

= Jackie Robinson Day =

Jackie Robinson Day is a traditional event which occurs annually in Major League Baseball , commemorating and honoring the day Jackie Robinson made his major league debut . April 15 was Opening Day in 1947 , Robinson 's first season in the Major Leagues . Initiated for the first time on April 15 , 2004 , Jackie Robinson Day is celebrated each year on that day . The festivity is a result of Robinson 's memorable career , best known for becoming the first black major league baseball player of the modern era in 1947 . His debut with the Brooklyn Dodgers (today known as the Los Angeles Dodgers) ended approximately eighty years of baseball segregation , also known as the baseball color line , or color barrier . He also was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962 , remembered for his services with the number 42 jersey .

The gala is celebrated at varied ballparks by Major League team players . On that one day , all players , coaches , and managers on both teams , and the umpires , wear # 42 on their jerseys .

Shea Stadium was one of the prominent venues hosting the event , having commemorated the retirement of Robinson 's number 42 jersey in 1997 . Bob DuPuy , the President and Chief Operating Officer of Major League baseball , described Jackie Robinson Day as a significance " not only for baseball , but for our country in general . "

= = History = =

= = = 2004 = = =

The first Jackie Robinson Day was on April 15 , 2004 . That day was a start to an annual tradition throughout Major League Baseball and an inspirational reminder about what happened on that day exactly fifty @-@ seven years earlier when Jackie Robinson became a Major League Baseball player . The day would be the first official league @-@ wide Jackie Robinson Day , having festivities taking place at all 13 ballparks where Major League games were scheduled to be played . Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig made the announcement with Sharon Robinson (daughter of Rachel and Jackie Robinson) .

" I have often stated that baseball 's proudest moment and its most powerful social statement came on April 15 , 1947 when Jackie Robinson first set foot on a Major League Baseball field " , said Selig . " On that day , Jackie brought down the color barrier and ushered in the era in which baseball became the true national pastime . Fifty years after that historic event , in April 1997 , I was proud to join Rachel Robinson and President Bill Clinton at Shea Stadium to honor Jackie by retiring his uniform number 42 in perpetuity . By establishing April 15 as ' Jackie Robinson Day ' throughout Major League Baseball , we are further ensuring that the incredible contributions and sacrifices he made ? for baseball and society ? will not be forgotten . "

It began that Thursday morning with Sharon Robinson , ringing the ceremonial Opening Bell at the New York Stock Exchange . Rachel Robinson (Jackie Robinson 's wife) , officials from the Major League Baseball foundation , and officials of the Jackie Robinson Foundation (JRF) took part in the special ceremony honoring Jackie Robinson . Festivities took place in the 13 ballparks that had scheduled games that day . The balls had a " 42 " logo on each of them for the games that day . Jackie Robinson Foundation scholars threw out the ceremonial first pitch prior to each game . " I 'm very happy my son is in Boston today , we 're happy that the scholars and family are at different clubs and look forward to expanding the celebration as the years go on " , Robinson said . " And also continuing to come up with creative ways to reach out to the African @-@ American community and bring them into this wonderful game of baseball that we all love . "

= = = 2005 = = =

April 15 , 2005 , was the 58th anniversary of Jackie Robinson 's major league debut . Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig officially declared that every April 15 would be designated as Jackie

Robinson Day and it would be celebrated each year throughout Major League Baseball . Every ballpark in Major League Baseball in the United States celebrated Jackie Robinson Day , unlike in 2004 when it was only celebrated in 13 ballparks . Each ballpark showed a video tribute to Robinson , and many brought out Jackie Robinson Foundation scholars onto the field before the games . In Cincinnati , Ohio , Ken Griffey , Jr. spoke of how much every African @-@ American baseball player owes Robinson , who was chosen by manager Branch Rickey to break the color line because of Robinson 's inner courage and ability to keep his temper in check .

= = = 2006 = = =

April 15 , 2006 , was the 59th anniversary of Jackie Robinson 's major league debut . Rachel Robinson attended the ceremony , having former Negro Leagues players Robert Scott and Armando Vazquez also attending the ceremony . His widow was honored and celebrated at Shea Stadium . After a video tribute on the scoreboard of Shea Stadium of Jackie Robinson , Rachel Robinson walked to the pitcher 's mound before the New York Mets hosted the Milwaukee Brewers , along with Bob DuPuy , baseball 's chief operating officer , and New York Mets manager Willie Randolph . " I 've got a picture of Jackie in my office , so I think about that every day , " Randolph said . " I 'm just happy to be a part of this day . " A large blue , gray and white circle with " 42 " on it was put over home plate representing the colors of Jackie Robinson 's uniform with the Dodgers as a major leaguer .

= = = 2007 = = =

April 15 , 2007 , was the 60th anniversary of Jackie Robinson 's major league debut , with ceremonies held at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles , California . Uniformed personnel (players , coaches and managers) were invited to wear the number 42 just for that day to commemorate Robinson . During the 2007 regular season , Ken Griffey , Jr. called Bud Selig to ask for permission to wear number 42 on Jackie Robinson Day . Griffey received special permission from Rachel Robinson to wear number 42 on Jackie Robinson Day of 2007 .

Number 42 had been retired for all Major League Baseball teams . This meant that no future Major League Baseball player could wear it . The number was retired in a ceremony which took place in 1997 at Shea Stadium to mark the 50th anniversary of Robinson 's first game with the Dodgers . (The last player to wear the Number 42 is Mariano Rivera of the New York Yankees , who retired at the end of the 2013 season) . Selig embraced the gesture and encouraged other Major League Baseball clubs to have a player wear number 42 on Jackie Robinson Day as well .

Several players thought having over 150 players wearing number 42 on Jackie Robinson Day was far too many . " This is supposed to be an honor " , Minnesota Twins outfielder Torii Hunter told USA Today , " and just a handful of guys wearing the number . Now you 've got entire teams doing it . I think we 're killing the meaning . It should be special wearing Jackie 's number , not just because it looks cool . " Cleveland Indians pitcher C.C. Sabathia , who decried the lack of African @-@ American players in the game in March 2007 , told USA Today that " It kind of waters it down . I could see the Dodgers since that was his team , but not everyone else . " " I didn 't know so many guys planned to wear the number . I sure wasn 't expecting whole teams to wear it " , Griffey told the USA Today . " But I 'm not going to look at it as a negative . This is a tribute for what the man has done , a day to celebrate . " Garret Anderson , Los Angeles Angels left fielder , told the USA Today that he won 't wear number 42 because " I just don 't feel I 'm worthy of it . "

Hank Aaron and Frank Robinson , both Baseball Hall of Famers , threw the ceremonial first pitches , and fellow Hall of Famers Joe Morgan and Dave Winfield were on hand . Actors Courtney B. Vance and Marlon Wayans also attended the Jackie Robinson Day ceremony . Academy Award winner Jennifer Hudson sang " The Star @-@ Spangled Banner " before the games started . More than 240 players wore number 42 in honor of Jackie Robinson 's retired number , including the entire team rosters of the Los Angeles Dodgers , New York Mets , Houston Astros , Philadelphia Phillies , St. Louis Cardinals , Milwaukee Brewers , and Pittsburgh Pirates . All scheduled games

were played that day except for several games ? notably the Washington Nationals @-@ New York Mets , the Houston Astros @-@ Philadelphia Phillies (the game and the ceremony was held on the make @-@ up date on April 23 , 2007) , as was the Pirates game against the San Francisco Giants ; the uniforms were worn at the team 's next home game at PNC Park ? all due to a major rainstorm in the Eastern United States that postponed six games .

Andre Ethier , Russell Martin and Wilson Valdez managed to each earn three hits each during the Dodgers game . Ethier hit a home run which drove in the first four runs of the season for the Dodgers , who stole five bases ? their most since August 23 , 1999 when they stole seven in a game at Milwaukee . " It 's kind of cool to have a decent game on Jackie Robinson Day , " Martin said . " I ? m going to remember this probably for the rest of my life . " Randy Wolf , who was playing for the Dodgers at the time (currently a free agent) allowed six hits and three runs in six innings and struck out seven . " The whole team wearing No. 42 , it kind of goes sour if we don ? t win , " Wolf said . " It was great . There were a lot of special people here . It 's a special day and I think they did it right . " The San Diego Padres ' José Cruz , Jr. hit his 200th career home run .

Chris Young 's streak of 25 consecutive road starts without a loss was broken that day by the Dodgers win . The only other pitcher in major league baseball history had gone as many as 25 straight road starts without losing ? Allie Reynolds had a 25 @-@ game streak in 1948 ? 1949 . " I was terrible , " Young said . " I just never found my rhythm and never found my groove . I put the guys in a hole early in the game and it was just too much to overcome . I can ? t imagine , having to go through that , the courage it took , the discipline , and just how successful he was . I mean , he wasn ? t just successful integrating the game . He was a great baseball player . He 's a Hall of Fame baseball player . He wouldn ? t allow himself to fail , and that 's tremendous . "

" Oh Happy Day , " a Robinson favorite , was sung by The Brookinares Gospel Choir from The First African Methodist Episcopal Church . Paintings of Minnesota Twins logos acknowledging Robinson were on both sides of the home plate with another behind second base , and " Jackie Robinson Day " was printed on the bases . A video tribute with Morgan and Aaron among those participating was shown . Several current players expressed their thanks to Robinson in the video also .

== 2008 ==

April 15 , 2008 , was the 61st anniversary of Jackie Robinson 's major league debut . Over 330 team members wore number 42 , more than the over 240 last year . When the teams took the field , all players , managers and coaches were wearing number 42 , and was repeated at all other 14 ballparks that had scheduled games that day . All players wore number 42 at games including the Washington Nationals ' game at the New York Mets , Pittsburgh 's game at the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Los Angeles Angels ' game at the Texas Rangers . The Oakland Athletics , St. Louis Cardinals and Tampa Bay Rays also wore number 42 , increasing the total to nine teams . " The significance of Jackie Robinson Day is not lost on anyone " , said Bob DuPuy . " As more and more people realize what April 15 means , not only for baseball , but for our country in general , I think you 're going to see the celebration grow annually . "

== 2009 ==

The celebration for the 2009 season , commemorating the 62nd anniversary of Robinson 's debut , included the dedication for the Jackie Robinson Rotunda at Citi Field , the New York Mets ' new home in Flushing Meadows prior to the Mets playing the San Diego Padres in the second regular season game to be played there . Additionally , for the first time , all uniformed personnel (players , managers , coaches and umpires) wore # 42 for the day . The sole exception was when the scheduled game at Nationals Park between the Philadelphia Phillies and the Washington Nationals was rained out ; they wore the jerseys in the night game of a day @-@ night doubleheader May 16 .

== 2010 ==

The celebration of Jackie Robinson Day , marking the 63rd anniversary of his debut , marked the second season that all uniformed personnel and umpires wearing # 42 . A total of twelve games were played that day , so as a result , several teams wore Robinson 's number in another game in April due to an off day planned for several teams . The main celebration was again in New York , but was held at the new Yankee Stadium , yards from the original stadium where Robinson played in seven World Series against the New York Yankees .

== 2011 ==

The 64th anniversary of Robinson 's debut marked the third straight season all uniformed players and umpires wearing # 42 , with the exception of the rained @-@ out New York Mets @-@ Atlanta Braves game ; the teams wore the uniforms the following day 's makeup game . In addition , a new MLB website , www.iam42.com , was established .

== 2012 ==

65th anniversary of Jackie Robinson 's debut and 4th straight season all uniformed players , coaches and umpires wore No. 42 .

== 2013 ==

2013 marked the 66th anniversary of Jackie Robinson 's debut and 5th straight season all uniformed players , coaches and umpires wore No. 42 .

== 2014 ==

The 67th anniversary of Jackie Robinson 's debut was celebrated at Historic Dodgertown , where Robinson and teammates used to spend their spring training preparing for the upcoming season for the Dodgers . Owned by former Dodger owner Peter O 'Malley , Historic Dodgertown hosted the 2014 celebration by putting on a minor league exhibition game . Also , four games ? Atlanta at Philadelphia , Cleveland at Detroit , Tampa Bay at Baltimore and the Chicago Cubs at the New York Yankees ? were postponed due to a rainstorm that plagued much of the eastern USA .