

# Robinson, Jackie,



*Jackie Robinson, 1946*

UPI

byname of JACK ROOSEVELT ROBINSON (b. Jan. 31, 1919, Cairo, Ga., U.S.--d. Oct. 24, 1972, Stamford, Conn.), first black baseball player in the U.S. major leagues during the 20th century, an infielder and outfielder for the Brooklyn Dodgers of the National League from 1947 through 1956. He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

Reared in Pasadena, Calif., Robinson became an outstanding all-around athlete at Pasadena Junior College and the University of California at Los Angeles. He excelled in football, basketball, and track as well as baseball. Robinson withdrew from U.C.L.A. in his third year to help his mother care for the family. In 1942 he entered the U.S. Army, attended officer candidate school, was commissioned a second lieutenant in 1943, and received a medical discharge in 1945. He then played professional football in Hawaii and baseball with the Kansas City Monarchs of the [Negro National League](#).

On Oct. 23, 1945, Robinson and pitcher John Wright, also black, were signed by Branch Rickey, president of the Brooklyn club, to play on a Dodger farm team, the Montreal Royals of the International League.

Robinson led that league in batting average in 1946 and was brought up to play for Brooklyn in 1947. He was an immediate success. Leading the National League in stolen bases, he was chosen rookie of the year. In 1949 he won the batting championship with a .342 average and was voted the league's most valuable player. His career average was .311. As a base runner, Robinson unnerved opposing pitchers and terrorized infielders who had to try to prevent his stealing bases. After retiring from baseball early in 1957, Robinson engaged in business. His autobiography, *I Never Had It Made*, was published in 1972.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Greatest Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (1983, reissued 1993); David Falkner, *Great Time Coming: The Life of Jackie Robinson, from Baseball to Birmingham* (1995).