one of the real strengths of the book as we are introduced to the players through scouting reports. Instead of just a statistical accounting of the key players, Lester gives some background on each player so they come alive as people and ball players. After reading the brief biography of William Bell, Sr. of the Monarchs we know Manager Jose Mendez counted on Bell as his workhorse. Bell had great control and relied most heavily on his curveball to get batters out. He was also married, worked during the off-season, and liked to read. Clint Thomas provided power, speed, and great defense for the Giants in the outfield. Thomas was all-hustle and would never give up in a game, a great attitude for a manager to see in one of his superstars.

After learning about the players Lester takes the reader through the ten-game series. Along with the description of each game are included the stats, a summary, and an inning-

by-inning account of the offense. When game one ends with Kansas City winning 6-2 we know exactly how and when those runs were scored. Dobie Moore provided the game-winning hit, and Rogan won the first contest. This type of detail is given for each game, something that again cannot be found in any other Negro League book.

The summary of the series that follows is also great for researchers because Lester provides such unique features as to who the Most Valuable Player and least valuable player of the series was based on their numbers. Hurley McNair had a tough series at the plate, and we are given a run down of exactly how he failed to deliver for the Monarchs. The report card on each team for batting, pitching, fielding, managing, and base running is an excellent way to see how the Monarchs won. And then Lester finishes the main text with the financial records of the series. Often books will talk about the failure of the teams to make money, their lack of contracts, etc., but little if any numbers are provided. This breakdown gives us the chance to see how much money each player and team made from these games. It eliminates the guesswork.

The final contribution Lester makes to the scholarship of the Negro Leagues comes through the appendices he includes. The official souvenir program provides the original descriptions from 1924 of the key players. In addition to the batting order, we can find home and away splits for pitchers and batters as well as their performance against the others in the league in 1924.

This text is an entertaining read that gives you a chance to know the players as more than their numbers on the field. But for those intrigued by statistics there are plenty of those as well. Larry Lester has provided a fascinating and well-researched look into the first Negro League World Series, filling a gap that has existed until now in the literature.

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