Learning Guide:
This handout is designed to help you and your students enjoy, prepare for, and discuss Black Diamond! Satchel Paige & the Negro Baseball Leagues. Inside you will find background information, an introduction to our co-sponsors, The Library of Congress and The Smithsonian Associates Discovery Theater, and activities for students.

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★ About our Co-sponsors
★ Raquis Da’Juan Petree
★ Biographies of the Players
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About Our Co-Sponsors:

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, with more than 120 million items on approximately 530 miles of bookshelves. The collections include more than 18 million books, 2.5 million recordings, 12 million photographs, 4.5 million maps, and 54 million manuscripts. Founded in 1800, and the oldest federal cultural institution in the nation, it is the research arm of the United States Congress and is recognized as the national library of the United States.

When you visit the Library of Congress you can expect to find comic books, baseball cards, some of your favorite television programs, motion pictures, the latest music recordings, newspapers from all over the world, street maps, even the contents of Abraham Lincoln’s pockets the night he was assassinated.

Online Exhibit at LC

Baseball, the Color Line, and Jackie Robinson

http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/jrhtml/jrabout.html

This Web site reference aid was created to commemorate Jackie Robinson’s achievements and describe some aspects of the color line’s development and the Negro Leagues. Robinson became the first African American in the twentieth century to play baseball in the major leagues when he stepped onto Ebbets field on April 15th, 1947 -- breaking the “color line,” a segregation practice dating to the nineteenth century. Robinson was an extremely talented, multi-sport athlete and a courageous man who played an active role in civil rights. This aid also illustrates how historical collection materials located throughout the Library of Congress can be drawn together to tell a story.

The Smithsonian Associate's Discovery Theater, located in the Arts and Industries Building on the National Mall, is dedicated to offering the best in live performing arts for young people. Each season more than a dozen productions feature puppets, storytellers, dancers, actors, musicians, and mimes in performances that present classic stories for children, folk tales from all over the world, American history and cultures, and innovative theater techniques. Some productions, such as Black Diamond! are written specially for Discovery Theater. Often interactive, Discovery Theater performances unite ideologies, enact themes that reflect the diversity of its audiences, open avenues of self-reflection, and are enjoyable means for parents and teachers to demonstrate life’s lessons.

Discovery Theater
Smithsonian Institution
Arts & Industries Building
900 Jefferson Drive, S.W.
Phone (202) 357-1500, Fax (202) 357-2588
Email: disc-th@tsa.si.edu

Meet Raquis Da’Juan Petree

Raquis Da’Juan Petree is an actor, dancer, choreographer, writer, and director of theater and musical performances. He graduated from the Duke Ellington School for the Arts where he focused on Performing Arts and Producing; and studied Musical Theater and Theater Dance at the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York City.

Black Diamond is part of a series of musical, theatrical performances Raquis is working on called “The Greatest Stories Never Told.” Upcoming in the series is “Children of Struggle,” which tells the story of Ruby Bridges and other courageous children who played important roles in the Civil Rights Movement.
Meet Satchel Paige

Leroy Robert Paige was born in Mobile, Alabama on July 7, 1906, the sixth of twelve children. His father was a gardener and his mother was a domestic worker. Some say Leroy “Satchel” Paige got his nickname while working in Mobile, Alabama as a baggage porter. He could carry so many bags or satchels, all at one time, that he looked like a “satchel tree.”

At the age of 12 a truant officer caught him skipping school and stealing. As punishment, Paige was sent to industrial school. Paige said, “It got me away from the bums. 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.”

He was a superb athlete throughout his career in the Negro Leagues, from his debut in 1924 with the semi-pro Mobile Tigers Ball Club, to a stretch with the Pittsburgh Crawfords, and to the Kansas City Monarchs, where he helped them win half a dozen pennants from 1939-48. In 1934, Paige won 104 of 105 games. In 1934, Paige won 104 of 105 games.

In the off-season, Paige would barnstorm as a solo player (appearing independently as a kind of sports personality) sitting in with other teams. For a fee of $500-$2000, his appearance would guarantee a full house for small town teams. He was a sensation in his time – the most popular and celebrated player of the Negro Leagues. Everyone was amazed at his wide variety of pitches. He told Baltimore Afro-American sportswriter Sam Lacy he had pitches, “I ain’t even showed yet.” He called them “bloopers, loopers, and droopers . . . I got a jump ball, a screw ball, a be ball, a wobbly ball, a whipsy-dipsy, a nothin’ ball, and a bat dodger.” But the most famous of all his pitches was the “hesitation pitch,” where he would touch his foot on the mound before the pitch. Satchel told Lacy, “Some of the umpires have been saying they’re going to call a balk on me if I throw my ‘hesitation’ with a man on third. I guess if they do, that’ll just have to be all right. But it won’t be no balk.

The rules say a balk is a pitch that fools the base runner. If I wind up, the base runner knows I can’t throw to catch him so I got to throw home. So when I wind up with my ‘hesitation,’ I ain’t fooling the runner, I’m fooling the batter. Ain’t that what a pitcher’s supposed to do?”

After playing spectacularly for years in the Negro Leagues, he was finally signed to play in the Major Leagues in 1948. At age 42, Paige was the oldest “rookie” to enter the Major Leagues, playing for the Cleveland Indians. Paige was also the first African American pitcher to win a game in the Major Leagues. In September 1965, at the age of 59, he became the oldest baseball player ever to pitch in the professional sport.

In 1971, Satchel Paige was the very first Negro Leagues player to be elected into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

Position: Pitcher, Coach
League: Negro Leagues, Major Leagues
Teams: Pittsburgh Crawfords, Kansas City Monarchs, St. Louis Browns, Cleveland Indians
Career Dates: 1930 - 1965
Batting Avg.: not given
Honors: First Negro Leagues baseball player inducted into Baseball Hall of Fame, 1971.

What's Your Average?

It is difficult to compare the ability of Negro Baseball Leagues (NBL) players with Major League players because the two leagues played their seasons separately and only met at barnstorming or exhibition games. In addition, statistics for NBL players are incomplete.

One important way to measure a baseball player’s ability is figuring out his batting average. You can find out your favorite player’s average, or figure out your own, by using division. Just divide the player’s number of hits by the number of times at bat.

Say your favorite player got a hit three times in his last ten times at bat. Divide three by ten, which can also be written as 3/10, or .300.

**Negro Leagues Baseball**

The Negro Leagues refers to African American baseball teams that competed between 1880 and 1955. During the era of segregation based upon skin color, also called the Jim Crow era, African Americans were barred from playing on white teams, so they created their own teams and leagues. African Americans took great pride in the players' skills and looked forward to exhibition games between Negro Leagues and Major League players.

During **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, including his brother Weldy, were gradually forced off teams as players and owners restricted and then eliminated African American involvement in the sport. Fleet was the last African American playing in the Major Leagues when he retired from baseball in 1889.

**Position:** Catcher, Outfield, 1st Base  
**League:** Major Leagues  
**Teams:** Toledo Blue Stockings  
**Career Dates:** 1883-1889  
**Batting Avg.:** not given

Andrew “Rube” Foster

Foster was a pitcher, team manager and founder of the Negro National League, which began in 1920. His screwball pitch was said to be very powerful and accurate. Foster's ability as a manager was equally impressive. He signed pitcher “Smokey” Joe Williams, later with the Grays, to his Leland Giants in 1910.

**Position:** Pitcher  
**League:** Negro Leagues  
**Teams:** Chicago American Giants, Leland Giants  
**Career Dates:** 1902-1930  
**Batting Avg.:** not given  
**Honors:** Baseball Hall of Fame, 1981

Josh Gibson

Gibson was called the “Black Babe Ruth,” and was one of the Negro Leagues' most prominent power hitters. He was known as a courageous hitter, never flinching when a pitch came too close. His numerous home runs were hit with incredible strength and control. He died soon after his 35th birthday.

**Position:** Catcher, Outfield, 3rd Base, 1st Base  
**League:** Negro Leagues  

**Teams:** Homestead Grays, Pittsburgh Crawfords  
**Career Dates:** 1929-1946  
**Batting Avg.:** not given  
**Honors:** Baseball Hall of Fame, 1972

Jackie Robinson

The first African American to be recruited by, and play for a modern Major League team. Brooklyn Dodgers president Branch Rickey signed Robinson to a minor league contract in 1945; Robinson’s first season with the Dodgers was 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 of the time, who had little or no experience outside of segregated society. Robinson played an important role in the Civil Rights Movement. He stated: “The right of every American to first-class citizenship is the most important issue of our time.”

**Position:** 1st Base, 2nd Base, Shortstop, 3rd Base  
**League:** Negro Leagues, Major Leagues  
**Teams:** Kansas City Monarchs, Dodger’s Montreal Farm Team and Brooklyn Dodgers  
**Career Dates:** 1944-1956  
**Batting Avg.:** .311, 137 home runs, 197 stolen bases  

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**Be a Sports Reporter**

The reports that newspapermen Sam Lacy, of the Baltimore Afro-American, and Wendell Smith, of the Pittsburgh Courier, wrote about the Negro Leagues played a crucial role in desegregating Major League Baseball. Long before any Major League owner seriously considered recruiting an African American player, Lacy and Smith let their readers know that the stars of the Negro Leagues – Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Monte Irvin, Buck Leonard, and many others – matched the ability of any player from the Major Leagues.

The next time you watch a game, write down what you think are the highlights, record the final score, and pick the outstanding players from each team. Then read the next day’s newspaper to see how the game was described. Finally, write your own story to share with your class or
Resources for Teachers:

Books:
Satchel Paige (as told to David Lipman), *Maybe I’ll Pitch Forever*. Lincoln, Ne.: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.

On Line:
*Baseball, the Color Line, and Jackie Robinson*. On line exhibit at American Memory created in honor of the 50th anniversary of Jackie Robinson’s rookie season for the Brooklyn Dodgers. memory.loc.gov/ammem/jrhtml/jrabout.html


*National Baseball Hall of Fame*
www.projectview.org/bbhoflessons.htm

*Negro Leagues Baseball*
www.negroleaguebaseball.com

Vocabulary of Key Words

**Barnstorming** - traveling across the country to showcase ones talents.

**Baggage Porter** - person who carries baggage for tips.

**Industrial School** - a school specializing in the teaching of industrial arts (or a public institution of this kind for juvenile delinquents).

**Inning** - one of nine divisions or periods of a regulation game, in which each team has a turn at bat that is limited by three outs.

**Migration** - the movement of people from one country, place, or locality to another.

**Mound** - the hill, or circle of dirt on the baseball field from where the pitcher throws the ball.

**Pennant** - the annual championship in a baseball league; also the flag that is awarded to the winner of such a championship.

**Satchel** - a bag for carrying books or clothing, often having a shoulder strap.

**Truant Officer** - a school attendance officer.
Reading List for Students:


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