

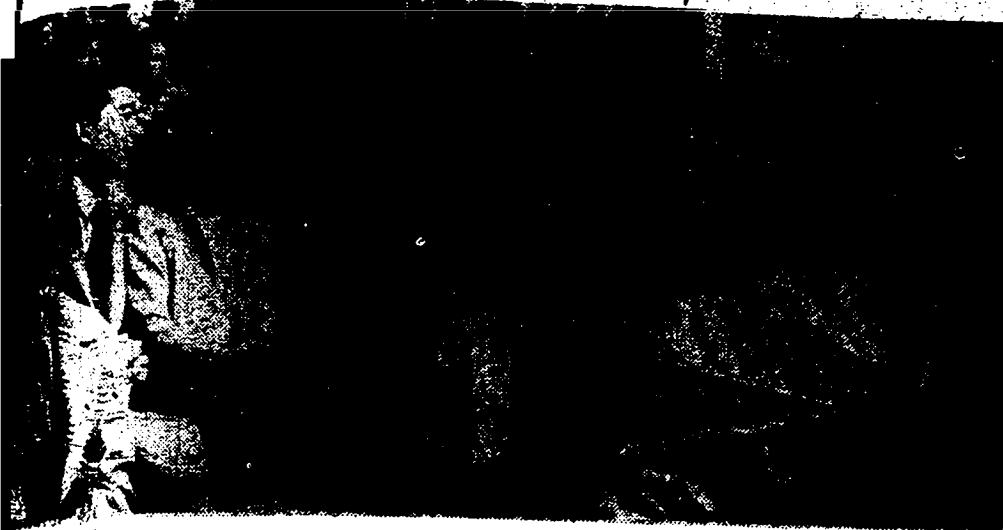
# Jackie Robinson Packing 'Em In: Dodgers Have Drawn 95,000 Fans in Four Exhibition Contests

WENDELL SMITH Courier Sports Editor

The Pittsburgh Courier (1911-1950); Apr 19, 1947; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Pittsburgh Courier

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## Jackie Robinson Packing 'Em In



### Fans Throng to Jackie's Debut —

The Courier's ace cameraman, Billy Rowe, was right on hand to catch the huge crowds which flocked to Ebbets Field, Brooklyn, N. Y., for the debut of Jackie Roosevelt Robinson as a major

leaguer, wearing the uniform of Branch Rickey's Brooklyn Dodgers in the National League. More than 95,000 fans turned out for the four exhibition games in which Jackie displayed his wares. Three of them were against the former world's champions, the New York Yankees. These scenes show part of the huge crowds.

In the extreme right photograph, Mrs. Jackie Robinson (third from right), smiles with their young son in her arms, as she watches her husband's final performance as a minor leaguer, with the Montreal Royals of the International League, against the Dodgers. He signed a Brooklyn contract the following morning.—Billy Rowe Photos.



Man of Destiny—Fate has taken a hand in the life of this young man standing here looking to the future and the fortune it might bring. He is Jackie Robinson, first Negro in modern major league baseball. And the biggest news of the week in everybody's book.—Rowe Photo.

## Dodgers Have Drawn 95,000 Fans in Four Exhibition Contests

By WENDELL SMITH  
(Courier Sports Editor)

**BROOKLYN, N. Y.**—Jackie Robinson might easily dislodge Dixie Walker as the "Peepul's Choice" in Brooklyn.

Although Walker has held this honor for no less than five years, the bronze-colored first baseman, who made his major league debut against the Yankees here last week, is the choice of the fans at the present time.

While Walker has been subjected to cat-calls in every game played at Ebbets Field since the Rickey caravan returned from Havana, Robinson has been the "darling of the bums."

He has been cheered and hailed in every ball game and there is no doubt that the fans are more sentimental about him than their once-beloved Dixie.

In fact, Robinson's presence in the Dodgers' lineup has made the turnstile click. He is definitely box office, and whatever expense Rickey went to in Havana will be a mere pittance if he stays on the club.

Three games with the Yankees, for instance, attracted a total of 79,441 cash customers. That's just about twice as many fans as the Yanks and Brooks have attracted

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# Jackie Robinson Packing 'Em In

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in their annual spring exhibition series before.

Robinson is the attraction. There is no doubt about that, and there is no doubt that Negro fans are showing their appreciation by digging down and coming up with money for tickets every day.

Last Sunday, for instance, Brooklyn and New York played before a total of 30,847 spectators. That is probably the biggest crowd that ever saw a spring training tilt in the history of the majors.

## ROBBIE DRIVES IN LONE RUN

The Yanks rallied and won that game, 10 to 9, after Brooklyn apparently had it sewed up. The Bronx Bombers, also won the previous day's game, 8 to 1, and Robinson singled sharply to left to drive in the lone run the Brooks made.

Altogether, Brooklyn has played before 95,000 fans in three games with New York and one with Montreal.

Crowds like those represent money. Branch Rickey knows that, and is now satisfied that he made a good business deal when he signed Jackie to a Brooklyn contract.

Rickey is a shrewd business man. He knew when he signed Jackie that he had cornered the greatest drawing card since Babe Ruth was going around with his destructive bat and cracking out home runs.

If Robinson stays in the game regularly, Brooklyn will probably attract more fans this year than ever before in the history of the club.

As for Robinson's popularity race with Dixie Walker, there is no doubt that Jackie is leading the "Alabama Angel" by a good margin. Each time the stocky Robinson steps to the plate, he is welcomed with a rousing ovation by the fans.

## BUMS' BOSS CLEANING UP LEFT AND RIGHT

While other owners sit tight and "wait to see what happens to Rickey," the boss of the bums, is cleaning up left and right. Rickey knows he has the best attraction in all baseball in Robinson and that is one of the main reasons he is up there with the big leaguers.

Robinson is mobbed by Brooklyn's loyal fans before and after every ball game. It was necessary for him to find the "secret door" in Ebbets Field to escape the maddening throng. Robinson must hide and run for safety after each game. Dixie Walker, on the other hand, has been greeted with a deluge of boos and cat-calls.

Typical of the reaction of Brooklyn fans is the exuberance of Hilda Chester, the number one fan of the Dodgers, who became involved in a verbal battle after Sunday's game. Hilda and a woman fan from Havana became engaged in a word battle when Jackie stepped out of the clubhouse Sunday afternoon. The Cuban visitor grabbed Jackie and insisted on getting an autograph.

"Leave him go home," Hilda Chester said, throwing her weight against the onsurging crowd. "He's a ball player. He's tired after trying such a hard game today."

But the Latin lady refused to be moved. If it hadn't been for an alert police guard, they might have had a real feminine brawl.

So, as Jackie Robinson makes his debut in the majors, Dixie Walker is trying to win back the popularity he once controlled without a rival.

Robinson will probably prove to be the best drawing card in baseball during the 1947 season.

Meantime, Rickey is sitting in his office counting out the money.