

RICKWOOD TALES

Rickwood Calendar 5/7/25 to 7/31/25

- **May 10:** Vestavia Youth
- **May 16-18:** Over 40 Tournament
- **May 21-25:** SWAC Baseball Tournament
- **June 4, 12:30 PM:** Rocket City Trash Pandas v. Birmingham Barons (Tribute to the Negro Leagues)
- **June 19, 12:00 PM:** MLB East-West All Star Tribute Game
- **June 6-8, 12-15, 21-26; July 5-8, 12-15, 18-20, 25-27:** Travel ball
- **June 28-30; July 1-2:** International Police & Fire Games

Please like our Facebook Page for updates about events at the park: www.facebook.com/friendsofrickwood.com

Get Your Rickwood Gear!

We have plenty of copies of the new book celebrating the life of Willie Mays. Caps, t-shirts, jackets, posters, books, coffee mugs, and other Rickwood merchandise are available for purchase at <https://rickwood.com/shop/>



THE SWAC TOURNAMENT AND THE BARONS' RETURN TO RICKWOOD HIGHLIGHT THE SPRING

Rickwood will again take center stage in 2025, hosting two marquee events that celebrate baseball's past, present, and future. From **May 21-25**, we welcome the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) Baseball Tournament, followed shortly by the return of the Birmingham Barons on Wednesday, June 4 at 1:00 PM.

The SWAC tournament combines the top eight teams from the conference's 12 baseball programs in a two-bracket, double-elimination showdown. With a legacy dating back to 1920, the SWAC is the premier athletic conference for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and its baseball tournament traces its origins to the late 1940s. Powerhouses like Southern University (19 titles) and Jackson State (13) will aim to add to their storied histories.

The tournament's arrival at Rickwood is more than a one-year commitment—it will remain at America's Oldest Ballpark through at least 2029.

With the SEC Tournament unfolding the same week across town at Hoover Met, Birmingham is set to become the heart of college and professional baseball this spring.

Less than two weeks after the SWAC tournament, the 2024 Southern League Champion Birmingham Barons return to Rickwood to face the Rocket City Trash Pandas in the Barons 25th visit to our historic venue since 1996. Scheduled for a **12:30 PM** start on **June 4**, both teams will wear Negro League throwback uniforms, honoring the Black baseball legends who once played at Rickwood.

Adding to the day's excitement, recent Hall of Famer Jim Kaat will throw out the ceremonial first pitch and sign autographs for fans. Kaat, who won 283 Major League games over a 25-year career, has a unique connection to the park—he appeared there as a 20-year-old with the Chattanooga Lookouts in 1959. However, he made his Rickwood debut as a pinch runner rather than on the pitcher's mound.

The Barons' memorable and emotional return to Rickwood in 2024 coincided with Willie Mays's passing, as fans learned the bittersweet news during the game. This spring's events are poised to once again connect fans with baseball's deep and powerful legacy at America's Oldest Ballpark.

MLB RETURNS TO RICKWOOD ON JUNETEENTH FOR THE EAST-WEST ALL STAR TRIBUTE!

From 1933 to 1962, the biggest stars in the Negro Leagues gathered late in each season for the annual East-West All Star Game (or games, as sometimes the All-Stars played at more than one park). The exploits of players such as Satchel Paige, Josh Gibson, Oscar Charleston, Buck Leonard, and many more in the EWASG are the stuff of legend.

The game was most often played at Chicago's Comiskey Park, which was the oldest ballpark until it was torn down in 1991, and Rickwood took that title. Other big league parks to host the event included Yankee Stadium, the Polo Grounds, Washington D.C.'s Griffith Stadium, and Cleveland's Municipal Stadium. Rick-

wood never hosted the event. *Until now.*

After last year's incredible tribute to the Negro Leagues at Rickwood, Commissioner Rob Manfred promised that Major League Baseball would return to Birmingham. MLB has just announced that Rickwood has been chosen to host the *East-West Classic: A Tribute to the Negro Leagues All-Star Game*, which will take place on **June 19, 2025, at 12:00 PM.**

In 2024, the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown hosted the inaugural tribute, as the East beat the West, 5-4. Ryan Howard hit a three-run

home run and was named the player of the game.

According to MLB, "the 2025 rosters will be led by 2025 Hall of Fame inductee CC Sabathia (West) and All-Star outfielder Chris Young (East) of MLB Network. The distinguished group of players participating spans over 370 Major League seasons and 35,400 games, combining for 12 World Series, two MVP Awards, two Cy Young Awards, 66 All-Star appearances, 18 Silver Slugger Awards and 31 Rawlings Gold Glove Awards."

Please follow MLB for more details about the game, including ticket information.

DICK ALLEN ELECTED TO THE BASEBALL HALL OF FAME; BECOMES 183RD MEMBER WHO APPEARED AT RICKWOOD

On Sunday, December 8, 2024, the Classic Era Baseball Committee elected power hitters Richard "Dick" Allen and Dave Parker to the National Baseball Hall of Fame. The group concentrates on candidates who contributed to the game before 1980, including Negro Leaguers and pre-Negro League players.

With 16 committee members, 75% of the vote, a minimum of 12 is needed for election. Parker received 14 of the 16 votes (87.5%), while Allen tallied 13, good for 81%. Other players on the ballot included pre-Negro League pitcher John Donaldson, three-time Negro World Series Champion Vic Harris, as well as former major leaguers Ken Boyer, Luis Tiant, Tommy John, and Steve Garvey.

What makes this story Rickwood relevant is Dick Allen. He started in two preseason exhibition games at the ballpark in 1965. While his performance in both games was mostly unremarkable, he is the 183rd known member of the Hall of Fame to participate in a game at Rickwood.

He was nicknamed Richie Allen by the team, and the press followed suit during his first stint with Philadelphia. Allen believed the diminutive was juvenile. His friends and family had always called him Dick and he implored sportswriters and the Phillies to refer to him by that name. They considered this request to be provocative, rather than reasonable. They refused him, and articles often painted him as a disgruntled troublemaker. He was even called "Richie" on his Topps baseball cards from 1964 to 1972.

In his time in the big leagues from 1963-1977, Allen wielded a dangerous bat as he slugged

351 home runs, drove in 1,119 runs, and posted snappy career averages in batting (.291), on-base (.378), and slugging (.534). As a hitter, his 156 lifetime OPS+ compares favorably to Willie Mays (155), Hank Aaron (155), and Joe DiMaggio (155). While he appeared in far fewer games than Mays and Aaron, he played in slightly more than DiMaggio. Based on his numbers, Allen's induction into the Hall of Fame is long overdue.

Allen played with Philadelphia on two separate occasions, while also logging time with the St. Louis Cardinals, Los Angeles Dodgers, Chicago White Sox, and Oakland Athletics. He was a seven-time all-star, winning the American League MVP in 1972 with the White Sox. That season, he batted .308 with career highs of 37 home runs and 113 runs batted in. He had a 199 OPS+ and received 96% of the votes for the American League MVP, making him a runaway winner.

Two Games At Rickwood

Dick Allen's two appearances at Rickwood were both afternoon contests against the Pittsburgh Pirates, held on Saturday and Sunday, April 10 and 11, immediately before the start of the 1965 regular season. In the Saturday game, the Phillies rolled to a 6-2 victory highlighted by a two-run homer by Wes Covington and a three-run double by Dick Stuart in front of a crowd of 4,321. Allen started at third base, going 0-1, with an error in the field, before giving way to Bobby Wine.

Allen also started Sunday's contest, as the Pirates rebounded with a 5-1 win. Free-swinging Roberto Clemente and light-hitting Gene Alley were the stars

of the game for the Bucs as both players slashed three hits in Pittsburgh's win.

Batting second in the lineup for the Phils, Allen got the lone hit off Pirate starter Don Cardwell. The Phillies would tally only four hits for the game, as 6,109 fans looked on.

Sidenotes - Other Notable Names

Three other Hall of Famers appeared in the two-game series along with Allen. Phillies teammate Jim Bunning started the Saturday game. Pirate stars Willie Stargell and Clemente also stepped onto the grass at Rickwood in both games. Notably absent was Pittsburgh's second baseman, future Hall of Famer Bill Mazeroski, who broke his foot earlier in spring training and was unable to play.

Leeds native Harry "the Hat" Walker managed the Pirates. Walker won the 1947 National League batting crown with a .363 average. He would manage the Houston Astros in addition to the Pirates, and later became the first head baseball coach at UAB. One notable guest in both dugouts before the Sunday game was Alabama head football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant. The gridiron king spoke with Walker and Philadelphia manager Gene Mauch before the Sunday afternoon game.

Allen died on December 7, 2020, at the age of 78, and will be inducted posthumously in Cooperstown. He was born in Wampum, Pennsylvania, and his early nicknames, according to a recent Associated Press story, included "The Wampum Whammer" and "Crash."

- Joe DeLeonard & Jeb Stewart

"Dick Allen's two appearances at Rickwood were both afternoon contests against the Pittsburgh Pirates, held on Saturday and Sunday, April 10 and 11, immediately before the start of the 1965 regular season."



Three Hall of Famers who played at Rickwood Field. Dick Allen is Rickwood's 183rd Hall of Famer!

BASEBALL 1965

B'HAM BARONS
1965
SEASON

TICKETS NOW AVAILABLE

BOX SEATS—70 GAMES	\$30⁰⁰
Choice Seats Available . . .	
TICKET BOOKS—25 TICKETS	\$25⁰⁰
Save 25c Each Ticket. . . .	
SEASON PARKING	\$15⁰⁰
All Games	

PIRATES vs. PHILLIES

Here April 10th and 11th

BOX SEATS (at Rickwood only)	\$2.00
for RESERVATIONS PHONE 786-4358	
GRANDSTAND SEATS	\$1.50

Available at Rickwood
 FLORSHEIM SHOES, 222 N. 20th St.
 EPP'S JEWELRY, 1810 N. 3rd Ave.
 MAIL ORDERS P. O. Box 3911, B'ham

"Dick Allen is Rickwood's 183rd Hall of Famer!"

An Advertisement that appeared in *The Birmingham News* before the 1965 season included prices for season tickets for the Birmingham Barons and the exhibition games between the Phillies and Pirates. Courtesy: *The Birmingham News*, Alabama Media Group/AL.com.

REMEMBERING BOB VEALE, A WONDERFUL FRIEND OF RICKWOOD FIELD

Bob Veale, the towering left-hander who once dominated National League batters and remained a beloved son of Birmingham, died on January 3, 2025, at the age of 89. A two-time All-Star and World Series champion, Veale's baseball legacy was matched only by his kindness, humility, and enduring connection to his hometown and Rickwood Field.

Born and raised in Birmingham, Veale was a fearsome presence on the mound, standing six feet six-inches tall and delivering fastballs that rattled even the greatest hitters of his era. In 1964, he led the National League with 250 strikeouts, outdueling legends like Bob Gibson and Don Drysdale. He followed that performance with a personal best 276 strikeouts in 1965, second only to Sandy Koufax. Veale remained among the league leaders for several seasons, including a third-place finish in 1966 (229 strikeouts) and a career-best 2.05 ERA in 1968.

Across thirteen major league seasons, mostly with the Pittsburgh Pirates and later the Boston Red Sox, Veale recorded 120 wins with a career 3.07 ERA. He was named to the National League All-Star team twice and played a key role for the 1971 Pirates, who won the World Series.

Despite his success, Veale never forgot his roots. According to *Willie's Boys* by John Klima, as a teenager, Veale pitched batting practice for both the Birmingham Black Barons and the white Barons—an unusual role for a young Black player in segregated Alabama. After pitching, he would work in the concession stand. In his own quiet way, Veale was helping nudge the color barrier long before he took the mound in the majors.

Veale often spoke fondly of Rickwood, the historic ballpark where

his dreams began. At a Triple Play Baseball Club meeting in the early 2000s, he recalled hurling a baseball from home plate over Rickwood's massive left-center scoreboard as a kid. That moment captured the drive and fire that fueled his career. He relished facing the game's best — Gibson, Koufax, Ferguson Jenkins, and Juan Marichal — never shying away from a challenge.

Before his professional career began, Veale played in Birmingham's competitive industrial and sandlot leagues. He later attended St. Benedict College (now Benedictine College) in Atchison, Kansas, where he honed his skills before signing with the Pirates.

Between 1964 and 1969, Veale struck out more than 200 batters in four separate seasons and recorded double-digit wins for seven straight years. He struck out 16 batters in a single game twice, which was clear evidence of his dominance during a golden era of pitching. He pitched 1,926 innings with 78 complete games during his big-league career.

Despite these achievements, recognition at home came much later. Veale was long overlooked

by the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame (ASHOF) until a group of Birmingham baseball fans, including the Friends of Rickwood Field and members of the Triple Play Baseball Club, launched a grassroots campaign. The effort succeeded, and in 2006, Veale was finally inducted.

Lamar Smith, who helped spearhead the letter-writing push, recalled the campaign: "Two decades ago, several of us were discussing Alabama players who deserved Hall of Fame recognition. Bob Veale's name came up immediately—but his stats weren't widely known. We presented the numbers and stories to the voters, and the result was swift: he was in." Smith remembered the mix of humor and humility that defined Veale: "He never tooted his own horn. At the ASHOF banquet, after a gracious and eloquent speech, Bob added a little surprise at the end. He paused and said, 'It's about time!' The room erupted in applause."

Other Rickwood board members also shared fond memories of Veale. Chairman Bill Cather remembered his visits to the historic ballpark fondly: "Every time Bob came to Rickwood, I just laughed at everything he said. He

"Across 13 major league seasons, mostly with the Pittsburgh Pirates and later the Boston Red Sox, Veale recorded 120 wins with a career 3.07 ERA."



Bob Veale signing an autograph before the Negro League tribute game at Rickwood, which ESPN broadcast in February 2006.

“DUSTING ‘EM OFF”: FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Warm days and cool nights are a sure sign of springtime in Birmingham and Alabama in general. As I sit here today, the last couple of days of Miles College and Birmingham High School baseball play have arrived.

At Rickwood, we are in full preparation for the SWAC Tournament, which we will host from **May 21-25**. See the SWAC's website for more details, including the schedule and start times. This event will be followed by the game between the Rocket City Trash Pandas and the Birmingham Barons, which will take place on **June 4 at 12:30 PM**. Also, during the last week of June, Rickwood will play host to the baseball component of the World Police and Fire Games.

Of course, I would be remiss if I did not mention the *East-West Classic: A Tribute to the Negro Leagues All-Star Game*, which will take place on **June 19 at 12:00 PM**. We are thankful to

the City of Birmingham for partnering with Major League Baseball to allow Rickwood to host this game. We certainly owe a debt of gratitude to Commissioner Rob Manfred for keeping his promise to have another MLB event at Rickwood. And, we can't wait to find out which former big leaguers will be participating.

The events held earlier this season have been successful in large part to everyone contributing to the effort. The Willie Mays Open, which jump-started our 2025 season, was a huge success. A special thanks goes out to all of the schools, particularly to host Miles College and Head Coach Milton Barney, Jr. We hope to make the event bigger in the future. We also owe a large thank you to Michael Mays for his interest in the Willie Mays Open and Rickwood Field. Michael is a great friend of Rickwood and a steward of his father's legacy. We are always glad to have him in Birmingham.

Thank you to both UAB and Troy and their respective head coaches, Casey Dunn and Skylar Meade, for their participation in the third annual Rickwood College Classic.

Also, much appreciation goes to North Alabama and Belmont for choosing Rickwood as their venue for a game on April 9. We were glad to host head coaches Jad Prachniak (UNA) and Dave Jarvis (Belmont) and their teams. We hope they will consider playing at the ballpark again in the near future. Please check the Rickwood website for more details.

Finally, even though it is six months away, I want to remind our readers that the Fourth Annual Rickwood Home Run Derby is **Sunday, October 26th**. We'll see you at the ballpark!

- Gerald Watkins

“We certainly owe a debt of gratitude to Commissioner Rob Manfred for keeping his promise to have another MLB event at Rickwood.”

BOB VEALE IS GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

always brought joy.” President and Executive Director Gerald Watkins, who had known Veale since the 1980s, praised his generosity and spirit, noting that “Bob loved kids. I saw it over and over again. He even worked on the field at Rickwood from time to time. His career was stellar—but he was humble. Only pitchers like Koufax, Gibson, and Marichal kept him from being a household name.”

Board member Mike Newton, who met Veale at card shows in the 1980s and '90s, recalled a signature phrase the pitcher often used when signing autographs. “‘Success never measures the man—only his heart does.’ That described him perfectly. He was a gentle giant.”

I met Veale at a Triple Play meeting in the early 2000s. I couldn't believe it. I'd wanted to meet him since I got his baseball card back in 1969. He told me about going to a small Catholic college and how the little nuns scared him. He always stayed on the straight and narrow.

Lamar Smith recalled, “he was very kind to children. He would pick up a baseball and tell the kids that he had a magic trick.

He would hold the baseball in one hand and slowly turn his hand over to reveal his fingers with no baseball showing. They would look to see if he had dropped it on the floor, and he

would open his fingers to surprise them with the baseball still there. His hands and fingers were just that big.”

Veale, one of many siblings from a large Birmingham family, leaves behind a wealth of warm memories and lasting impressions. His combination of elite talent, his humble nature, and love for his community made him a local hero—and a national talent who never forgot where he came from.

As Lamar Smith summed it up, “He had the stats. He had the stories. And he had the heart.” Bob Veale will be missed—but never forgotten.

- Joe DeLeonard

“Veale, one of many siblings from a large Birmingham family, leaves behind a wealth of warm memories and lasting impressions.”

RICKWOOD'S CHAMPIONSHIPS: THE 1944 BIRMINGHAM BLACK BARONS

If you wander over by the third-base side of the grandstand, you will notice that the Friends of Rickwood have commemorated the championship clubs that have called America's Oldest Ballpark home from 1910-1987. This series remembers those seasons.

During the decade of the 1940s, the Birmingham Black Barons were almost always in contention with a club stocked with former stars from the proving grounds of Birmingham's industrial leagues. The club entered the 1944 campaign as the defending Negro American League (NAL) champions. Once again, legendary skipper Winfield Welch managed the Black Barons.

Offensively, the team was led by right fielder Ed Steele, who batted .357 and posted an eye-popping 214 OPS+, shortstop Artie Wilson, who batted .379 and had a 187 OPS+, second baseman Tommy Sampson, who hit .339 with an OPS+ of 152, and

Johnny Britton, who hit .318 with a 137 OPS+. The club also featured stars like Piper Davis, Pepper Bassett, and Ted "Double Duty" Radcliffe.

The pitching staff included some well-known names: Alfred Saylor, who led the team in both innings pitched and wins, and finished with a 3.77 ERA, Alvin Gipson, who had a 3.79 ERA and led the club in strikeouts, Fay Washington who had a 2.92 ERA, and youngster Jimmie Newberry, who finished with a 3.18 ERA.

Overall, the club had a team ERA of 3.65 and batted .269. The Black Barons were once again the class of the NAL, finishing with a league-best record of 50-24 (.676) and a 12.5 game lead over the second-place Cleveland Buckeyes. Because Birmingham was so dominant in winning both halves of the season, the Black Barons did not have to play

against an NAL opponent to win the pennant. After the season, the NAL reached an agreement with the Negro National League (NNL) for the two leagues to play a Negro League World Series in multiple locations, including Birmingham, New Orleans, Pittsburgh, and Washington D.C.

Unfortunately for Birmingham, the Homestead Grays were again waiting for them in the World Series. The Grays' roster included five future members of the Hall of Fame: Josh Gibson, Buck Leonard, Cool Papa Bell, Jud Wilson, and Ray Brown. Homestead made short work of the Black Barons, winning the World Series four games to one, including two wins at Rickwood Field. Despite the loss, the Black Barons will forever be remembered for their NAL championship in 1944 on Rickwood's grandstand.

[NOTE: All player statistics and team records were taken from Seamheads.com]

"The Black Barons were once again the class of the NAL, finishing with a league-best record of 50-24 (.676) and a 12.5 game lead over the second-place Cleveland Buckeyes."



FROM THE ROOFTOP: A LESSON LEARNED

I am very fortunate to have known Charles and Margaret Farrell for several years. However, I never asked if either were baseball fans, or if they had ever visited Rickwood Field until October of 2024. I discovered both are fans, and Charles gave me a great surprise when he mentioned he still has his Rickwood badge from the time he worked at the ballpark in the late 1940s and early 1950s as a parking lot attendant for the Birmingham Barons. Below is his story as he wrote it. – Joe DeLeonard

As I am here tonight, looking at my prized Rickwood job badge, thoughts turn back to a time 74 (now 75) years ago, when I took turnip greens home from work to my dad. On that night, the Barons' game had started, and my parking lot was full. I closed the lot and turned in the parking money.

Before I departed for the evening, I watched a little of the game and saw Fred Hatfield rounding the bases after knocking a homer over the left field fence. I left in the second inning. I went back to the lot, grabbed a bunch of greens off a farmer's truck, and headed home.

As I entered the front door, my father was standing there and asked, "Where did you get the greens?" I told him a farmer came into the parking lot with a truck loaded with them.

Next, he said, "He gave them to you?" I replied, "Dad, I know they

are your favorites and grabbed a bunch for you."

"Are you telling me the farmer did not give them to you?"

"I got them for you."

He said, "Get back in that '37 Ford coupe of yours, go back and put those greens back in that man's truck exactly where you got them." That is what I did and had learned a valuable lifetime lesson.

Charles Stanley Farrell, Jr. is 90 years old, is sharing this memory of his past. A true lesson guiding him through the years. Hopefully, this or a similar lesson will reach their three children, eleven grandchildren, and soon thirteen great-grandchildren.

If you have a Rickwood memory or an old photo of the ballpark you'd like to share, please send it to jddballpark@gmail.com



1950 Rickwood Job Badge, Courtesy of Charles and Margaret Farrell

"As I am here tonight, looking at my prized Rickwood job badge, thoughts turn back to a time 74 (now 75) years ago, when I took turnip greens home from work to my dad."

During the Willie Mays Open, Willie's son, Michael Mays, was kind enough to visit with fans and share stories about his father. He posed for a picture with Willie Young, Jr., who was a star catcher and first baseman for Mississippi Valley State from 1977-80. Mr. Young is a member of the Mississippi Valley State Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2022.



TROY WINS THIRD ANNUAL RICKWOOD COLLEGE CLASSIC

The first two Rickwood College Classics pitted UAB against Birmingham-Southern College. The Blazers won the inaugural contest 10-4, while the Panthers stormed back in 2023 to win the Classic 13-3, in a game that ended after seven innings due to the "run rule". There was no Rickwood College Classic in 2024 due to renovations for the MLB game at the ballpark.

Of course, with the closing of Birmingham-Southern, the Classic will never be the same. This also gave UAB the practical problem of finding a new opponent.

On Tuesday, March 18, 2025, UAB hosted Troy University in the third annual Classic. The Trojans came into the game with an enviable 11-1 record and the number 21 ranking in the USA Today Sports baseball coaches' poll. For their part, the Blazers entered the contest with a respectable record of 14-6, including a big win over then-number 22 Auburn.

Unfortunately for UAB, the Trojans' hitters took a liking to Rickwood's confines as Troy posted two five-run innings en route to a 14-2 win, which was called after seven innings due

to the run rule. Troy pounded out 15 hits, including five doubles. Gavin Schrader and Houston Markham led the way with four and three hits, respectively, while Harrison Bowman hit the game's only home run. Jacob Roettgen pitched four innings of one-hit ball for Troy and got credit for the win. On defense, UAB's fielders had some success as the Blazers turned two 4-6-3 double plays, the only ones in the game.

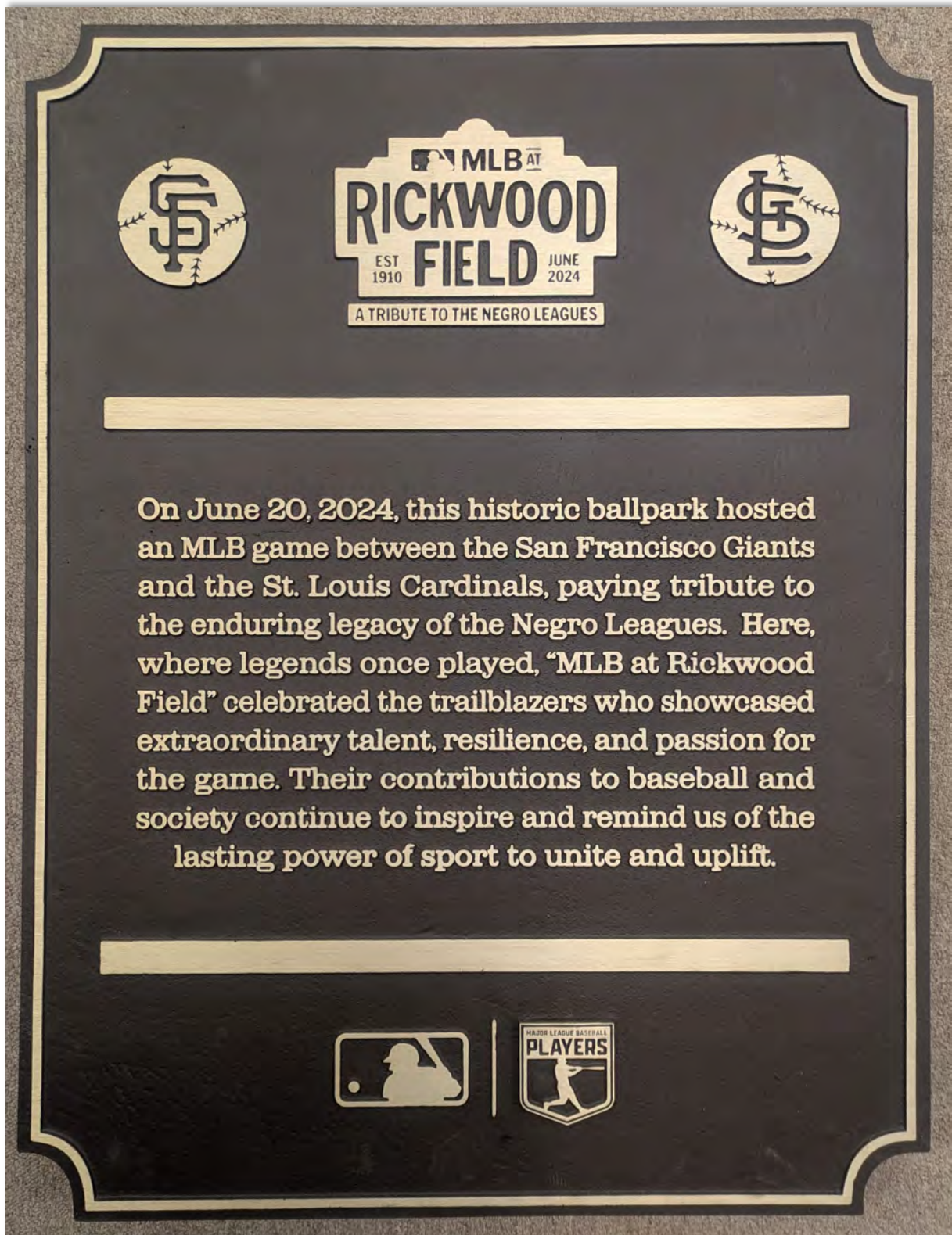
UAB and the Friends of Rickwood are looking forward to next year's College Classic.

"... the Trojans' hitters took a liking to Rickwood's confines as Troy posted two five-run innings en route to a 14-2 win ..."





MLB PRESENTS HISTORIC MARKER TO RICKWOOD



Our Friends at Major League Baseball are also Friends of Rickwood Field. The Commissioner and many executives and employees of MLB, the St. Louis Cardinals, and the San Francisco Giants worked tirelessly with the City of Birmingham to bring the first MLB regular season game to America's Oldest Ballpark on June 20, 2024. No one in Birmingham will ever forget that magical night. Now, MLB has honored the ballpark once again by generously presenting the Friends of Rickwood with a new historic marker, which will memorialize *MLB at Rickwood Field: A Tribute to the Negro Leagues* forever. Thank you to all our Friends at MLB! We appreciate you all beyond words and look forward to seeing you again on Juneteenth!

DID YOU KNOW?



X marks the spot. On May 21, 1948, Walt Dropo of the Birmingham Barons blasted a home run, which sailed over Rickwood's 35-foot-high scoreboard. The ball traveled 467 feet and struck the ballpark's original concrete outfield wall. Walton Lowry of *The Birmingham News* reported that 14,565 fans purchased tickets, which set a regular season attendance record. The Barons won the game against the Mobile Bears, 3-1. According to columnist Zipp Newman, Dropo's "ball hit halfway up the wall—467 feet from home plate. It would have rolled another 35 or 50 feet at the speed the ball was traveling." The spot was soon marked in white paint with an X. Months later, sportswriters were still marveling at Dropo's crushing blow. We have preserved the moment with a plaque, which is an essential part of any tour of America's oldest ballpark.

*"On May 21, 1948
Walt Dropo of the
Birmingham Barons
blasted a home run,
which sailed over
Rickwood's 35-foot high
scoreboard."*

BECOME A FRIEND OF RICKWOOD

The Friends of Rickwood is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which was formed in 1992, and is dedicated to preserving America's Oldest Ballpark. Anyone can become a Friend of Rickwood by donating to the Friends.

We have four levels of membership for individuals and each level will receive a certificate and a window sticker. In addition: (1) Level 2 is a "Rookie" for a \$25 donation (and gets a certificate and a sticker); (2) Level 3 is a "Veteran" for a \$50 donation (and also gets a cus-

tom patch); (3) Level 3 is a "Gold Glover" for a \$100 donation (and also gets a Rickwood T-shirt); and (4) Level 4 is an "All-Star" for a \$500 donation (and also gets a cage jacket) To join, please visit www.rickwood.com/membership or write us at:

The Friends of Rickwood
Rickwood Field
1137 2nd Ave West
Birmingham, AL 35204

Please come out to the ballpark and take a tour. Thanks!



BIRMINGHAM BARONS AT RICKWOOD FIELD SINCE 1996

Date	Winner	Loser	Honoring (and Special Guest)
June 12, 1996	Barons 3	Memphis Chicks 2	1948 Barons (Walt Dropo, Piper Davis)
June 10, 1997	Barons 12	Chattanooga Lookouts 6	1950s Barons teams
June 4, 1998	Greenville Braves 12	Barons 8	1967 Birmingham A's (Paul Bryant, Jr., and Hoss Bowlin)
May 16, 1999	Barons 5	Huntsville Stars 4	1948 Black Barons (Charlie Pride, Bill Greason, and Bill Powell)
June 11, 2000	Mobile Baybears 5	Barons 4	1931 Barons
June 7, 2001	West Tennessee Diamond Jaxx 12	Barons 3	1912 Barons
April 25, 2002	Barons 14	Chattanooga Lookouts 4	1928 Barons (Vida Blue)
June 11, 2003	Barons 5	Huntsville Stars 1	1980s Barons teams (Art Clarkson, Bill Lee, Scottie Earl, Mark Smith, Rondal Rollin, Chuck Cary, and Roy Majtyka)
June 17, 2004	Huntsville Stars 8	Barons 6	Birmingham's Industrial Leagues
July 27, 2005	Montgomery Biscuits 6	Barons 5	10 Previous Birmingham Eras (Minnie Minoso, Jesse Mitchell, Charlie Moore)
June 22, 2006	Barons 3	Tennessee Smokies 2	1950s Yankee years (Tommy John and Rondal Rollin)
May 30, 2007	Barons 3	Jacksonville Suns 2	1960s Barons/A's teams (Bobby Bragan)
May 29, 2008	Jacksonville Suns 4	Barons 2	1950s Red Sox years (Jimmy Piersall)
May 27, 2009	Mississippi Braves 3	Barons 2	1982 Barons (Pete Van Wieren)
June 2, 2010	Tennessee Smokies 8	Barons 7	1910 Barons (Harmon Killebrew)
June 1, 2011	Barons 4	Chattanooga Lookouts 3	1961 Barons (Gaylord Perry)
May 30, 2012	Chattanooga Lookouts 7	Barons 6	War-time baseball (Dale Murphy)
May 29, 2013	Barons 6	Tennessee Smokies 3	1948 Black Barons (Fergie Jenkins)
June 25, 2014	Mississippi Braves 5	Barons 2	The Roaring 20s (Dwight Gooden)
May 27, 2015	Jacksonville Suns 8	Barons 2	1948 Barons (Darryl Strawberry)
June 1, 2016	Chattanooga Lookouts 7	Barons 4	1967 Birmingham A's (Rollie Fingers)
May 30, 2018	Barons 7	Chattanooga Lookouts 1	1950s Barons teams (Bucky Dent)
May 29, 2019	Montgomery Biscuits 9	Barons 4	Opening day 1910 (Lou Piniella)
June 18, 2024	Montgomery Biscuits 6	Barons 5	1948 Black Barons

