



## Trailblazing African American Athletes

- **Jackie Robinson** (Baseball): First Black MLB player in the modern era, helped create a more accepting Brooklyn and league.
- **Jesse Owens** (Track & Field): Won 4 gold medals during the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Owens showed the German people that the Nazi Parties ideology of Aryan supremacy was fiction.
- **Wilma Rudolph** (Track & Field): First American woman to win three gold medals in a single Olympics (1960). Overcame polio as a child.
- **Bill Russell** (Basketball): Civil rights leader and 11-time NBA champion. With a clear focus on teamwork, Hall of Famer Bill Russell not only won a gold Olympic medal as Captain of the U.S. national basketball team and helped the Boston Celtics win 11 NBA Championships in his 13-year professional career, but he went on to become the first ever black coach in NBA history.
- **Arthur Ashe**:(Tennis): First Black man to win Wimbledon, US Open; advocate for civil rights and HIV awareness.
- **Tiger Woods** (Golf): First Black (and multiethnic) superstar in golf, shattered a historically white sport.
- **Cheryl Miller** (Basketball): Women's basketball pioneer, college legend, set the stage for WNBA.
- **Ernie Davis** (Football): First African American to win the Heisman Trophy (1961), broke barriers despite a tragically short life.
- **Doug Williams** (Football): First Black quarterback to win a Super Bowl (1988), shattered stereotypes.
- **Simone Biles** (Gymnastics): Greatest gymnast of all time, advocating for athlete mental health.

- **Bubba Wallace** (NASCAR): Current NASCAR driver, vocal against Confederate flag and racism in racing.
- **Jim Brown** (Football): NFL legend, civil rights activist, often called the greatest running back ever.
- **Serena Williams** (Tennis): Dominated women's tennis with 23 Grand Slam singles titles, redefining power and presence.
- **Althea Gibson** (Tennis): First African American to win a Grand Slam title (1956 French Open), paved the way in tennis.
- **Muhammad Ali** (Boxing): Heavyweight champion, activist, outspoken critic of the Vietnam War and racism.
- **Debi Thomas** (Figure Skating): First Black athlete to win a medal at the Winter Olympics (1988, bronze).
- **HOCKEY: Willie O'Ree**  
A legend on and off the ice, Willie O'Ree was the first black National Hockey League (NHL) player, suiting up for the Boston Bruins from 1958–1961 (and did you know he played blind in his right eye?)
- **Mamie "Peanut" Johnson** was an American professional baseball player who was one of three women, and the first female pitcher, to play in the Negro leagues.
- Flo Hyman: **THE MOST FAMOUS VOLLEYBALL PLAYER OF HER TIME.**  
**Famous quote:** "When I hit the floor, I have to realize it's not as if I broke a bone. Pushing yourself over the barrier is a habit. I know I can do it and try something else crazy. If you want to win the war, you've got to pay the price."
- **BOXING: Laila Ali**  
The daughter of great Muhammad Ali, Laila showed the world that females have a place in the boxing ring, winning multiple titles and retiring undefeated.
- **Alan Cedric Page** made history on November 3, 1992, by winning election to the Minnesota Supreme Court and, in so doing, becoming the first African-American to serve on the Court. Justice Page was re-elected in 1998, 2004, and 2010, serving on the Court until 2015 when he reached the mandatory retirement age of 70. A graduate of the U. of Notre Dame and former professional football player

for the Minnesota Vikings and Chicago Bears. He was the NFL's MVP in 1971. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2018. His famous quote: "Don't whisper justice."

- **Alice Coachman: THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN FROM ANY COUNTRY TO WIN AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL.** Famous Quote: "To be a champion, you got to have determination, you've got to have guts; you have to train and let nothin' come between you and what you want, that goal you want to reach."
- **Jackie Joyner-Kersey.** Jackie Joyner-Kersey is a retired American track and field athlete.
- **Simone Manuel: FIRST BLACK FEMALE SWIMMER TO WIN AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDAL**
- **Lisa Leslie: THE FIRST WOMAN TO DUNK IN THE WNBA**
- **Pelé:** Soccer player and former Minister of Sports of Brazil. As the first black soccer star, who was also the first global soccer star ever, he inspired People of Color worldwide. Pelé also transformed the impact of soccer: with his style of play, he transformed the ball sport into an art form in its own right with a high entertainment factor.
- **Frank Robinson:** American professional baseball outfielder and manager in Major League Baseball (MLB) who played for five teams over 21 seasons. In 1975, he became the first black manager in big-league history as player-manager of the Indians.
- **Lindsey Harding:** is an American professional basketball coach and former player. She is an assistant coach for the Los Angeles Lakers of the National Basketball Association (NBA) She made history as first Black woman to be named head coach in NBA G League
- **Maia Chaka:** Made history as the first black female NFL Referee