



The Smithsonian Associates
Discovery Theater

and



Class Acts

present

Black Diamond!

Satchel Paige and the Negro Leagues

An original musical by Raquis Da'Juan Petree



A Reproducible Learning Guide for Teachers

This learning guide is designed to help you and your students enjoy, prepare for, and discuss *Black Diamond! Satchel Paige and the Negro Leagues*. It contains background information, discussion questions, vocabulary and activities.

About the Show

This original musical play with four performers traces the history of the Negro Leagues from Civil War-era ball player Fleet Walker, to Jackie Robinson, who broke into the Major Leagues in 1947. The wisecracking Satchel Paige serves as host. Through song, dance, and humor, young audiences learn about early African-American baseball stars—and have fun!

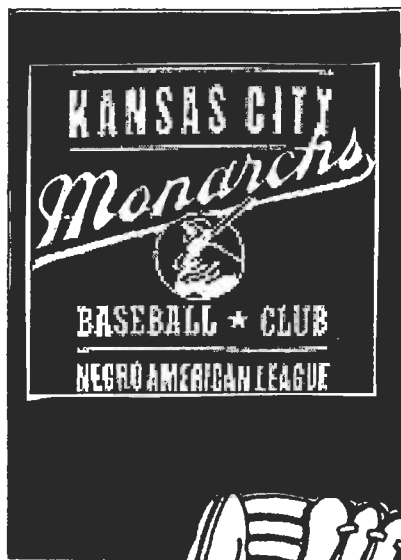
Meet Satchel Paige

Leroy "Satchel" Paige was born in Mobile, Alabama in 1906, the sixth of twelve children. His father was a gardener and his mother was a domestic worker. Some say Paige got his nickname while he was working as a baggage porter. He could carry so many suitcases (or **satchels**) at one time that he looked like a "satchel tree."

At the age of 12, a **truant officer** caught Paige skipping school and stealing. As punishment, he was sent to **industrial school**. This experience turned out well. "It got me away from the bums," he said later. "It gave me a chance to polish up my baseball game. It gave me some schooling I'd of never taken if I wasn't made to go to class."

WHAT WERE THE NEGRO LEAGUES?

"**The Negro Leagues**" refers to African-American baseball teams that competed between 1880 and 1955. During this period, African-Americans were **barred from playing on white teams**, so they formed their own leagues. African-American fans took pride in the players' skills and looked forward to exhibition games between the Negro Leagues and the all-white Major League players.



PITCHING AND BARNSTORMING

Satchel Paige pitched his first Negro League game in 1924 with the semi-pro Mobile Tigers ball club. After a stretch with the Pittsburgh Crawfords, he went to the Kansas City Monarchs, helping them win half a dozen pennants between 1939-1948. In 1934, Paige won 104 out of 105 games.

In the off-season, Satchel Paige would **barnstorm** as a solo player, appearing independently as a kind of sports personality and sitting in with other teams. For a fee of \$500-\$2000, his appearance would guarantee a full house for small town teams. Paige was a sensation in his time—the most popular and celebrated player of the Negro Leagues. Over his career, he "performed" for crowds estimated to total **10 million** in the U.S., Caribbean, and Central America

NAME THAT BALL!

Satchel Paige amazed fans with his wide variety of pitches. Each had its own name: the "**Trouble ball**," the "**Bee ball**," the "**Jump ball**," the "**Long Tom**" and the "**Two-hump blooper!**" Most famous of all his pitches was the "**Hesitation Pitch**," where he fooled the batter by touching his left foot to the ground just before the throw.

After several recordbreaking years in the Negro Leagues, Paige was finally **signed to play in the Major Leagues in 1948**. (Jackie Robinson, the first African-American player in the Majors, had joined the year before.) At age 42, Paige was the oldest "rookie" to enter the Major Leagues, playing for the Cleveland Indians. In September 1965, at the age of 59, he became the oldest ever to pitch in the professional sport.

In 1971, Satchel Paige was the very first player of the Negro Leagues to be elected into the **National Baseball Hall of Fame**. A groundbreaker and a sports legend, he died in 1982 at age 75.



"Satchel Sez"

Satchel Paige was famous for his wisdom and humor. Here's a sample:

"Age is a case of mind over matter.
If you don't mind, it don't matter."

"Work like you don't need the money.
Love like you've never been hurt.
Dance like nobody's watching."

What do you think he meant?

Other Negro League Greats

There are many notable athletes in the history of the Negro Leagues. In *Black Diamond*, you will meet:

Moses "Fleet" Walker

The first African-American player in the 19th-century Major Leagues, Walker played for the Toledo Blue Stockings in 1884 before the creation of the Negro Leagues. He and several other African-American players were gradually forced off teams as white players and owners restricted and then eliminated African-American involvement. More than just an athlete, Walker attended Oberlin College and the University of Michigan. He studied Greek, Latin, German, French, civil engineering, zoology, astronomy, and chemistry, wrote a book, and published a newspaper, the *Equator*.

Position: Catcher, Outfield, 1st Base

League: Major Leagues

Teams: Toledo Blue Stockings

Played: 1883-1889

Andrew "Rube" Foster

Foster was a pitcher, a team manager, and founder of the Negro National League, which started in 1920. He was known for his powerful, accurate screwball pitch, and his ability as a manager was equally impressive. Foster was voted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1981.

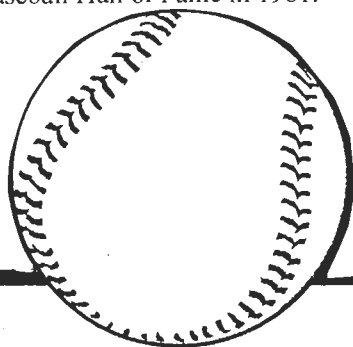
Position: Pitcher

League: Negro Leagues

Teams: Leland Giants,
Chicago American Giants,

Career dates: 1902-1930

Honors: Baseball Hall of
Fame, 1981



Josh Gibson

Perhaps the Negro Leagues' most prominent power hitter, Gibson was called "the Black Babe Ruth." Known for his kindness and easy-going personality, he was also a courageous batter, never flinching when a pitch came too close. He hit numerous home runs with incredible strength and control. Sadly, Gibson died soon after his 35th birthday.

Position: Catcher, Outfield, 3rd Base, 1st Base

League: Negro Leagues

Teams: Homestead Grays, Pittsburgh Crawfords

Played: 1929-1946

Honors: Baseball Hall of Fame, 1972

Jackie Robinson

The first African-American recruited to play in the modern Major Leagues, Robinson joined the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947. An excellent all-round athlete, Robinson's experience in college at UCLA and serving in the military set him apart from most other Negro Leaguers, who had little or no experience outside of segregated society. He played an important role in the Civil Rights movement, declaring that "The right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time."

Position: 1st Base, 2nd Base, 3rd Base, Shortstop

League: Negro Leagues, Major Leagues

Teams: Kansas City Monarchs, Brooklyn Dodgers

Played: 1944-1956

Highlights: 137 home runs, 197 stolen bases, .311 batting average

Honors: First African-American inducted into Baseball Hall of Fame, 1962. (His number, 42, was retired from Major League Baseball in 1988.)

For more about Jackie Robinson, see memory.loc.gov/ammem/jrhtml/jrabout.html, an on-line exhibit from the Library of Congress.

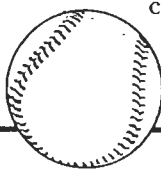
ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT: RAQUIS DA'JUAN PETREE

If it happens in a theater, chances are Raquis Petree has done it! This gifted young playwright, dancer, choreographer and director graduated from Washington's Duke Ellington School of the Arts, then went on to study musical theatre and theatre dance at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City. A nominee for Best Emerging New Artist in the District of Columbia Mayor's Arts Award in 1997, Raquis has been featured on BET News, NewsChannel 8 and in *The Washington Post* as an up-and-coming director and choreographer in the Washington metro area.

As an educator, Raquis has worked with classical dance master Jacques D'Amboise, founder of the the National

Dance Institute, an organization dedicated to bringing the unique joy and motivational rewards of dance to public school children. Raquis is now artistic director of the NDI in Washington, DC and associate artistic director of the NDI's Trenton, NJ summer residency. Ever busy, he also serves as choreographer for BET's *Urban Nation* and as guest choreographer/director at the Duke Ellington and Sidwell Friends Schools. He has recently returned from a five-country European tour as the choreographer for the D.C. Boys Choir.

Raquis' original musical productions range from *Hansel and Gretel* and *the Witch*, a contemporary re-telling of the classic tale, to a riveting look at modern urban life, *Something to Shout About*. *Black Diamond!* is one of a series of children's musicals Raquis has written for the Smithsonian. Others include *Nat Love of the Wild*, *Wild West* and *Freedom's Child: Ruby Bridges and the Children of the Integration Struggle*.



Discovery Theater presents *Black Diamond*

Activities!

Your Family in Sports

Every family has a **hidden sports history**. Uncover yours!

Be a sports reporter. **"Interview"** your parents, your grandparents, your aunts and uncles. **Ask them:**

- What sports have you played?
- When did you play them? Whom did you play with?
- What sport was your favorite? What did you like about it? Do you still play it?
- What sport did you like the least? Why?
- Have the sports that you play changed over the years?
- Do you have any funny stories about playing sports?

Write down the answers so you can share the memories with your friends! Then make a poster: "My Family's Greatest (or Funniest) Moments in Sports!"

With the rest of your class, bind the stories and the posters into a big book—**Great Moments in Sports History**.

FOR OLDER AUDIENCES: POST-SHOW DISCUSSION

Prejudice and Sports

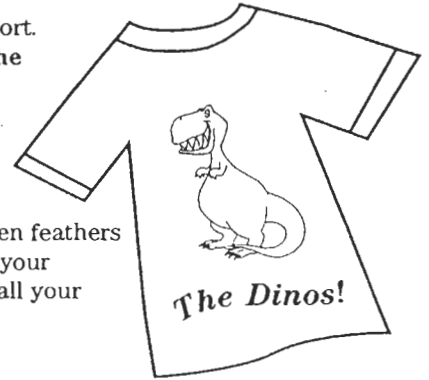
As a class, focus on the many aspects of professional athletics, privilege and prejudice. Remember, there are many opinions: students should not feel they have to reach a consensus. It is important to stimulate critical thinking, and individuals can be encouraged to participate without reaching a set outcome or conclusion.

- Review the types of prejudice suffered by the Negro League players. Was it better or worse after Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier by joining the Major Leagues in 1947?
- Do you think that athletes experience prejudice in sports today? How has the situation progressed? How is this attitude still in place?
- Can you think of other athletes who broke the color barrier in other sports?
- What can you do about this situation in today's sports? How can you use the example of Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Rube Foster and Jackie Robinson and Branch Richey (the man who hired Jackie Robinson to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers) as models of different responses to racial inequities?

Design your Own Baseball Uniform!

When Satchel Paige went out barnstorming, he wore a special homemade uniform with his name, "Satchel," sewn on the chest.

- Create your own personal barnstorming **"look"**!
- Choose your favorite sport. **Draw the outline of the uniform** on a piece of paper. (Don't forget the socks, hat, and shoes!)



- **Decorate** your uniform with markers, glitter, even feathers or sequins. Don't forget your name—in big letters so all your fans can see!

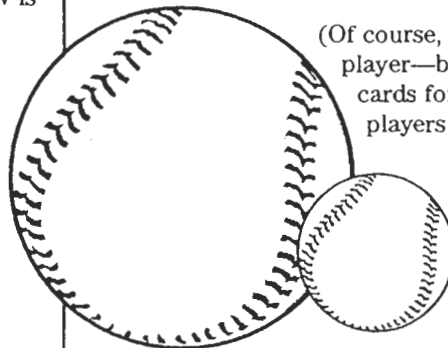
Or...

- **Get the team spirit!** Pick a sport, a team name and team colors. Choose a mascot (an animal or creature that represents your team).
- **"Recruit"** all your favorite people to be on the team! **Draw them** in your team uniforms. Anything goes. If you want, draw stripes on the shirts, checks on the socks, and flowers on the shoes!

- **Create a card** to go along with your team. Use a baseball card or some other collector's card as a model. Draw or paste your picture on the front. On the back, write a short account of **your rise to fame** and list statistics or other information that fans should know. You decide what's important!



(Of course, **you're** the star player—but you can make cards for all the other players if you want!)



Additional Resources

- www.blackbaseball.com—offers bios of many notable African-American baseball players.
- www.usd230.k12.ks.us/NLBM/lessonplans/lessonplans.htm—lesson plans from the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and other resources for teachers. The site includes an audio interview with Satchel's son, Warren Paige.
- www.projectview.org/bbhoflessons.htm—a wealth of student activities and lesson plans relating to African-American and other minority players, courtesy of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.
- www.baseballhalloffame.org/hofers_and_honorees/hofer_bios/paige_satchel.htm—the Baseball Hall of Fame's bio of Satchel Paige. Site includes info on baseball history and other hall-of-famers.
- www.cmgww.com/baseball/paige/paige.html—the official Satchel Paige web site.
- Holway, John B. *The Complete Book of Baseball's Negro Leagues*. Meckler Books, 2000. An exhaustive reference: 478 pages for those who want to know everything about the Negro Leagues.
- Humphrey, Kathryn Long. *Satchel Paige*. Franklin Watts, 1988. An in-depth look for ages 10 & up.
- Margolies, Jacob. *The Negro Leagues: The Story of Black Baseball*. Franklin Watts, 1993. Profiles the leading figures in black baseball, with accounts of some of their greatest games. Grades 7 & up.
- McKissack & McKissack. *Black Diamond: The Story of the Negro Baseball Leagues*. Scholastic, Inc., 1994. A detailed history, plus easy-reference features: time line, thumbnail biographies of dozens of players, etc. Ages 9–12.
- McKissack & McKissack. *Satchel Paige: The Best Arm in Baseball*. Enslow Publishers, Incorporated, 1992. Basic bio for ages 4–8.
- Paige, Leroy Satchel & David Lipman. *Maybe I'll Pitch Forever: A Great Baseball Player Tells the Hilarious Story behind the Legend*. University of Nebraska Press, 1993. Paige's autobiography (for older readers).
- Cline-Ransome, Lesa, and James E. Ransome. *Satchel Paige*. Simon & Schuster, 2000. Beautiful illustrations, saturated with color, in a biography for ages 6 & up.
- Riley, James A. *The Biographical Encyclopedia of the Negro Baseball Leagues*. Carroll & Graf Publishers, Inc., 2002. A landmark reference book for all ages.
- Ritter, Lawrence S. *Leagues Apart: The Men and Times of the Negro Baseball Leagues*. Morrow Junior Books, 1995. Vibrantly illustrated introduction for readers 6 & up.

Vocabulary of Key Words

- **Barnstorming**—traveling across the country to showcase one's talents.
- **Industrial school**—a school specializing in teaching industrial skills (or a public institution of this kind for juvenile delinquents).
- **Inning**—one of nine divisions or periods of a regulation baseball game, in which each team has a turn at bat as limited by three outs.
- **Mound**—the small hill or circle of dirt on the baseball field from where the pitcher throws the ball.
- **Pennant**—1. A flag that serves as the emblem of the championship in a professional baseball league. 2. the yearly championship in such a league.
- **Satchel**—a small bag for books or clothing, often having a shoulder strap.
- **Truant Officer**—a school attendance officer



Black Diamond was originally commissioned by Discovery Theater, the Smithsonian Institution's theater for children, as part of its commitment to offer the best in live educational performing arts for young people. Each year, more than 50,000 Washington-area children and their adults visit Discovery Theater in the SI's S. Dillon Ripley Center next to the Castle on the National Mall to explore American history and cultures, folk tales from around the world, and exciting, accessible science and math programs. Discovery Theater performances unite ideologies, enact themes that reflect the diversity of its audiences, open avenues of self-reflection, and offer an enjoyable means for parents and teachers to demonstrate life's lessons.

To book this show, please contact: Class Acts Arts, Inc., P.O. Box 3580, Silver Spring, MD 20918 • Phone: 301-588-7525 • email: info.classacts@verizon.net • www.classactsarts.org

Learning Guide text: Daniel Eduardo Hickman, Discovery Theater; Cheryl Fox, Library of Congress; Anne Stewart O'Donnell, Discovery Theater

Graphics: Laurie McDonald

Discovery Theater Director: Roberta Gasbarre

Discovery Theater

202-357-1500

disc-th@tsa.si.edu

www.DiscoveryTheater.org

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