

# Boston Newspaper Coverage of Jackie Robinson's First Season

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This paper examined how Boston newspapers of the time covered Jackie Robinson in the games he played as a Brooklyn Dodger against the Boston Braves during his rookie season in 1947. Daily newspapers examined included microfilm copies of the Boston *Daily Globe* (morning), the Boston *Evening Globe*, the Boston *Sunday Globe*, the Boston *Herald* (morning), the Boston *Sunday Herald*, the Boston *Daily Record* and the Boston *Sunday Advertiser* (the *Record's* Sunday edition). Two of the city's better known weekly newspapers published for the black community – the Boston *Guardian* and the Boston *Chronicle* – also were examined for their coverage of Robinson.

The paper concentrated on material from four areas: (1) staff-written reports by beat sportswriters in the daily newspapers cited above; (2) some wire service dispatches that appeared in those daily newspapers; (3) material written by newspaper columnists – particularly Dave Egan of the *Daily Record*; (4) stories that appeared in the two newspapers (cited above) that served the black community.

In general, there was fairly heavy coverage of Robinson's promotion to the majors and his initial debut in an exhibition game against the Yankees, via wire service dispatches in the Boston daily papers, as well as commentary by the columnists. This coverage of Robinson decreased somewhat when the Dodgers played the Braves in the season-opening series at Ebbets Field. It should be mentioned that Boston newspapers were denied what probably would have been their most timely opportunity for intensive coverage of Robinson when a three-game series between the two teams at Braves Field in Boston scheduled for the first weekend of the season was rained out.

While Boston daily newspapers in general confined their coverage of Robinson's early season appearances to the sports section, the *Guardian* and the *Chronicle* featured them on the front page. In addition, while references to Robinson by race diminished in the Boston press as the season wore on, some references to race appeared sporadically in both the daily newspapers and black newspapers until the end of the season.

The final portion of the paper examined columns written in support of Robinson by Dave Egan, a sportswriter and columnist for the *Daily Record*, a morning tabloid with a wide circulation throughout New England. Egan, a college graduate at a time when many in his profession were not, spoke out in a fair but firm manner on the absence of blacks in major league baseball and was adamant in his affirmation of Robinson's promotion to the Dodgers. He was described by the *Guardian* as "a militant Irish-Catholic sportswriter" who "devotes whole columns toward colored Americana." During the 1947 season, he wrote at least seven columns that featured Robinson, including one entitled "A Truly Memorable Memorial Day" when Robinson finally made his Boston debut on May 30.