

PARENTS WITH PREPAREDNESS

Baseball!

The Greats. The Game. The Character It Takes.
Ruth · Robinson · Mays · Gehrig · Clemente · Aaron

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The Game Within the Game

Baseball is the most statistically documented sport in human history. Every pitch, every swing, every step has been counted, categorized, and debated for over 150 years.

But the numbers only tell part of the story.

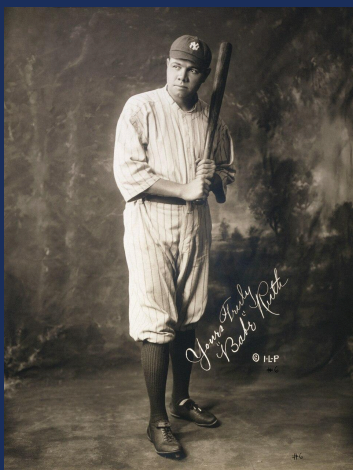
This ebook is about the other part — the character, the resilience, the team-first mentality that makes great players into legends, and the lessons that apply just as well in a classroom or a boardroom as they do in a dugout.

We'll look at six of the greatest players ever to play the game, then we'll talk about what the game actually teaches: how to ride the bench, how to be a great teammate, how to win without showing off, and how to lose without an excuse.

The Greats

Six players. Six stories. One game.

BABE RUTH



★ ★ ★

New York Yankees
Pitcher / Right Fielder
1914–1935

714 career home runs
.342 batting average
2,214 career RBIs

Photo source:
commons.wikimedia.org

Babe Ruth

New York Yankees · 1914–1935

George Herman Ruth didn't just change baseball — he invented the modern game. Before Ruth, baseball was a game of singles and strategy. He made it about power.

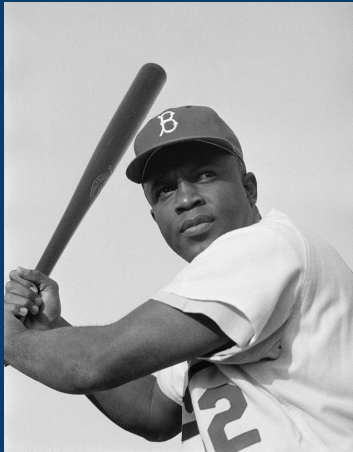
Orphaned at seven and raised at a reform school where he learned to play ball, Ruth signed his first professional contract at 19. He became the most famous athlete in America before he was 30.

What made Ruth legendary wasn't just the numbers — it was his unapologetic joy. He played with everything he had, every single game.

“I swing big, with everything I've got. I hit big or I miss big. I like to live as big as I can.”

— Babe Ruth

JACKIE ROBINSON



★ ★ ★

Brooklyn Dodgers
Second Baseman
1947–1956

.311 batting average

6× All-Star selections

1947 Rookie of the Year

Photo source:
commons.wikimedia.org

Jackie Robinson

Brooklyn Dodgers · 1947–1956

Jack Roosevelt Robinson broke Major League Baseball's color barrier on April 15, 1947. He was 28 years old, and he knew what was coming.

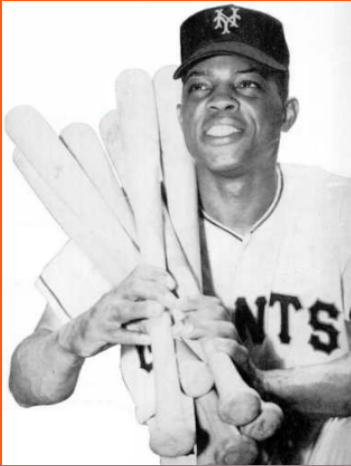
Branch Rickey, the Dodgers' executive who recruited him, told Robinson he needed someone with the courage to not fight back — at least at first. Robinson agreed. For three years, he endured abuse from fans, opponents, even some teammates, and responded by playing some of the best baseball anyone had ever seen.

His number, 42, is the only number retired across all of Major League Baseball — on every team, forever.

“Life is not a spectator sport. If you're going to spend your whole life in the grandstand just watching what goes on, I think you're wasting your life.”

— Jackie Robinson

WILLIE MAYS



★ ★ ★

*New York / San Francisco
Giants*
Center Fielder
1951–1973

660 career home runs

24× All-Star selections

2× MVP awards

Photo source:
commons.wikimedia.org

Willie Mays

New York / San Francisco Giants · 1951–1973

Willie Mays may be the most complete baseball player who ever lived. He could hit for average, hit for power, steal bases, and play defense at a level that left opponents simply shaking their heads.

"The Catch" — a full-speed, over-the-shoulder grab in the 1954 World Series — remains one of the most replayed moments in sports history. What most people don't know is that the throw he made afterward was just as extraordinary.

Mays never seemed to work hard — he seemed to play. Other players practiced; Mays just showed up and the game looked easy. That ease was the result of more preparation than anyone saw.

"They throw the ball, I hit it. They hit the ball, I catch it."
— Willie Mays

LOU GEHRIG



★ ★ ★

New York Yankees
First Baseman
1923–1939

2,130 consecutive games

.340 career average

1,995 career RBIs

Photo source:
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Lou Gehrig

New York Yankees · 1923–1939

Henry Louis Gehrig played 2,130 consecutive games — a record that stood for 56 years. He played through broken bones, back spasms, and concussions. He simply showed up.

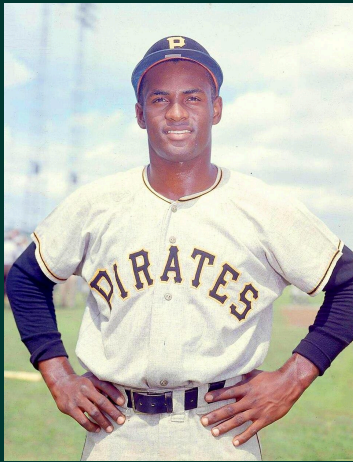
In 1939, at the height of his career, Gehrig was diagnosed with ALS — a fatal neurological disease that now bears his name. He retired immediately. On July 4, 1939, he stood at home plate at Yankee Stadium before 62,000 fans and delivered the most famous speech in baseball history.

He called himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth." He had been given a death sentence two months before.

"Today I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

— Lou Gehrig, July 4, 1939

ROBERTO CLEMENTE



★ ★ ★

Pittsburgh Pirates
Right Fielder
1955–1972

3,000 career hits (exact)

12× Gold Glove Awards

1966 NL MVP

Photo source:
commons.wikimedia.org

Roberto Clemente

Pittsburgh Pirates · 1955–1972

Roberto Clemente was the first Latin American player enshrined in the Baseball Hall of Fame — and he got there not because of his arm (legendary), his hitting (career .317 average), or his fielding (12 Gold Gloves), but because of who he was as a human being.

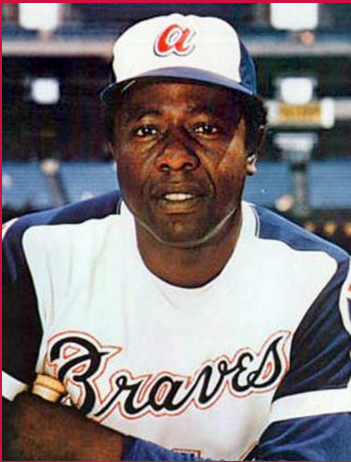
On December 31, 1972, Clemente boarded a plane carrying relief supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua. The plane crashed into the ocean shortly after takeoff. He was 38 years old.

The Baseball Hall of Fame waived its standard five-year waiting period and inducted him the following year. No player since has worn number 21 for the Pirates.

“Any time you have an opportunity to make a difference in this world and you don't, then you are wasting your time on Earth.”

— Roberto Clemente

HANK AARON



★ ★ ★

Milwaukee / Atlanta Braves
Right Fielder
1954–1976

755 career home runs

.305 career average

25× All-Star selections

Photo source:
commons.wikimedia.org

Hank Aaron

Milwaukee / Atlanta Braves · 1954–1976

Henry Louis Aaron broke Babe Ruth's all-time home run record on April 8, 1974 — and he did it under a torrent of racist threats so severe that he had a security detail and mail screened for two years before the moment arrived.

Aaron handled it with a dignity that made the achievement even greater. He didn't celebrate loudly. He didn't respond to the threats. He showed up and hit.

Aaron finished his career with 755 home runs and spent decades afterward working in baseball's front office, mentoring young players, and quietly making the game more accessible to players who looked like him.

“My motto was always to keep swinging. Whether I was in a slump or feeling badly or having trouble off the field, the answer was always to keep swinging.”

— Hank Aaron

The Other Half of the Game

Statistics tell you what happened. Sportsmanship tells you who someone is.

Great players are measured in numbers. Great teammates are measured in something harder to count — how they treat the game, their team, and the people across the diamond from them.

Here's what real sportsmanship looks like at every level of baseball, from the bench to the box score.

Riding the Bench

Every great player spent time on the bench. Every one of them. And the way they handled it — whether they sulked, checked out, or stayed ready — said everything about the player they became.

What bench players do that coaches notice

Cheer for the guy who took your spot. Pay attention to the pitcher — you may need that information in the seventh inning. Ask questions. Stay loose. Be the first to congratulate a teammate after a hit. The bench isn't where careers end. It's where character is built.

“The team that trusts each other wins more games than the team with the best talent.”

— Joe Torre, Hall of Fame Manager

Being a Great Teammate

- Run out every ground ball. Every time. Not for the crowd — for your teammates who are watching.
- When a teammate makes an error, be the first voice they hear — and make it encouraging.
- Know the situation. Know the score. Know the count. Be ready when your name is called.
- Disagree with coaches and umpires respectfully. You can compete hard and still keep your composure.
- Celebrate your teammates' successes like they were your own. They will remember it.

The best thing Roberto Clemente ever said about sportsmanship

"If you have a chance to accomplish something that will make things better for people coming behind you, and you don't do that, you are wasting your time on this earth." He wasn't talking about baseball — but he was.

Losing Well, Winning Better

How you lose matters. How you win matters almost as much.

- After a loss: shake hands, say something genuine, keep your head up in the lineup. The team that can lose gracefully can win consistently.
- After a win: don't show up the other team. Flip your bat at your own backyard. On the field, keep it professional.
- After a bad game: take the lesson, leave the moment. Tomorrow's game is a separate game.

"It's not whether you get knocked down. It's whether you get up."

— Vince Lombardi

What the Greats Had in Common

Every player in this ebook — Ruth, Robinson, Mays, Gehrig, Clemente, Aaron — was, by any measure, extraordinary. But look closer and you see the same things again and again:

- They played hard regardless of the score or situation.
- They handled adversity — injury, racism, disease, tragedy — without making excuses.
- They respected the game more than they respected their own statistics.
- They made the people around them better.

You don't have to hit 714 home runs to do those things. You just have to decide to.

Play the Long Game

Every one of the six players in this ebook had moments of failure, pain, and doubt. Ruth struck out 1,330 times. Robinson was told to stay quiet when he wanted to fight back. Gehrig played his last game knowing he was dying. Aaron stepped up to the plate knowing the hatred directed at him.

None of them quit. None of them made excuses. And none of them played only for themselves.

That's the game within the game. It doesn't care what position you play or what your batting average is. It just wants to know — when things get hard, what do you do?

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Raising kids who know what to do.

