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**Afroameričtí průkopníci ve  
čtyřech hlavních sportovních ligách v  
USA**

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně a použil jen uvedených pramenů literatury.

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## **Abstract**

This bachelor thesis will be dealing with the stories of first African Americans, or at least people of African descendants living in North America, who played in each of the four major sports leagues in North America, and how they dealt with racism and prejudice against them. This thesis will be divided into 6 parts, Brief African American history, Brief history of sports in the United States, Baseball, Basketball, Football, and Hockey. The main objective of this thesis will be analysis of who were the first African American athletes and athletes of African descendance living in North America to break the color line in professional North American sports leagues, how they did it, and what they had to face.

# 1. Introduction

African Americans have been a part of the history of the United States for over 400 years, and their journey to freedom had been a long and difficult one. The struggle of fighting for freedom, abolishment, and later against segregation and the Jim Crow laws is unparalleled, and so unique that it inspires other minorities to fight for their freedom as well. Of course, the fight for equality has not ended, and African Americans are deemed as unequal by some people to this day.

Sports are an integral part of the culture of the United States and there is nothing more American than spending a Sunday afternoon playing catch with your children. Sports began as a mere free time activity, but as time went on, the first professional leagues started to establish themselves, and American sports industry started to bloom.

Race and race relations are an important topic in our society, and there should be a way to make this topic closer to youth. As most of them may not think much of writers, politicians, or other civil rights activist yet, they may hold athletes close to their hearts, so learning about racial struggles and fighting for equality can be easier if they learn about it from stories of athletes, so these stories can make a difference.

At first, professional sports in the United States were predominantly white, and unaccepting of African American competitors, but when you take a look at sports in the US now, there are African Americans in every sport. How come? Who were the first athletes to break the so-called color line? And who were the first African American star athletes. These were the questions that were born in my head when I first started reading the stories of my favorite athletes and how they had to fight for equality even today. And these are the questions that will be answered in this thesis. A collection of stories of the first African Americans who broke the color line, and those who became the first African American star athletes at a pro level.

## **2. Brief African American History**

### **2.1 Slavery**

Majority of African Americans in the United States of America are descendants of African slaves, which were brought to American colonies as a cheap work force. The first occurrence of Africans being brought to America by Europeans happened in 1619, when a group of Africans were brought to the colony of Virginia as indentured servants. During the rest of the seventeenth century multiple laws were passed in American colonies that legalized and anchored slavery. (Bankston 2005, p. 1076)

During the eighteenth century, the oppression of African Americans continued, although there had been occasional revolts and uprisings. However, those had not been successful. In 1775 the first abolitionist organization in the United states, named the Pennsylvania society for the Abolition of Slavery is formed. (Frazier 1970, p. 31)

In 1786 Underground railroads, being the network of secret routes by which slaves escaped from southern states to the North, sometimes going as far as Canada. The United states Constitution did not mention slavery, but contained several clauses confirming the existence of slaves and slave trade. Federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1793 required the escaped slaves to return to their owners. In the same year, cotton gin is invented, encouraging even more widespread of slavery through the south. (Bankston 2005, p. 1077)

Importation of slaves became illegal in 1808, although illegal importation of slaves continued. The new Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1850 by the Congress, facilitating the returning of the slaves who fled from the South to the North. In 1859 the Slave ship Clotilde was caught, ending the delivery of slaves from Africa to the United states. As the American civil war went, the Congress passed the first and second Confiscation Acts. The first Confiscation Act passed in 1861 stated that all property used by the south in the war, including slaves, shall be confiscated. The second Confiscation Act declared that captured slaves will not be returned to their owners and will be free later. In year 1863 President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, that declared that all slaves living in states that fought against the Union are free. (Bankston 2005, p. 1077-1078)

## 2.2 Segregation years

The thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments to the United States Constitution prohibited slavery and any other form of involuntary servitude, granted citizenship to all persons born in the United States and an equal protection of the law for regardless of skin color, and guaranteed a right to vote regardless of race, color, or previous servitude, respectively. In 1875, the Civil Rights Act of 1875 prohibited discrimination based on race in public facilities. However, in 1883 the Supreme Court ruled the Civil Rights Act of 1875 as unconstitutional. (Bankston 2005, p. 1079)

The Plessy vs. Ferguson Supreme Court decision established the separate but equal doctrine that enabled services to put African Americans to separate places. This decision included railroads, buses, hotels, restaurants, swimming pools, theatres, and even schools, starting a period in African American History known as Jim Crow era. (Bell 1978, p.19-20)

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is founded in 1910 promoting equality of rights, trying to eradicate race prejudice in society, and fighting for increase of justice in courts, among all else. (Bankston 2005, p. 1081)

In 1910's a Great migration of African Americans from Southern states up North started and did not end until 1930's. I roughly the same time period the Harlem Renaissance, a cultural and artistic uplifting of black culture and racial pride took place. (Frazier 1970, p. 249-251)

The Brown vs Board of Education case and The Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1954-1955 started a new wave of Civil Rights movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and other African American leaders, culminating into the Civil Rights Act of 1964, prohibiting racial religious, sexual, and other types of discrimination in a variety of contexts. Also, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed thanks to this movement. (Bankston 2005, p. 1083-1086)

Since then, racism did not disappear, but African American voices have been heard, and are more and more prominent year by year, this can be seen for example in politics. The first African American state governor Douglas Wilder was Elected in 1989 and Colin Powell was made the Secretary of state in 2001, succeeded by Condoleezza Rice. (Bankston, 2006, p. 1091-1096) All this led to Barrack Obama being elected as the President of the United States of America, as the first African American ever. (Wallenfeldt 2020)



### **3. Brief History of Sports in USA**

Since 1619 there had been attempts at free time activities in form of sports or others, on the soil of New England colonies. Since the Puritans and the Quakers were so influential here, there has been a desire for the sports to be “lawful”, meaning they would not be wasting one’s time, as well as making people do things against God’s will. In southern colonies later however, the sporting culture started to take shape similar to that in Britain. Sports like horse racing, fox hunting, stag hunting and cock fighting were really popular at the time, as well as playing cards, dice, and other forms of gambling. This was only part of lives of the gentry. Sports were to display higher rank and helped to achieve better social positions. These public displays of sports also helped the gentry to establish themselves as the new ruling class in the south. And lastly, sport showed manhood, courage and bravery, attributes that men of those times needed to be accepted by his peers. (Rader 1996, p. 16)

After the civil war, sports started to gain popularity, especially baseball and sports of prize fighting. Men gathered in fraternities, unions, and clubs to compete and to create a tradition of sporting culture. The wealthier a person was, the more they could participate in sport activities. This transcended to colleges forming sport communities, because the children of the wealthy Americans wanted to compete as well. (Rader 1996, p. 47)

This started a wave of intercollegiate competitions between colleges. College athletes competed in baseball, track and field, and newly formed gridiron football a combination of associate football and rugby. These athletes however, competed only on a base of amateurism, which meant that the athletes were not paid, and should be competing only on the basis of fair play. (Rader 1996, p.78, 95)

During the years between 1890 to 1950, sport became an integral part of American culture, it helped to tighten up communities, and to entertain masses. This timespan was also known as “The Golden age of baseball”. With professional league on the rise, baseball became the most popular sport in United States, and was called “America’s pastime”. (Rader 1996, p. 131)

The second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century drastically changed the way sporting events were perceived in the United States. Sport became televised, so that the most sought out games could be seen by masses. This led to rise in popularity of football, especially pro football, and basketball as well. The leagues also started to be more and mor racially diverse. (Rader 1996, p. 258)

## **4. Baseball**

### **4.1 Jackie Robinson**

Jackie Robinson was born on January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1919 in Cairo, Georgia, to a sharecropper family. He was raised by his single mother Mallie and his older siblings, because his father left them when Jackie was an infant. Shortly after that, the family moved from Georgia to Pasadena, California, believing that the racial tension there is not as bad as in Cairo. (Johnson 2017, p.7-8)

Growing up Robinson soon realized that he was not perceived as equal by white population, and sports are the only way he can compete with white kids, so he played all possible sports, and excelled in them too. He got varsity letters in four different sports, a feat that was unprecedented. Robinson competed in baseball, basketball, football, and track and field for University of California, Los Angeles. Baseball was Robinsons worst sport at University of California, Los Angeles, but he excelled in other sports. He won the 1940 National Collegiate Athletic Association Championship in long jump, averaged over eleven points per game in basketball, and was one of three African American running backs on the same team for University of California, Los Angeles football team. (Johnson 2017, p. 9-12)

However, Robinson ran into some financial issues during his years at University of California, Los Angeles and in 1942 he was drafted to the United States army and was assigned to Army cavalry in Fort Riley, Kansas, a unit that was segregated at the time. Later, Robinson was reassigned to Fort Hood, Texas. There he joined the 761<sup>st</sup> tank battalion called “Black Panthers”. On July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1944 Robinson was told to sit in the back of the Army bus by the bus driver, which was an order that Robinson refused to execute. As a result of Robinsons refusal, military police were called and took Robinson to custody. Initially court-martialed Robinson was acquitted at least. Then, Robinson served as a coach for army athletics in Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, until he received an honorable discharge in November 1944. (Vergun 2021)

In 1945 Robinson started playing baseball for Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro Baseball League and travelled all over Midwest. Shortly after his start in the Negro Baseball league Robinson was contacted by Branch Rickey, president of Brooklyn Dodgers of the Major League Baseball. Rickey's plan was to bring African Americans into the Major leagues, so that the sport would grow not only financially, by bringing African American audience, but also to increase the talent pool of the League. (Baker 1988, p.285-305)

And Robinson was supposed to be the one player to start this process as he was known for his integrity and mental stability. Before Rickey signed Robinson however, he had to test his temperament, so at their first meeting, Rickey did not restrain from yelling insults at Robinson, taunting him as much as he would be taunted during the games. And Robinson passed with flying colors. (Johnson 2017, p.150-151)

At first though, Robinson had to prove his worth, so he was initially assigned to Brooklyn Dodgers' minor league affiliate the Montreal Royals. But even before he was able to officially join the Royals, he had to get a taste of southern segregation. As he and his wife, Rachel, travelled to the south for the Royals spring training, they were bumped from the connecting flight from New Orleans, and then once again from the plane to Jacksonville. Unable to board another plane, they had to take a bus, but had to sit at the back of the bus, due to segregation laws. From Jacksonville they travelled by a car with Wendell Smith, who was an African American sportswriter for a prominent African American Newspaper in Pittsburgh, the "Pittsburgh Courier", and photographer from the same newspaper. (Johnson 2017, p. 155-157)

In spring training, Robinson was accompanied by Johnny Wright, another African American player, although his career in the minor leagues was short. The first trial against racism as a professional would come in spring training of 1946 in Daytona Beach. Thanks to Robinson signing, the Royals were turned down by many practice facilities, who did not want an African American Playing on their field. In Florida, Robinson was unable to live in the same accommodation as the rest of the Royals and had to stay with local African American businessman and doctor David Brock in Sandford. Later however Smith received threats from local white mob, so both players, Robinson's wife Rachel, Smith and the photographer had to move and stay with Joe and Dufferin Harris. The couple introduced Robinson to Mary McLeod Bethune, a civil rights activist. (Lamb 2004, p.86-89)

In Daytona Beach on March 17<sup>th</sup>, 1946 Robinson played his first exhibition game for the Royals, against the Brooklyn Dodgers. In front of a segregated crowd, despite the Jim Crow laws. But this was not the case for their next game against Saint Paul Saints, for which the team had to travel back to Sandford. Robinson was put in the starting lineup by the Royals, and as the game began, he beat out an infield single in the first inning, then stole second base. In the bottom of the second Inning though, a Sandford police chief walked to the stadium, went straight to Royals' manager Clay Hopper, and told him to get Robinson and Wright off the field and out of the stadium. After this incident, the Royals had to cancel some games of the spring training, and played the rest of their home games, in a much more tolerable environment of Daytona Beach. (Dreier 2013)

In 1947 Robinson was called up to the Major League to play for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Of course, there has been a backlash from other teams and players, but there has been problem even with Dodgers own players. Kirby Higbe demanded a trade from the Dodgers because it was against his southern beliefs to play with an African American, even though he supposedly did not have problem with Robinson as a person. Another Dodgers player, Fred E. "Dixie" Walker a seasoned veteran, and a five time All Star at this point even started a player petition against Robinson joining the major leagues. But team owner Branch Rickey did not listen to his players opposing Robinson's call up, a told the team coach and manager Leo Durocher to talk to his pleyer and stop the petition. So, Durocher called a player meeting and told the players that he did not care for the color of Robinsons skin, as long as he will help the team win, he will stay. Walker was not happy with that, and just like Higbe, he demanded a trade, but unlike Higbe, he was not traded, because he had too much of a value to the Dodgers. (Baker 1988, p.285-305)

Although Robinson played in exhibition games for the Dodgers, he officially broke the baseball color line on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1974 in a home game against Boston Braves. Even though his performance was an average one, the attendance of African American spectators rose, as they suddenly made up to sixty percent of the crowd. The overall attendance however fell due to white fans not wanting to sit in a crowd full of African Americans. (Johnson 2017, p.192)

Robinson's struggles against racism in professional baseball did not end by breaking the color line. Robinson was a target of public racial slurs, pitchers trying to hit him in the head, catchers spitting on his shoes, other players attempting to seriously injure him by the cleats

on their shoes, and even receiving multiple death threats towards him and his family. Some of the threats were so serious that police had to be involved. Some teams refused to play against Robinson, for example the Philadelphia Phillies. The manager of the Phillies Herb Pennock, called Branch Rickey a day before, and said that the Phillies are not willing to suit up against the Dodgers if Robinson will be playing. Rickey was not willing to suspend Robinson, so he told Pennock that he will be glad to pick up three free wins if the Phillies refuse to play. However even fans in Philadelphia were not happy that Robinson should play there, and the Dodgers were forced to accommodate Robinson in an all-black hotel, before the rest of the team could check in the hotel, they regularly stayed in. (Johnson 2017, p.194)

Against the Phillies, Robinson was a victim of multiple racial slurs coming out of the mouth of the Phillies manager Ben Chapman, who was shouting at Robinson to go back to the cotton fields, or that he should return to the jungle, and even attacked his teammates, asking Robinson which of his teammates' wives will he be dating later that night. This was to be expected from Chapman, as he was traded during his playing career for taunting Jewish spectators and shouting anti-Semitic epithets at them. The rest of the Phillies held their bats like guns, pretending to shoot Robinson. Robinson recalled this to be one of the hardest moments of his life, saying that this was the closest he ever was to cracking and attacking Chapman, or anyone else. Chapman's taunts had one side effect, the Dodgers' players backing up Robinson, because they just could not look at a man that was not able to fight back, so they fought for him. The press backed up Robinson as well, calling him the only gentleman in that incident, as well as criticizing Chapman's manners. In an attempt to save Chapman's job, Branch Rickey asked Robinson to take photo with Chapman, but Chapman refused to shake hands, so they just held a bat together. (Johnson 2017, p. 195-196)

There had been multiple other accidents during Robinson's rookie season, and some even later in his career. When the Dodgers played Cincinnati Robinson was threatened for life, but still played. There he received support from his teammate and local athlete Pee Wee Reese, who has a pep talk with Robinson on the field, and put his hand around him, which was quite unusual for a white man at that time. Reese did this once again in their next game against the Boston Braves, to show he did it intentionally. Both players became lifelong friends after this. In another instance, in a game against Saint Louis the opposing player Enos Slaughter spiked Robinson during the game, wounding Robinson's leg and causing Dodgers' players

to rush to the field in an attempt to protest what slaughter did. Robinson later said that this was the moment when he felt like a member of a solid team. Jackie's tremendous play led to him becoming the first Major league Rookie of the year, an award that would later be renamed the Jackie Robinson Award. (Johnson 2017, p. 197-199)

Robinson played for the next ten years, went to win the Most Valuable Player Award, and even helped the Dodgers win the World series. During those times he saw an influx of African American players coming to the Major league, and he made sure to let every one of them know that the road to full integration will be a long one, and that they all have to be prepared to fight for their rights. He also became more outspoken and aggressive, as he felt he did enough to deserve respect from other players, managers, and umpires. After his playing days were over, Robinson continued to fight for civil rights, started working as a president for personnel at a New York based restaurant, helping to employ African Americans. Shortly after retirement he was diagnosed with diabetes. Robinson helped Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with civil rights protests and was in Washington with Reverend King when he gave his "I have a dream" speech. He also spoke about civil and political matters through newspaper and became a chairman of the Freedom Fund Drive of the NAACP. On October 24<sup>th</sup>, 1972 Jackie Robinson died of a fatal heart attack. His accomplishments on and off the court are commemorated every year on April 15<sup>th</sup> by every player in Major League Baseball wearing his number 42. On no other occasion can a Major League player wear that number. (Johnson 2017, p. 220-230)

Robinson's impact on Baseball, as well as civil rights movement and African American communities is indescribable. Jackie Robinson started a wave of new African American Athletes in US professional sports and helped to inspire generations of African Americans to come. Early period of Robinsons life is not talked about as much as the pro career part, but I personally think that it was during his high school and university years when his determination to be influential for African Americans developed the most. This and a lack of well-paid job opportunities for African Americans at that time motivated him to keep doing his best. The incident with the army bus driver clearly shows how strict the segregation laws were, but it also shows Robinson's determination to hold his ground. In my opinion, Robinsons call up was the biggest milestone in African American integration in team sports, but the reactions from his teammates clearly show that Americans were not ready for this change. I would also say that Robinson's life story helped so much in integration of African

Americans into US population, because he gave them one of the first instances of American dream coming true for an African American.



## 4.2 Larry Doby

Just mere two months after Jackie Robinson, Lawrence “Larry” Doby made his first appearance for the Cleveland Indians and started integration in the second part of the Major leagues, the American League. Doby went through his number of struggles as well, but his path to baseball integration was totally different from Robinson’s. Unlike Branch Rickey, who started his attempt at baseball integration slowly and carefully, sending Robinson to the minor league for a year and then calling him up to play for the Dodgers, Bill Veeck, owner of the Cleveland Indians, signed Doby on the spot, buying him out of his contract in Negro Baseball League, and bringing him to the team in a midst of a series against Chicago White Sox on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1947. (Branson 2016, p. 113-119)

Others difference between Larry Doby, and Jackie Robinson would be in their demeanor. While Robinson at the start of his career stayed calm and collected, always turning the other cheek, and not reacting to the taunts of opposing players, managers, or fans, but later became more aggressive, Doby was quiet and shy player, who somehow respected that other players did not want to be associated with him, so he did not try to do so publicly. This made Doby play out his career in Robinson’s shadow, although Doby’s importance in integration of baseball was comparable. Nevertheless, Robinson and Doby were friends and often called each other. It was key for them to exchange their experiences with someone who went through similar situations. (Branson 2016, p.190-202)

Doby also had problems with his teammates just like Robinson did. Two of them, Les Fleming and Eddie Robinson, refused to shake Doby’s hand when they were introduced. When Player-Manager of the Indians asked Doby to start at first base his Eddie Robinson even refused to lend him his glove. But when equipment manager asked for the glove, Robinson did not refuse. After Doby made a name for himself, he started to be respected by his teammates, and even won a World series with the Cleveland Indians a season later, becoming the first African American, along with his teammate Leroy Robert "Satchel" Paige to do so. (Branson 2016, p. 120- 145)

One can only try to imagine how hard it was to try and play baseball as an African American in the segregation era, and Larry Doby went through every bit of the struggle just like Jackie Robinson. It was only Doby’s personality and the fact that he was second, that made him the forgotten hero of Baseball’s integration.

## **5. Basketball**

### **5.1 Chuck Cooper, Nat “Sweetwater” Clifton, and Earl Lloyd**

Charles Cooper may not be remembered for his playing career in the National Basketball Association, averaging around 6 points and 6 rebounds for his whole career, maybe not even for his college career where he received All-American honors and participated in National Invitational tournament twice with Duquesne University, but for sure he will be remembered as the first African American to be drafted to the National Basketball Association. Drafted by Walter Brown, the owner and founder of the Boston Celtics, Cooper made way for other African Americans to join the National Basketball Association. After his playing days were over, Cooper used his presence in public sphere in his hometown Pittsburgh, taking care of education, recreation, and later even became an official in Pittsburgh bank. (Wiggins 2015, p. 75)

The first African American player to sign a contract with National Basketball Association team, the team being New York Knicks, was Nathaniel Clifton, often nicknamed “Sweetwater” for his fondness in drinking flavored sodas, when he was a kid. Before Clifton signed with the Knicks, he spent three years with Harlem Globetrotters, an All-African American basketball exhibition team based in New York and had a solid campaign at Xavier University of Louisiana. As a professional player, Clifton averaged over ten points and eight rebounds per game, helped New York to get to the Finals three times, and was even named an All-Star at age 34, making him the oldest first time All Star to date. This also meant that Clifton was one of the 20 best players in the league that year, an astonishing feat. Clifton’s contributions to African American Communities in New York, during his tenure with the Knicks have been recognized by Associated Black Charities of New York City, naming a Black History Maker Award after him, as well as New York Knicks renaming their Monthly “City Spirit Award” to “The Sweetwater Clifton City Spirit Award”. (Wiggins 2015, p. 71)

The third African American basketball player to complete this trifecta of African American pioneers is Earl Lloyd, the first African American player to ever play in National Basketball Association game. Lloyd has spent 10 years as a player in the National Basketball Association and continued to work in the league as the first African American assistant coach,

and even became the second African American head coach. For his lifelong accomplishments Lloyd was enshrined into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. (Wiggins 2015, p. 214)

In his biography, Lloyd says there has been many more skilled African American players than him that did not get into the league, especially on the guard positions, because of the bias, that African American plyers cannot run an offense and be leaders on a winning team. (Lloyd a Kirst 2011, p. 13-20)

The triad of African American pioneers did not make that much impact on the basketball court, but in my opinion their accomplishments were the starting point for integration in the league and helped other more talented players to make an impact in a game of basketball, and in civil rights. These leading figures should not be forgotten, as they showed the strength to fight against segregation no matter the circumstances.

## 5.2 Bill Russell

William Felton Russell, named after Felton Clark, the former president of historically black Southern University, was born on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1934 in Monroe Louisiana as the youngest child of Charles and Katie Russell. In his early childhood Russell and his family moved, during the Great Migration, from segregated south to Oakland for a job opportunity at a military shipyard. (Shoals 2021)

In Oakland young Russell started to attend elementary school and shown little to no talent as an athlete. He was lean and lumbering, and these attributes accompanied him through Junior high where he at least hit a growth spurt. When Russell was twelve years old, his mother died, and since her passing he became a shy reserved kid, wo rather read books than interacted with others, especially since others often called him names. His height did not help him to get more playing time so even through high school, he often played so little that he had to share a jersey with another teammate. Soon he realized that if he ever wanted to be efficient on the court, he should focus more on his defense and rebounding, and less on the offensive side of basketball. (Shoals 2021)

After high school Russell went on an exhibition tour though the Pacific Northwest, where he was scouted by Hal DeJulio, who offered a scholarship from University of San Francisco, a local university. There Russell played and studied for four years, and grown to his full height, as well as athletic peak. Russell won two National Collegiate Athletic Association titles, the National Collegiate Athletic Association Tournament Most Valuable Player award and was named center for the All-American East West Allstar game. Thanks to his defensive dominance under the basket, the National Collegiate Athletic Association had to widen the free-throw lane, making it double the width it was before. (Shoals 2021)

In 1956 Bill Russell finished his college studies with a Bachelor of Arts degree, was selected for the United states of America Olympic Men´s basketball team, with which he won a gold medal at the Melbourne Olympics, married his college girlfriend, and most importantly, was selected with the second pick of the National Basketball Association draft by Red Auerbach, the Boston Celtics´ head coach. Getting Russell however was not easy, as he was consensus to be a first overall pick, that belonged to the Rochester Royals. Auerbach was only able to trade with Saint Louis Hawks who had the second overall pick and had to give up a six-time all-star and another player to get the pick from the Hawks. To persuade the Royals

to not take Russell with the first overall pick, the Celtics owner, Walter Brown, promised the owner of the Royals that Ice Capades, a famous traveling ice skating show, would set up dates to perform in his arena. And so, with the second overall pick in the 1956 National Basketball Association draft, the Boston Celtics selected Bill Russell. (Shoals 2021)

As a player Bill Russell won eleven championships in thirteen seasons, a record that stands still even today. He also won five Most Valuable Player awards, became a twelve-time all-star, four-time league rebounding leader, and was selected to numerous All-league teams. Of course, he did not win all those accolades alone, he was a part of star-studded Celtics dynasty that is still regarded as one of the best collections of basketball talents ever. But the indisputable leader of those incredible Celtics teams was without a doubt Bill Russell. (Shoals 2021)

As a player in the nineteen fifties and sixties, especially on a team with multiple African Americans, there was no way that Russell would not have to face segregation. One time in 1961, the Celtics were scheduled to play an exhibition game in Kentucky. As soon as the team got there, African American players were not allowed to stay in the same hotel as the rest of the team, and were also denied from local establishment, where their teammates went for a meal. As a result of that Russell and the rest of the African American players decided to boycott the scheduled game, rather than be treated this way, and flew back to Boston. This was quite unusual situation, because it was quite common for southern based teams to refuse to play against teams with African Americans on their rosters, but to see this other way around was unprecedented. (Johnson 2019)

Being a Boston's basketball legend, one would expect to be sheltered from racism at least in the nearby area, but that was far from true for Russell and his family. One night when Russell's family came home, they found out that their home in Reading, Massachusetts had been robbed. And not only that, but the vandals also destroyed some of Russell's trophies, poured beer all over the floor, defecated on their beds, and spray painted the word "NIGGA" on the walls. The police never found out who did it. The police actually did not try to help Russell and his family a lot, when they came to police station to complain about someone kicking down their garbage cans, policemen said it were racoons who did it. When Russell applied for a gun permit, the racoons never showed up again. (Russell 1984)

The environment Russell had to live and perform in was quite specific, on one side he was loved by the fanbase, but on the other he was frowned upon for who he was. This translated into the way Russell treated fans. He never signed autographs, he thought they were impersonal, but he did not restrain from interacting with fans, he had no problem with shaking their hands or having a conversation. But this way of treating fans was not what was expected of him. His refusal for signing autographs became so infamous that he became known as arrogant, and this reputation went so far that even in his file in from Federal Bureau of Investigation, he was described “an arrogant negro who will not sign autographs”. (Johnson 2019)

Red Auerbach retired from coaching in 1967, and it was his idea to make Bill Russell the playing head coach of the Boston Celtics. This decision made Bill Russell the first African American head coach in National Basketball Association, and one of the first African American head coaches in American professional sports. As a playing coach, Russell won two more championships for the Celtics before retiring from his playing career. He then coached the Seattle Supersonics and Sacramento Kings, but was not able to repeat his coaching success. (Shoals 2021)

Russell was fighting for equal rights off the court too. He was supporting Muhammad Ali in his decision to not be drafted to the United States Army and to not fight in the Vietnam war at the Cleveland summit. He was also an active member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, for example his contributions for the Boston public schools helped to improve quality of life of many underprivileged students in the Boston area, and he also participated in the March on Washington with Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. (Johnson 2019)

When Russell travelled with delegates of the United States government to Africa, for a diplomatic journey, as well as a journey, looking for his roots, he made a big impression on locals. They applauded him for seeking his ancestral African roots. Russell was also able to meet and chat with Emperor Haile Selassie, and in Liberia he was so awed by the country, that he bought a small rubber plantation there, which was remarkable, because he could give jobs to more poor Liberian people, and it cost him a big part of his salary, since athletes were not paid that much in the sixties. (Johnson 2019)

Bill Russell never wanted to be celebrated because he was an athlete, he thought that people should focus their attention on more important issues than sports, and thus celebrate people who fought to make a change in society. He had tremendous respect for Civil Rights movement leaders and was immensely grateful for everyone who paved the way for him, as a basketball player, so he could do what he wanted to do most. And because of this respect, Russell did not accept his Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame enshrinement ring, as he thought that those who came before him should receive these honors first, he did not want to be the first African American in the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. And as a direct result of his refusal, Russell did not receive the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame enshrinement ring until 2019, when Chuck Cooper was finally introduced into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. (NBA.com 2019)

Bill Russell has, in my opinion, one of the best sports careers ever, as well as one of the most influential ones in term of an athlete fighting for civil rights. His character and demeanor were not made for aggressive arguments, or forceful fights, what he did was more gracious. He set a goal for himself and did not give up until he succeeded. He is a true winner, someone who is considered to be one of the best to ever play the game of basketball, and a player who transformed the sport and the way athletes try to fight for what they think is right. He continues to do this even today, which h is something truly remarkable, and I think he deserves to be admired, and future generations of athletes should be inspired by him, just as the generation we can see on the court now.

## **6. Football**

### **6.1 Kenny Washington and Woody Strode**

Born on August 31<sup>st</sup>, 1918 in Los Angeles, California, Kenny Washington was an excellent athlete from a young age, showing his prowess in both baseball and football as a student at the Abraham Lincoln High school, where he was nicknamed “Kingfish”. He probably got his Athletic talent from his father Edgar “Blue” Washington, who played baseball in Negro Baseball League. Washington, however, was not raised by his parents but by his grandmother, and uncle, who was the first uniformed African American lieutenant in the Los Angeles Police Department. (Johnson 2017, p. 16-29)

When it as time to go to college, Washington enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he played both football and baseball. There he played alongside other significant African American athletes, namely Jackie Robinson, Woody Strode, and Ray Bartlett. At University of California, Los Angeles Washington spent two years, and in his last year he received All-American honors, the first African American to accomplish this. (Johnson 2017, p. 65-74)

After Washington left University of California, Los Angeles, he was undrafted in the 1940 National Football League draft, so he started to work as a police officer for the Los Angeles Police Department as well as joining Hollywood Bears, a Los Angeles based football team playing in Pacific Coast Professional Football League. He played there in 1940, 1941 and 1945 season. In 1942 and 1943 he had his mandatory military service, where he was inactive because of a knee injury, and in 1944 Washington played one season for the San Francisco Clippers of the American Football League. (Johnson 2017, p. 107-115)

In 1946 the National Football League ban on African American players was overturned, and Washington was signed by the Los Angeles Rams, breaking the professional football color line. Washington spent three years in the National Football league, playing for the Rams, but knee injuries made him retire in 1948. To this day he has not been enshrined to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. (Johnson 2017, p. 140-148)



Woodrow Wilson Woolwine Strobe was born on July 25<sup>th</sup>, 1914 in Los Angeles, California, to a family of African American and Native American heritage. Strobe was named after the United States president Woodrow Wilson who was in the office at the time Strobe was born. Strobe attended University of California, Los Angeles where he played football with Jackie Robinson, Kenny Washington, and Ray Bartlett. After college, he was drafted to serve in World War II., where he unloaded bombs. After World War II., in 1946, when the Los Angeles Rams wanted to sign Kenny Washington to play football in National Football League, Washington said he wanted Strobe on the team as well, so the Rams signed him too, making him one of the first African Americans to play in the National Football League. However, Strobe played for only one season, and tried his luck playing elsewhere, until he settled back in Los Angeles as an actor, appearing mostly in movies directed by John Ford. (Johnson 2017, p. 16-29; 65-74; 107-115; 140-148)

Washington and Strobe maybe were not the stars that their college teammate Jackie Robinson would go on to become, but their significance in integration of the National Football League is undeniable, and their contributions to the sport of professional football, and to African American communities in the United states should be recognized more, as I see it. There is basically no version of the Jackie Robinson day in the National Football League, but there should be. Unfortunately, even today there are a lot of racial problems in professional football, and I think that the athletes of today should keep fighting for justice.

## 6.2 Marion Motley and Bill Willis

Marion Motley was born on June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1920 in Leesburg, Georgia, but his family moved to Ohio during the Great Migration when Motley was three years old. In Canton, Ohio Motley attended Canton McKinley High School, and played basketball and football there. He then received a football scholarship to South Carolina State University and University of Nevada where he was a member of both offensive and defensive teams. After his college years, Motley spent World War II. Playing football for the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, where he played under coach Paul Brown, who would go on to become the coach of the newly formed Cleveland Browns. The Browns then in 1946 signed Motley as a fullback along with another African American, Bill Willis. The Cleveland Browns initially were not a part of the National Football League but started in a new league called the All-America Football Conference that later joined the National Football League, making Motley one of the first African American to sign with a professional team. In the All-America Football Conference, the Cleveland Browns won the title each and every year until 1950 when they joined the National Football League. Motley led the Browns and the whole All-America Football Conference with 3024 yards over the four-year existence of the four-year span of the leagues existence and led the league in rushing touchdowns as well. After the All-America Football Conference was absorbed into the National Football League, the Cleveland Browns won the 1950 National Football league title, with 810 yards and was named to the All-Pro team, he then helped the Browns to reach the final game three more times, before injuring his knee in 1954 and finishing his career with the Pittsburgh Steelers the next year. In 1968, Motley became the first African American to be inducted to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, breaking the color barrier one more time. (Porter 1995, p. 228-230)

Bill Willis born on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 1920 in Georgia, but his family soon moved to Columbus Ohio, during the Great Migration as well. He had to be raised by his mother and grandfather due to his Father dying because of pneumonia in 1923. In Columbus he attended Columbus East High School, where he participated in football and track and field. During his high school years Willis was often compared to his older brother, Claude, who received All-city and All-State awards when he played football for the same high school. Willis did not like the comparison though and switched to playing a different position than he and his brother used to play. Willis then became a star football player, but was not recruited by any major college, so he decided to work for a year, and when Paul Brown became a new head coach of the Ohio State University, he recruited Willis, and Willis enrolled. (Swartz 2020)

At Ohio State Willis played both on offence and on defense, winning National title in 1942 and being named to All-Big Nine conference first team in 1943 and 1944 and to All-American team in 1944 as well, before graduating the same year. After graduation Willis went and coached football at Kentucky State College, a historically black college, where his team lost only two games through the whole season. (Swartz 2020)

When Willis found out that his high school coach Paul Brown was coaching the Cleveland Browns of the All-America Football Conference, he reached out to him and asked if he could play for the Browns. Brown wanted Willis on the team, but due to racial tensions of the time he could not just invite Willis directly, but he sent him a message through a local newspaper columnist and told him that he should attend the Browns' training camp and try-out for the team. Willis did just that and made a great impression at the training camp, and he was signed immediately as one of the first African Americans in the professional football. Willis helped the Browns to win 4 All-America Football Conference titles, and a National Football league title in 1950. (Swartz 2020)

There had been numerous death threats against Willis and his teammate Marion Motley, and they had to sit out some of their games because of those threats, but they fought that much harder in the matches they got to play. Through the four years the Browns played in the All-America Football Conference Willis was named to the 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-AAFC and 2<sup>nd</sup> Team All-AAFC multiple times, as well getting invited to three Pro Bowls and being named to numerous 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> All-Pro teams in the National Football League too. (Swartz 2020)

After his retirement in 1953, Willis worked in recreation and youth services in Cleveland and Columbus, helping young people to turn away from life of crime, as this was becoming a rising trend at the time. Willis was inducted to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1977 and is still regarded as trailblazer by African American football players. (Swartz 2020)

Motley and Willis played significant roles in the history of professional football, not only were they two of the four African American players who broke the professional football color line in 1946, a whole year before Jackie Robinson did in professional baseball, but their plays on the field and their careers were so good that they were both inducted to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. It is this kind of athletes that actually give hope to next generations and inspire them to be better, which is visible on today's athletes in the National Football League.

## **7. Hockey**

### **7.1 Willie O'Ree**

Growing up in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, Willie O'Ree was the youngest child of his parents Harry and Rosebud. But his grandparents who relocated to Canada to escape slavery in the United States. They used the help of Underground Railroad to achieve their escape. O'Ree's family was one of only two families of African descent in town, but O'Ree does not recall any problem with his race when he was a child. He played organized hockey since he was five years old and lived for the sport since that age. (Freeborn 2021)

At the age of 14, O'Ree started playing Hockey with his older brother, who taught him bodychecks, as he needed to master this part of playing hockey, to be able to compete against adults. One year later O'Ree played for the Fredericton Falcons in the New Brunswick Amateur Hockey Association playoffs. Through the next three years, O'Ree played for the Fredericton Merchants who played in the York County Hockey League, and then moved on to Fredericton Capitals, where he played in the Junior team first, but then was called up to play for the Senior team in the New Brunswick Senior Hockey League. In 1954 O'Ree went to Quebec to play for the Quebec Frontenacs of the Quebec Junior Hockey League. (Freeborn 2021)

Since he was a young boy O'Ree dreamed about playing in the National Hockey League so when he injured his eye in 1955, while playing for the Kitchener Canucks, who played in the Ontario Hockey Association, it was a big problem. O'Ree lost 95 percent of the vision in his right eye, which would forbid him from playing in the National Hockey League. As such, O'Ree did not tell anyone about his injury and kept playing whilst being basically blind on one eye. He later said the fortunately he never had to do an eye test, he just had to stay in good physical shape, as it was the factor most teams considered at the time. This meant that O'Ree had to fight not only against racial stereotypes, prejudice, and the color line to get to the National Hockey league, but he also had to do it with a significant disability. (Freeborn 2021)

After one year in Ontario, O'Ree returned to Quebec to play for the Quebec Aces, where he stayed for three years. During this time, the Aces became a partner team of the Boston Bruins of the National Hockey League, meaning the Bruins had the right to call up any member

of the Aces' team at any time. And on January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1958 they called up Willie O'Ree, to play for the Bruins making him the first player of African descent to ever play in a National Hockey League game. The Bruins held onto him for only two games though, so O'Ree did not have a chance to make a bigger impact. However, the Bruins brought him back next season, and he played 43 games for the team, even scoring a goal against the Montreal Canadiens on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1961, making O'Ree the first player of African descent to score a goal in the National Hockey League game. Surprisingly, O'Ree was not taunted or mocked when he played for the Bruins, or at least not by the fans or the media, but on the other hand, people rarely even talked about him being breaking the color line. He did not receive that kind of treatment from other players though, as he was continuously mocked by a player who played for the Chicago Black Hawks, resulting in a fight between the two players. (Freeborn 2021)

After his two seasons in the National Hockey League, O'Ree went on and played for 14 more seasons in smaller professional leagues in Canada, California, and Connecticut. There he recalls of being a target of racist taunts from fans in Virginia, where they threw cotton balls at him. (Freeborn 2021)

After his retirement, he became a National Hockey League's Director of Youth Development and Ambassador for diversity in the National Hockey League. He spends his time by traveling through North America, promoting hockey, and teaching it to underprivileged children. For his service to hockey, O'Ree received many awards like the Lester Patrick Trophy, as well as receiving the Order of Canada and the Order of New Brunswick. O'Ree was inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame, being the third person of African descent to do so. His number will be retired by the Boston Bruins on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022, 64 years after he broke the color line. (Freeborn 2021)

In my eyes Willie O'Ree is someone who gave his whole life to the sport he loved and had he been able to do this thirty or forty years later, he might have been one of the greatest hockey players ever. Fortunately, his work after his retirement was as much needed as his passion on the ice. With this Hard-working mindset and passion for the sport he was able to help thousands of children to spend their free time doing something meaningful and he helped hockey to grow as well. Even though he was Canadian, and therefore not African American, O'Ree is the embodiment of true sports pioneer.

## 7.2 Val James

Growing up in Stony Brook, New York, Valmore James says he encountered little to no racist oppression as a kid, even though he recalls his family living in a one room establishment with no running water, no electricity and just a mere potbelly stove where that served for cooking and heating. His father initially worked at a potato farm, but due to his handiness, the owner of the farm gave him a different job at an ice ring where he did everything from repairing the equipment to driving the Zamboni. When James's father took James ice skating on the ring for the first time, James was thirteen years old and immediately fell in love with ice skating, and even more with hockey. His favorite team while growing up were the local Long Island Ducks, and James dreamed of playing for the team one day. (Borzi 2015)

In the meantime, James played in the Metropolitan Junior Hockey League, for the Suffolk Ducks, in a league that was co-founded by general manager of the New York Rangers, to help with development of local young hockey talents. One other co-founder of the league, Lou Varo remembers James as a big strong player who was a pretty good skater for his day and age. At age 16 James was recommended by a former Long Island Ducks player to a Junior B team in Midland, Ontario, Canada, even though James remembers that the team was more impressed by his physical prowess than his skill as a hockey player. Around this time James' teams started playing in tournaments outside his home state, and he remembers facing taunts and slurs for the first time, not being able to cope with the adult hatred towards his teenage self. (Borzi 2015)

In 1977 National Hockey League draft, Val James was drafted by the Detroit Red wings with the 184<sup>th</sup> overall pick, so it was no surprise that he was not contacted by the team right away. He actually never signed a contract with the Red Wings and played professionally in smaller leagues in United States and Canada before the Buffalo Sabres called James up from their lower league associate team the Rochester Americans in 1981 Making him the first African American to play in the National Hockey League. (Borzi 2015)

His playing time in the National Hockey League was a short one, playing eleven games altogether for the Buffalo Sabres and the Toronto Maple Leafs. James never scored a goal in the National Hockey League, but he participated in three fights, and received over thirty penalty minutes, as he was used mainly as an enforcer on the ice, due to his big stature.

But even in this short time, James was not able to evade racism, as once after a game against Boston, a mob of Bostonians stopped the Sabres team bus, threw beer bottles on it, damaging windows and windshield in the process, and demanding James to go out and face them, while they called him a vast variety of slurs. Val James retired from hockey in 1988, tried to coach for 10 years before finding a job in a maintenance. He says he likes the quiet nature of his life after 13 seasons of playing hockey and being called names. (Borzi 2015)

James' hockey career played out mostly in the minor leagues, but he will always be remembered as the first African American to play in the National Hockey league, even though his road to fulfil his dream was not as straightforward as one would hope. In my opinion he is one of the forgotten heroes of hockey and especially integration in the sport, but unfortunately, Val James does not get the recognition he deserves. On the other hand, Val James lives without internet or phones, and in his biography it is clear that his experience in playing hockey as an African American had traumatized him, so maybe he would not even want to be recognized.



## 8. Conclusion

The story of African Americans in the United states has been long and a difficult one, starting with enslavement of African people, and the slave labor they had to endure, continuing through abolishment, but instant segregation and another fight for their human rights, that in some cases still did not end. But this difficult past and present makes them one of the integral parts of the history and culture of the Unites States of America.

The same could be said about sports because they also played an important role in making United states the country they are today. Americans live surrounded by sports, be it in school, on television or on the internet, in local youth centers and sometimes even on family gatherings. And this closeness of daily lives and sports are one of the factors that made the United States one of the most successful nations, when it comes to sport.

That is why the integration of African Americans into professional sports is an important milestone, combining one of America's biggest faults, the segregation and racial discrimination of African Americans, with one of America's biggest successes, having a culture that is united by their passion for sports. That is the reason why the likes of Jackie Robinson, Earl Lloyd, Willey O'Ree, or Marion Motley, who with the help of many others integrated the four major sports leagues, are so important. They tried to help solving segregation, by integrating one of the favorite cultural aspects of the nation that demonized them. And. As direct a result of their actions, other African Americans that came after them like Bill Russell and many more after him, had the platform to fight against the struggles that African Americans had to go through. Many African Americans saw them as leaders and were inspired and motivated by them to take a stance and fight for their rights nonviolently but through actions and perseverance. Most of these athletes broke the color line in the nineteen-forties and nineteen-fifties, which in my opinion had a direct influence on the Civil Rights Movement, led by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., that resulted in the signing of the Civil Rights act of 1946.

I believe that the careers of these African American Pioneers were influential in many ways. Their heroism inspired many young African Americans to chase their dreams in sports and athletics, and he was a spike in percentages of African Americans in professional leagues. For example, since Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in the Major League Baseball, the percentages went as high as eighteen percent in 1981, before plummeting back to around

six percent in recent years. Unfortunately, integration was meant to help African Americans, but it did not help baseball as much, since African Americans from low-income families tend to prefer basketball or football over baseball.

On the other hand, in the National Basketball Association there is over seventy-four percent of African Americans among all thirty teams and just around sixteen percent of white players. But of those sixteen percent only thirty-six individuals were born in the US, meaning that since breaking the color line, African Americans had taken the National Basketball Association over. The same can be said about the National Football League, even though in certain positions, like the quarterback, that need a certain level of leadership and quick thinking, the team have been reluctant to assign these positions to the African Americans, and even nowadays the numbers of African Americans at these positions are scarce.

I would say that the integration of sports not only helped African American athletes in getting more opportunities in professional sports, but it also tremendously helped the sports to evolve, and to be more attractive for fans and wider audiences. For once, African American fans had someone of their ethnicity to root for, but also, since African Americans were allowed to participate in professional sports, the sample of potential athletes got bigger, so logically, more talented athletes got a chance to play in the professional leagues, making these leagues arguably better.

Another argument I have is that the careers and achievements of the African American pioneers that were mentioned in this thesis were influential on African American communities all over the United States, especially on young kids. The increase of young African Americans playing sports is a positive trend that can help kids to build healthier habits and keep them off the streets, so there is lower risk for them to get in contact with drugs or crime. Playing sports can also help young African Americans to get better education, as there are athletic scholarships that allow them to get higher education at colleges, they would not be able to attend otherwise.

Lastly, I think that careers on these African Americans directly affected the new wave of African American Athlete activists, like LeBron James or Colin Kaepernick who are leading voices in today's social justice movements. I see it as a good way to give back to society, and to be a voice someone else can look up to. Last year a plethora of African American athletes urged African Americans to register to vote in the 2020 United States presidential elections,

leading the minority and showing them that their voices matter. Unfortunately, most of the African American sports pioneers did not live to see this new generation of athletes that are the leaders and the voices of their communities, but those who did, like Bill Russell, have openly said that they are proud of the athletes of today who take stand for social justice.

Of course, sports are not the solution to all the racial problems in the United States, and some people may even say that social and political issues should not be mixed with leisure time activities like sports, but if the issue at hand is of concern of the athletes who entertain you, there will always be a connection between the two.

In the end, I think that solving these problems through nonviolent ways such as protests is a good way to do so, and all of the athletes mentioned in this work are in some sense responsible for doing it first and inspiring others that came after them to not be scared and speak their minds. That is why these pioneers should be celebrated.

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## Resumé

Tato práce se zabývá tématem rasismu v USA a primárně jeho působením na čtyři hlavní sportovní ligy v Severní Americe. Pojednávat bude hlavně o prvních sportovcích Afroamerického původu, kteří se do těchto lig dostali jako první, případně o jiných významných sportovcích, kteří sice do těchto lig nepřišli první, ale zasloužili se o jejich integraci.

Ve druhé kapitole se práce zaměřuje na historii Afroameričanů ve Spojených státech. Je zde popisováno, jak se tito lidé na území dnešních Spojených států dostali, jejich utrpení jako otroků pod nadvládou koloniálních Evropanů, boj za osvobození z otroctví, a následná segregace, a opětovný boj o integraci a rovnoprávné postavení ve společnosti.

Třetí kapitola obsahuje stručně popsané dějiny sportu ve Spojených státech od dob koloniálních přes boj o nezávislost, až k postupné profesionalizaci a monetizaci sportu, končící sportovní medializací.

Kapitola čtvrtá pojednává o prvních hráčích baseballu v Major League Baseball. Nejdříve tedy v podkapitole 4.1 Jackie Robinsonem, tedy jeho životem, bojem za rovnoprávnost, a šanci kterou dostal od týmu Brooklyn Dodgers. Další podkapitola 4.2 je zaměřena na Larry Dobyho, a jeho život ve stínu Robinsonova prvenství.

Pátá kapitola se týká prvních Afroamerických hráčů v National Basketball Association. V podkapitole 5.1 je zmíněna trojice hráčů kteří se do této ligy dostali ve stejný rok, kdy v roce 1950 byl prvním Afroamerickým hráčem vybraným v draftu Chuck Cooper, prvním Afroameričanem, který podepsal profesionální smlouvu Nat „Sweetwater“ Clifton, a prvním Afroamerickým hráčem, který kdy odehrál zápas v profesionální lize Earl Lloyd. Podkapitola 5.2 potom pojednává o Billu Russelovi, jeho životě, strastech v boji o rovnoprávnost, a životních úspěších s tímto spojených.

Šestá kapitola je zaměřena na Afroamerické hráče amerického fotbalu, jež jako první hráli v National Football League. V podkapitole 6.1 na hráče Los Angeles Rams, Kenny Washingtona a Woody Stroda, kteří byli na univerzitě spoluhráči Jackie Robinsona, a v podkapitole 6.2 jsou popsány příběhy hráčů týmu Cleveland Browns, kterými byli Marion Motley a Bill Willis.

V sedmé kapitole se práce zabývá prvními Afroameričany, kteří kdy hráli hokej v National Hockey League. Willie O'Ree o kterém se píše v podkapitole 7.1 je sice z Kanady, ovšem jeho prarodiče byli otroky ve Spojených státech, a jeho celoživotní přínos pro integraci hokeje je oceňován do dnes. Podkapitola 7.2 potom obsahuje informace o Valmore Jamesovi, který byl původem opravdu ze Spojených států a byl tedy technicky prvním Afroameričanem v National Hockey League.

Hlavními metodami pro tuto práci byla analýza biografí a jiných textů obsahujících informace o těchto Afroamerických průkopnících v oblasti čtyř hlavních sportovních lig v USA.



## ANOTACE

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<b>Rok obhajoby:</b>	2021

<b>Název práce:</b>	Afroameričtí průkopníci ve čtyřech hlavních sportovních ligách v USA
<b>Název v angličtině:</b>	Afro-American Pioneers in Four Major Sports Leagues in the USA
<b>Anotace práce:</b>	Tato bakalářská práce je zaměřena na první Afroameričany ve čtyřech hlavních sportovních ligách v USA. Jsou zde popsány příběhy těchto sportovců s ohledem na jejich úspěchy v boji proti segregaci a také na úspěchy v jejich sportovních disciplínách.
<b>Klíčová slova:</b>	Rasismus, rasismus v USA, sport, sport v USA, baseball, basketball, americký fotbal, hokej.
<b>Anotace v angličtině:</b>	This Bachelor thesis is focused on African American pioneers in Four Major Sports Leagues in the USA. The stories of these athletes are dealt with there, focused on their achievements in their fight against racism and segregation as well as their achievements in their sports.
<b>Klíčová slova v angličtině:</b>	Racism, racism in the USA, sports, sports in the USA, baseball, basketball, football, hockey.
<b>Přílohy vázané v práci:</b>	
<b>Rozsah práce:</b>	41 stran
<b>Jazyk práce:</b>	angličtina