

Civil Rights and Sports: The Athletes Who Changed the Face of Sports

Stella Evans

Professional Sports are a large part of our culture. We go to sporting events, we watch them on television, and we talk about them with our colleagues and friends. We want the teams we support to perform well. We want the owners and coaches to find the best players available to help our teams win. This was not always the case. Up through the mid twentieth century, sports teams were very much segregated. African Americans were not hired to play. Owners, fans, and other players were not looking for the best player; they wanted the best white player. This unit will examine the move from segregated professional sports teams to the ones we have today. We will look at the difficulty encountered by the players who pioneered the way onto various sports and how they made it possible for talented athletes to follow them. Students will be studying the African American athletes who paved the way.