

Baysox Hosting 10th Annual Negro League Tribute

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Josh Gibson is considered by many to be the greatest Negro League baseball player ever born, but because he played in the 1930s and 1940s when black players were not permitted on Major League teams, he was never able to showcase his skills to most of the country.

This season, the Bowie Baysox are hosting their 10th annual Negro League Tribute Saturday, June 4 and have teamed with the Josh Gibson Foundation to honor the Negro League player's achievements by giving away 1,000 Josh Gibson Centennial Bobblehead collectibles and holding a jersey auction.

In past years, the Baysox have made an effort to recognize the history of the Negro Leagues and the great players who spent their careers there, and this year Bowie will be celebrating Gibson's 100th birthday along with his great grandson Sean Gibson.

Gibson, a catcher and renowned power hitter, spent most of his professional career playing in Pennsylvania for the Homestead Grays and the Pittsburgh Crawfords. Accurate statistics from that era are difficult to find, but according to the National Baseball Hall of Fame, Gibson hit "almost 800" homeruns during his 17-year career.

During his career, Gibson never played for a losing team and the Homestead Grays won nine consecutive Negro National League pennants with Gibson behind the plate, according to the Josh Gibson Foundation. He was such a powerful hitter that many considered him the Babe Ruth of the Negro Leagues.

Playing alongside Gibson on some of the dominant Homestead Grays squads were Hall of Fame players "Cool" Papa Bell (OF), Judy Johnson (3B), Buck Leonard (1B) and Cuban great Martin Dihigo (2B, P, OF). These men helped lead the Grays in their historic charge into baseball lore.

Gibson died of a stroke in 1947 at age 35 and his foundation was established by his son Josh Gibson Jr. in 1994. In 1999, Sean Gibson took over the foundation, which is now a non-profit corporation.

The goal of the [Josh Gibson Foundation](#) is to "establish a history and learning center in Homestead, Pa. to reach out to the families and youth of the community on which Josh Gibson left his mark."

In the past, the Foundation has partnered with Duquesne University and the University of Pittsburgh to bring tutors to its recreation centers where the volunteers help kids read, write and improve their computer skills. The Foundation also sponsors a 10 team little league organization in Pittsburgh that encourages an active family environment and promotes educational programs while also giving young kids the opportunity to participate in a team sport.

Tickets to the Baysox 10th annual Negro League Tribute Night Saturday, June 4 go on sale Saturday, March 26 at 10 a.m. The event features appearances by former Negro League players, an autograph session, and a ceremony honoring the late Josh Gibson.

The Baysox open the 2011 season on the road in Harrisburg Thursday, April 7. They play their first game at Prince George's Stadium Thursday, April 14, at 7:05 p.m. Baysox ticket packages are now available. **Click [HERE](#)** for more information on 2011 ticket packages.

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