

NEGRO LEAGUES NIGHT

PLAYING IN HONOR OF:



**JAMES THOMAS
"COOL PAPA"
BELL**



**NORMAN
"TURKEY"
STEARNES**



**RON
TEASLEY**



**HENRY
"HANK"
AARON**



**TONI
STONE**



**MARTÍN
DIHIGO**



**MAMIE
"PEANUT"
JOHNSON**



**JOHN JORDAN
"BUCK"
O'NEIL JR.**



**OSCAR
CHARLESTON**



**TED
"DOUBLE DUTY"
RADCLIFFE**



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“In Honor of” Lineup

Presented on Saturday, June 22, 2024, at Negro Leagues Night at Victory Field

Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe:

1. **Dual Talent Nickname:** Ted Radcliffe earned the nickname "Double Duty" from sportswriter Damon Runyon after hitting a grand slam and pitching a shutout in a doubleheader at Yankee Stadium in 1932, showcasing his exceptional skills as both a pitcher and catcher.
2. **Longest Career Span:** Radcliffe had an incredibly long baseball career, playing professionally for 36 years and making appearances in five different decades. He even became the oldest man ever to appear in a professional baseball game at age 96, throwing a pitch for the Schaumburg Flyers in 1999.
3. **Integrated Teams Pioneer:** Radcliffe managed the Bismarck Churchills in 1934, making him one of the first Black managers of an integrated baseball team. He continued to play and manage integrated teams throughout his career, including the Chicago American Giants in the 1950s.

Mamie "Peanut" Johnson:

1. **Pioneering Female Pitcher:** Mamie Johnson was one of only three women to play in the Negro Leagues and the only woman to take the mound as a pitcher. During her three seasons with the Indianapolis Clowns, she achieved an impressive pitching record of 33-8 and maintained a .270 batting average.
2. **Nickname "Peanut":** Johnson earned the nickname "Peanut" due to her small, 5-foot-3 stature and reportedly weighing only 98 pounds. Despite her size, she was known for her formidable talent on the baseball field, as noted by her teammates and opponents alike.
3. **Ceremonial MLB Draft:** In 2008, Major League Baseball honored former Black players who were excluded from the major leagues by ceremoniously drafting them into existing teams. Mamie Johnson was drafted by her local team, the Washington Nationals, recognizing her significant contributions to the sport.

John Jordan “Buck” O’Neil Jr.:

1. **Pioneer as the First Black MLB Coach:** In 1962, Buck O’Neil became the first Black coach in Major League Baseball when he was promoted to the Chicago Cubs’ major league coaching staff, breaking racial barriers and setting the stage for future generations of Black coaches in the sport.
2. **Instrumental in Creating the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum:** O’Neil was a driving force behind the establishment of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City in 1990, serving as its chairman and ensuring that the history and legacy of the Negro Leagues would be preserved and honored.
3. **Presidential Medal of Freedom Recipient:** Buck O’Neil was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2006 by President George W. Bush, recognizing his extraordinary contributions to baseball and his efforts to combat prejudice and promote equality through his work in and beyond the sport.

Toni Stone:

1. **First Woman to Play Professional Baseball in the Negro Leagues:** Toni Stone made history in 1953 when she was signed by the Indianapolis Clowns, taking the place of none other than Hank Aaron. This groundbreaking move made her the first woman to play professional baseball in the Negro Leagues.
2. **Got a Hit off Legendary Pitcher Satchel Paige:** During her career, Toni Stone demonstrated her remarkable talent by achieving a hit against legendary pitcher and future Hall of Famer Satchel Paige, a feat that highlighted her skills and earned her respect in the league.
3. **Refused to Wear a Skirt Despite Owner’s Suggestion:** When signed by the Indianapolis Clowns, owner Syd Pollock encouraged her to wear a skirt to attract more fans, but Stone refused, insisting on being taken seriously as a player and maintaining her dignity on the field.

Henry “Hank” Aaron:

1. **Record-Breaking Home Runs:** On April 8, 1974, Hank Aaron broke Babe Ruth’s long-standing record by hitting his 715th home run. He finished his career with a total of 755 home runs.
2. **Consistent Excellence:** Aaron reached remarkable milestones, including batting .300 or greater in 14 seasons, hitting 30-plus home runs in 15 seasons and achieving 90 or more RBI in 16 seasons. He also won three Gold Glove Awards and was selected for 25 All-Star Games.
3. **Unmatched Career Stats:** Aaron is baseball’s all-time leader in RBI (2,297) and total bases (6,856). Remarkably, even if his 755 home runs were removed from his record, he would still have 3,016 hits.

Martín Dihigo:

1. **Versatile Star:** Dihigo excelled in multiple positions on the field, including second base, shortstop, outfielder, third base and pitcher. His exceptional skills earned him comparisons to Joe DiMaggio for his style and grace.
2. **First No-Hitter in Mexican League:** In 1938, Dihigo made history by throwing the first no-hitter in the Mexican League, while also hitting over .300 and leading the league in strikeouts.
3. **5-Time Hall of Famer:** Dihigo is the only person to be inducted into the national Halls of Fame of Cuba, Mexico, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic and the United States, underscoring his extraordinary impact on the sport across different countries.

James Thomas “Cool Papa” Bell:

1. **Legendary Speed:** Cool Papa Bell's speed on the field is the stuff of legend, with tales like stealing multiple bases on a bunt and outrunning the lights. Satchel Paige famously quipped that Bell was so fast, he could turn off the light switch and be in bed before the room got dark.
2. **Young Pitching Prodigy:** Even though he is more well-known as an outfielder, at just 19 years old, Bell joined the St. Louis Stars as a left-handed pitcher with an impressive array of pitches. His calm demeanor and skill earned him the nickname "Cool Papa" after a key strikeout of the renowned Oscar Charleston.
3. **Championship Legacy:** Bell was a key member of three of the greatest Negro League teams in history—the St. Louis Stars, Pittsburgh Crawfords, and Homestead Grays—winning three championships with each team. Notably, the 1933 Crawfords team boasted seven future Hall of Famers, including Bell himself.

Norman “Turkey” Stearnes:

1. **Unique Nickname Origins:** Turkey Stearnes earned his nickname due to his unusual running style, which resembled a turkey's flapping arms. However, Stearnes himself claimed it was because he had a potbelly as a child.
2. **Record-Breaking All-Star:** Stearnes was a five-tool player who was selected five times to the Negro Leagues East-West All-Star Classic. During his time with the Chicago American Giants, he received more votes than any other outfielder for the first East-West All-Star Game.
3. **Versatile Powerhouse:** Known for his incredible hitting and baserunning, Stearnes led his Major Negro League in home runs seven times and is credited with 129 stolen bases. His extraordinary skills were highlighted by legends like Satchel Paige and Cool Papa Bell, who praised his power and all-around playing ability.

Ron Teasley:

1. **Negro Leagues Standout:** Ron Teasley showcased his talent in the Negro Leagues, earning an All-Star selection in the ManDak League, where he played after his brief stint in professional baseball within the Brooklyn Dodgers' farm system.
2. **Wayne State University Hall of Famer:** Teasley's athletic prowess extended beyond the baseball diamond. In 1986, he was inducted into the Wayne State University Hall of Fame for his exceptional contributions to baseball and basketball during his collegiate years.
3. **Pioneer in Integration:** Teasley was part of a significant period in baseball history, being one of the first Black players to sign with the Brooklyn Dodgers (shortly after the legendary Jackie Robinson), marking his entry into professional baseball. Integration signaled the eventual end of the Negro Leagues.

Oscar Charleston:

1. **Youthful Beginnings:** Oscar Charleston's baseball journey began at a young age when he served as a batboy for his hometown team, the Indianapolis ABCs. This early exposure to the game laid the foundation for his future success as a star center fielder.
2. **Military Baseball:** At just 15 years old, Charleston enlisted in the military and was stationed in the Philippines. During his service with the 24th Negro Infantry, he continued to play baseball, showcasing his skills on the diamond even as a teenager.
3. **Versatile Talent:** Charleston was renowned for his versatility on the baseball field. A powerful hitter with the ability to hit to all fields, he also possessed exceptional speed on the basepaths and in center field. His aggressive demeanor and strong will to win contributed to his reputation as one of the greatest players of his time. Today, he is recognized as one of the greatest players of all time.