



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **STATISTICS OF THE NEGRO LEAGUES OFFICIALLY ENTER THE MAJOR LEAGUE RECORD**

**Several Individual Major League Records Are Now Held by Josh Gibson,  
While Other Negro Leagues Stars Newly Appear on Leaderboards**

**Career Totals of Hall of Famers Like Mays, Willard Brown, Campanella, Doby, Irvin,  
Miñoso, Paige and Jackie Robinson Now Reflect Their Negro Leagues Feats**

**All Negro Leagues Stats Assembled by These Major League Ballplayers  
Are Now Available at MLB.com, With More Data Still Being Discovered**

Several new Major League records are now newly held by Hall of Famer **Josh Gibson**, who is being joined on all-time Major League leaderboards by other Negro Leagues stars, Major League Baseball announced today. Gibson is now MLB's all-time career leader in batting average, slugging percentage and on-base plus slugging percentage, and he holds the all-time single-season records in all three of those categories. These historic changes to long-held baseball records follow an evaluation by the independent Negro Leagues Statistical Review Committee, whose public report is now available.

Today's announcement is the first major step that makes the achievements of the players of the Negro Leagues available to fans via the official historical record. The statistics of more than 2,300 Negro Leagues ballplayers from 1920-1948 – including this era's three living Negro Leagues players: **Bill Greason**, age 99; Hall of Famer **Willie Mays**, 93; and **Ron Teasley**, 97 – launch today in a newly integrated MLB.com database ([career records here](#) and [season records here](#)) that combines seven different Negro Leagues from 1920-1948 along with the American League, the National League and other major leagues in history. This effort will allow fans to view the statistics and records of Negro Leagues alumni as easily as all other historical Major League players.



In addition, Hall of Famers like **Mays, Willard Brown, Roy Campanella, Larry Doby, Monte Irvin, Minnie Miñoso, Satchel Paige** and **Jackie Robinson** are among the many players whose career statistics will now officially include their accomplishments in the Negro Leagues. For example:

- Miñoso's 150 hits with the New York Cubans from 1946-1948 lift his career total over the 2,000 hits milestone to 2,113.
- Robinson's 49 hits for the 1945 Kansas City Monarchs boost his career hits total from 1,518 to 1,567.
- Mays' 10 additional hits with the 1948 Birmingham Black Barons increase his career hits total from 3,283 to 3,293.
- Paige's career wins total increases from 28 to 124 total, reflecting his long Negro Leagues career.

Experts estimate that the available Negro Leagues records between 1920-1948 are nearly 75% complete. Future findings by the Seamheads Negro Leagues Database and other baseball researchers may result in additional modifications to the game's all-time leaderboards.

Among the changes to [single-season records](#) are:

- **BATTING AVERAGE:** **Josh Gibson's** .466 batting average for the 1943 Homestead Grays is now the highest mark in Major League history, followed by fellow Negro Leagues standout **Charlie "Chino" Smith**, who hit .451 for the 1929 New York Lincoln Giants. These two batting averages now eclipse the .440 by Hall of Famer Hugh Duffy in 1894.
- **SLUGGING:** Four slugging marks now eclipse the .863 by Barry Bonds in 2001. They were by **Josh Gibson** in 1937 (.974); Hall of Famer **Mule Suttles** in 1926 (.877); **Gibson** in 1943 (.871); and **Charlie "Chino" Smith** in 1929 (.870).
- **ON-BASE PERCENTAGE:** **Josh Gibson** (.564 in 1943) and **Charlie "Chino" Smith** (.551 in 1929) enter the top five in a category led by Barry Bonds, who posted a .609 OBP in 2004. Gibson is in 3<sup>rd</sup> place and Smith is 4<sup>th</sup>.
- **ON-BASE PLUS SLUGGING (OPS):** Two **Josh Gibson** seasons (1.474 in 1937 and 1.435 in 1943) will now lead the all-time category, surpassing the previous mark held by Barry Bonds (1.421 in 2004).
- **EARNED RUN AVERAGE:** **Satchell Paige** now ranks third with his 1.01 ERA for the 1944 Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro American League (note that Dutch Leonard, with his 0.96 ERA for the 1914 Boston Red Sox, holds the record since ERA became an official stat in 1912 for the National League and 1913 for the American League; prior to 1912-13, Hall of Famer Tim Keefe recorded a 0.86 ERA for the 1880 Troy Trojans).

Among the changes to [career leaderboards](#) are:

- **BATTING AVERAGE:** **Josh Gibson** now holds the all-time lead with a .372 average in 2,255 at-bats, surpassing Hall of Famer Ty Cobb's career .367 batting average. Hall of Famers **Oscar Charleston** (.363), **Jud Wilson** (.350), **Turkey Stearnes** (.348) and **Buck Leonard** (.345) join him in the 10.
- **SLUGGING:** **Josh Gibson** (.718), **Mule Suttles** (.621), **Turkey Stearnes** (.616) and **Oscar Charleston** (.614) all enter top 10 of a category formerly led by Hall of Famer Babe Ruth (.690).
- **ON-BASE PERCENTAGE:** **Josh Gibson** now ranks third all-time at .459 in a category led by Hall of Famer Ted Williams (.482). Gibson is joined in the top 10 by fellow Hall of Famers and Negro Leagues legends **Buck Leonard** (.452), **Oscar Charleston** (.449) and **Jud Wilson** (.434).
- **ON-BASE PLUS SLUGGING (OPS):** This category is now led by **Josh Gibson** (1.177), ahead of Hall of Famer Babe Ruth (1.164). **Oscar Charleston** (1.063), **Buck Leonard** (1.042), **Turkey Stearnes** (1.033) and **Mule Suttles** (1.031) all enter the top 10 as well.
- **EARNED RUN AVERAGE:** The top mark by a Negro Leagues pitcher is by **Dave Brown**, who posted a 2.24 ERA in 711.0 IP from 1920 to 1925, ranking eighth all-time.

Larry Lester, a Baseball historian and Negro Leagues expert who served on the Negro Leagues Statistical Review Committee, said: "Stories, folklore and embellished truths have long been a staple of the Negro Leagues narrative. Those storylines will always be entertaining, but now our dialogues can be quantified and qualified to support the authentic greatest of these athletes. Every fan should welcome this statistical restitution towards social reparation."

Phil Dixon, a Baseball researcher, author and Negro Leagues expert who served on the Negro Leagues Statistical Review Committee, said: "Working with this expert group of baseball historians has been an honor. This is a great effort. There is so much work to be done and so many stories to be told through the numbers, the articles and the box scores – found and yet to be found. The future of Black men in baseball has never looked brighter."

John Thorn, the Official Historian of Major League Baseball who chaired the Negro Leagues Statistical Review Committee, said: "Shortened Negro League schedules, interspersed with revenue-raising exhibition games, were born of MLB's exclusionary practices. To deny the best Black players of the era their rightful place among all-time leaders would be a double penalty."

John Labombarda, the Director of Research for MLB's Official Statistician, the Elias Sports Bureau, and a committee member, said: "Being on the Negro Leagues Statistical Review Committee was one of the most interesting, challenging and rewarding projects I have ever worked on in my 44 years at the Elias Sports Bureau."

Previous major leagues recognized as of the Special Baseball Records Committee (SBRC) rulings of 1969 included the National League, 1876 to the present; the American League, 1901 to the present; the American Association, 1882–91; the Union Association, 1884; the Players' League, 1890; and the Federal League, 1914–15. On December 16, 2020, MLB corrected a longtime error in the game's history by adding the Negro Leagues to the list above, which did not result from the 1969 SBRC process.

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# THE NEGRO LEAGUES

