

PEOPLE IN SPORTS

IS ORGANIZED NEGRO BASEBALL ON THE WAY OUT?

One of the biggest controversies in organized baseball is rapidly solving itself. The bitterly fought problem of segregation is virtually a thing of the past. By sheer ability, Negro players have broken down the color line: this season 14 are playing on five major league teams and at least seven others are having a chance to prove themselves with the minors.

As a consequence, all-Negro teams have been seriously weakened as their top stars moved on to the big leagues. Now that the full effect of this drain is making itself felt, the question of whether organized Negro baseball should be abandoned is being argued in sports circles.

On one side of the controversy are anti-segregation sports fans. They argue that the principle of all-Negro teams is as objectionable and out-dated as the system of all-white teams. Negro baseball, the reasoning runs, is a child of segregation, conceived because Negro players could not play elsewhere. Now, with no longer any excuse for existence, it simply perpetuates the principle of segregation, and should be abolished.

On the other side of the dispute are most Negro team owners, players, and sportswriters, who are also opposed to segregation. But they maintain that Negro baseball today has a new role: developing rookies for the major leagues. They point out that although segregation is fast disappearing, the barrier is still up in most of the minors and in semi-pro leagues, particularly in the South. So young players need the Negro clubs.

Wendell Smith of the Chicago *Herald-American* told PEOPLE TODAY, "The sale of young

Top Teams In Negro American League . . .

Since organized baseball abandoned its color line barrier, only one Negro league of national importance has continued to flourish. The Negro American League includes these teams: Baltimore Elites; Birmingham Black Barons; Chicago American Giants; Indianapolis Clowns; Kansas City Monarchs; Memphis Red Sox; New Orleans Eagles; Philadelphia Stars. These 8 are playing a regular schedule this season. Other leagues include the Southern Negro, the Texas, and the Southwestern.

. . . Top Negro Players In Major Leagues

Fans are seeing more Negro stars than ever before playing on major league diamonds this year. The lineup: Dodgers, Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Dan Bankhead, Don Newcombe. New York Giants, Monte Irvin, Henry Thompson, Rafael Noble, Artie Wilson. Boston Braves, Sam Jethroe, Luis Marquez. Cleveland Indians, Larry Doby, Luke Easter, Harry Simpson. Chicago White Sox, Orestes Minosa. In the minors: Willie Mays, Bob Boyd, Sam Hairston, Curley Williams, Gene Baker, Bob Thurman, Sam Jones.

The 1951 Season Finds Major Leagues With Biggest Crop of Negro Players In History

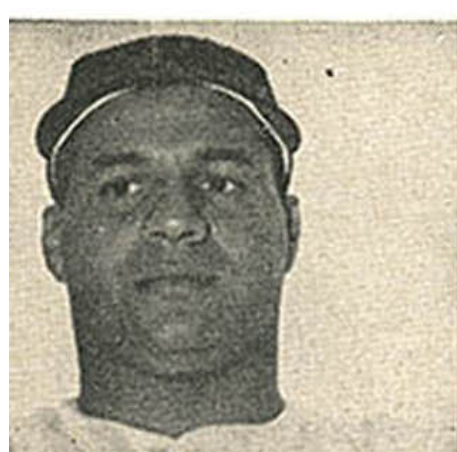
players to the major league clubs in the long run will provide Negro teams with more profits than they ever earned through attendance."

Smith agrees with Abe Saperstein, owner of the famed Harlem Globetrotters and financial backer of the NAL's Chicago American Giants, that there's another reason for continuing Negro baseball. "Negroes," Saperstein said, "are not yet accepted in organized pro clubs in the South. The NAL brings the game to the colored people in that section of the country. About 80% of NAL games are played there."

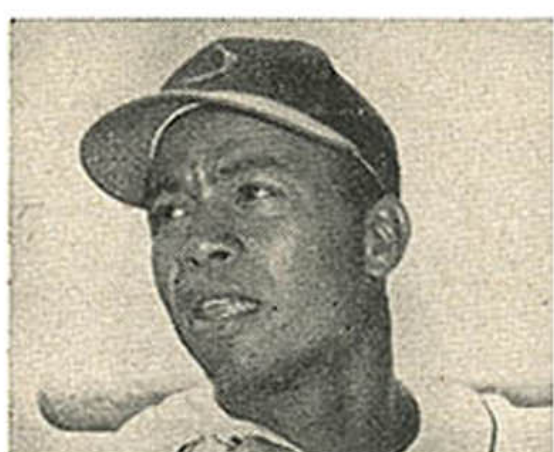
The trend, however, is toward disbandment of Negro teams where the major leagues have top Negro players—as in New York and Cleveland, where clubs disbanded last year. The end of segregation will be, in fact, the end of Negro teams.



Immortal
baseball
players:
"Satchel"
Paige &
Josh Gib-
son (r.).



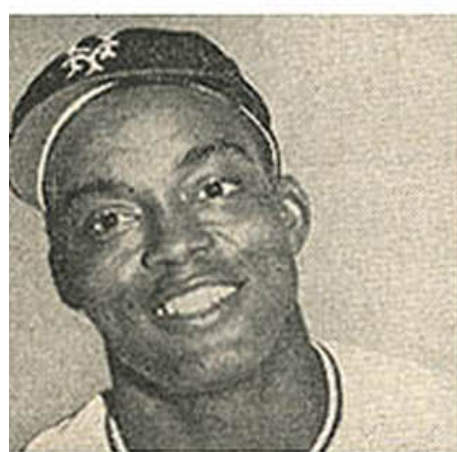
CAMPANELLA



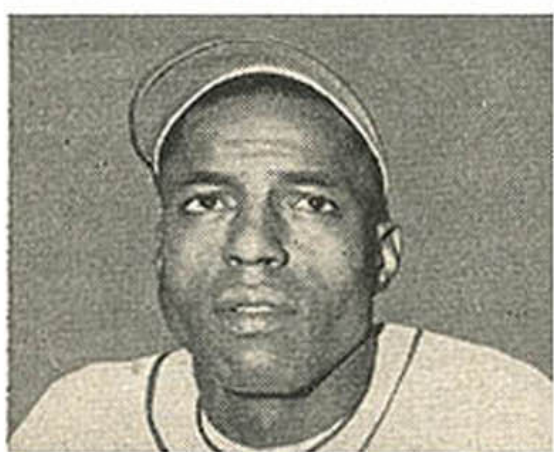
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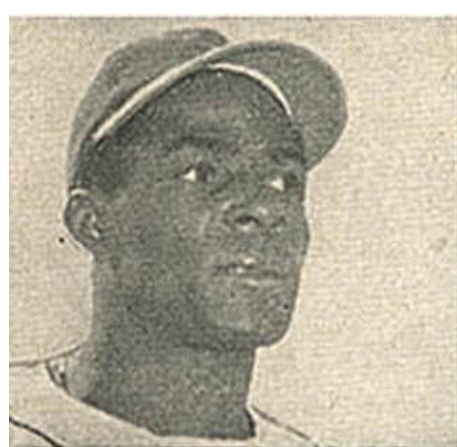
IRVIN



JETHROE



MARQUEZ



MINOSA
ROBINSON



NEWCOMBE
SIMPSON



NOBLE
THOMPSON

