
SPORTS

Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers

MAY 26 – AUGUST 20, 2006

NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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SPORTS: BREAKING RECORDS, BREAKING BARRIERS

Created by the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History
and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)
With Lead Support from Audi

EXHIBITION OVERVIEW

Introduction

In many American homes, the newspaper's sports pages are read first every morning. Beyond the scores and plays, issues surprisingly significant to our identity and history can be found. Sports illustrate many facets of American life, from Althea Gibson's struggle to break the color barrier and excel as a tennis champion, to the humanitarian efforts of baseball star Roberto Clemente, to the "Battle of the Sexes" waged between tennis players Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs. *Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers* seeks to evoke moments that have captured the nation's collective memory.

Core Themes

Drawn from the outstanding collection of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and sponsored by Audi, the exhibition celebrates athletes' accomplishments—the perfect game, the close race, the broken record, and the unheralded triumph. More significantly, the exhibition reflects broader changes in the United States and shows how many cultural, political, and even physical barriers have, through the help of sportsmen and women, been shattered. *Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers* reminds us of the racial, ethnic, and gender issues that athletes encounter and the effect their personal victories, both on and off the field, exert on the nation's consciousness.

From May 26, 2006 through August 20, 2006, the National Constitution Center presents this inspiring portrayal of sacrifice, challenge, and ultimate victory, which will appeal to athletes and non-athletes of all ages.

Walking through the Exhibition

The exhibition is organized into six perspectives: **Firsts, Olympians, Game Makers, Barrier Removers, More Than Sports Champions,** and **Superstars.**

In the **Introduction**, Curator Ellen Roney Hughes presents the themes of the exhibition, spotlighting the pioneering men and women who dominated their sports; championed their country, race, or sex; and helped others to achieve. The first exhibition artifact appropriately comes from the “Great Emancipator” Abraham Lincoln, a man who embodies the ideals of both a true athlete and a great humanitarian. Not only did Lincoln love competitive sports, but he also broke records and changed the course of history. The handball he used in Springfield, Illinois before his presidency is on display in this opening section.

In the next area, **Firsts**, visitors will see that being first takes imagination, courage, and strength. Records can be broken, but to be first is a permanent distinction. It is only fitting that America’s first national sports celebrity, John L. Sullivan, is featured in this section, along with Gertrude Ederle (first woman to swim the English Channel), Jackie Robinson (first African American to play in the Major Leagues), Roger Bannister (first man to run the four-minute mile), Althea Gibson (first African American Wimbledon champion), and Kristi Yamaguchi (first Asian American Olympic gold medal winner).

Olympians are also highlighted in the exhibition, as athletes who never fail to inspire. In this section, guests can view artifacts that endure as a symbol of a global community, including a medal from the first modern Olympic games, a jersey and stick used by the U.S. Olympic hockey team in the 1980 gold medal effort, and Dominique Dawes’ gymnastics leotard.

Some athletes change the game for everyone. They possess style and ability so novel and striking that they set a new standard against which every other player is measured. In their exemplary careers and great moments of achievement, they do more than set records, they challenge everyone around them to excel. **Game Makers** leave a legacy of electrifying events exalted by the media, relished by fans, and studied by generations of athletes and coaches to come. This section features beloved athletes Sandy Koufax, Arnold Palmer, Bill Russell, Terry Bradshaw, Hank Aaron, and Mia Hamm.

The next section focuses on athletes that are **More Than Sports Champions**: they are champions for a cause. Jim Thorpe, Billie Jean King, Roberto Clemente, and Lance Armstrong are just a few of the recognizable sports figures who have made significant contributions and become beacons of hope for generations. The performances of these extraordinary men and women, in and out of athletics, change attitudes and conditions, and strengthen their communities.

Some of the greatest sports heroes are inventors and innovators. These **Barrier Removers** comprise the following portion of the exhibition. Inventors have refined or created equipment to make sports safer, easier, and more accessible. Others have contributed by proving that disease and disability need not stand in the way of the will to compete and win. Inventions such as a wheelchair designed for tennis and rubber swim fins can be seen in this awe-inspiring section.

Entering the last section of the exhibition, **Superstars**, visitors will learn more about some of the most recognizable sports figures in history. Through the media, popular

culture, and commerce, these larger-than-life stars command worldwide attention. Guests will be amazed to see a baseball signed by the legendary Babe Ruth, a boxing robe worn by Muhammad Ali while training for the “Rumble in the Jungle”, and the great Michael Jordan’s Chicago Bulls basketball jersey, among others.

LOCAL LEGENDS

Introduction

From Phillies games to the Penn Relays, the Army/Navy game to the Dad Vail Regatta, sports are as much a part of Philadelphia as cheesesteaks and soft pretzels. This National Constitution Center created *Local Legends* exhibition pays tribute to local sports heroes and record breakers who embody the characteristics of true legends by both breaking records and breaking barriers throughout sports history.

Walking through the Exhibition

The exhibition is divided into sections based on sport. However, where would the athletes be without the legendary **Places** in which they played grueling games and strived to break records? The exhibition begins with a dedication to these memorable venues in Philadelphia sports history, including the Palestra, Veterans Stadium, and Franklin Field. Visitors will have the opportunity to watch a video about the Palestra and walk through a turnstile from the stadium.

Inspiring **Individuals** are the basis of this exhibition, and Philadelphia is home to many courageous athletes who brought home the gold and competed tirelessly throughout their careers. Here, visitors will see Joe Verdeur’s Olympic gold medal; goggles, a swim cap, and swim trunks from Brendan Hansen; John Christmas’ shoes; and a program from the legendary fight between Joe Frazier and Muhammad Ali.

Baseball is the focus of the next section, highlighting stars such as Tug McGraw, Richie Ashburn, and Mike Schmidt. Visitors will see Garry Maddox’s 1983 home uniform, complete with a Phillies centennial patch, and learn about the Amaro family legacy, the lone father-son combination to play for the Phillies.

In the next section, visitors will see memorabilia from well-known **Basketball** stars and hear stories of triumphant underdogs from some lesser-known teams in Philadelphia history. Wilt Chamberlain, Allen Iverson, and Dawn Staley are each featured here, as well as the highly successful South Philadelphia Hebrew Association basketball team and the tenacious Immaculata Might Macs.

The Flyers have always been Philadelphia favorites, and are featured in the **Hockey** section with tributes to players from the past and present. Ron Hextall and Bobby Clarke are each included for their skill and dedication over time. “Conflict on Ice,” a video about the Flyers win over the Soviet hockey team in 1976 is also shown in this section.

In the last section of the exhibit, visitors can reminisce about their favorite moments in Philadelphia **Football** history. Vince Papale, former Philadelphia Eagle and subject of the upcoming Disney major motion picture *Invincible*, is featured, as well as Chuck Bednarik, best known for his game-securing tackle on Frank Gifford. The Army/Navy game, a longstanding Philadelphia tradition, is also highlighted.

Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers
Featuring *Local Legends*
May 26 through August 20, 2006
National Constitution Center in Philadelphia

Sports: Breaking Records, Breaking Barriers is free with regular museum admission of \$9 for adults and \$7 for seniors ages 62 and up, children ages 4-12, and active military personnel. Children ages 3 and under are free. Group rates are also available. For ticket information, call 215.409.6700 or visit www.constitutioncenter.org.
