



Something to Prove: The Great Satchel Paige vs. Rookie Joe Dimaggio

Robert Skead , Floyd Cooper (Illustrations)

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In 1936, the New York Yankees wanted to test a hot prospect named Joe DiMaggio to see if he was ready for the big leagues. They knew just the ballplayer to call--Satchel Paige, the best pitcher anywhere, black or white. For the game, Paige joined a group of amateur African-American players, and they faced off against a team of white major leaguers plus young DiMaggio. Illustrations.

Something to Prove: The Great Satchel Paige vs. Rookie Joe Dimaggio Details

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Maggie Mattmiller says

As usual, I'm happy to learn about an event and a person I previously knew nothing about, but is a great and important person/story to know about. While sometimes I feel like the books don't quite tell enough, or leave me wanting to know more, this one I actually think is a bit too wordy. I quickly realized what the purpose of the book was, and what the relationship was going to be. I love the quote by Joe Dimaggio about Satch. I'm not trying to say the other characters/people are not important, but unfortunately, but introducing other people and their names, it takes a bit away from the story we are supposed to be focusing on. Yes let's learn about other lesser known people in history, but I think my students would get lost in the other names and their stories. There's too much going on by focusing on all the details of that game, rather than just the interactions and happenings of the two we are focusing on. Other people may disagree, and big baseball fans may love the details of the whole game, I just thought it lost its focus. If it was too wordy for me, I think for sure it'd be too much for my students.

Alyson (Kid Lit Frenzy) says

Another interesting piece of baseball history.

Ann says

It's always great to see any book about Satchel Paige--and this one is no exception. I almost died when I saw that Floyd Cooper did the illustrations. He's in great form and can capture the baseball milieu. My one small criticism: this book advertizes itself as a dual biography and there's too little about Dimaggio.

Nole says

This is a fun sports tale of an up and coming white baseball star, and his counter part a Negro league legend facing the Major league talent he wasn't allowed to compete with. I would like to utilize this book with many different lessons, History, sports, and perseverance to name a few.

Kris Dersch says

I've heard stories of an older relative somewhere in my family...doesn't matter how we are related...but he was what older people call "a man of his time" which is a really nice way of saying "racist"...but anyway, to him every single black person was "a n*****" except the one that was "the great Satchel Paige." Visually, this is a great book. The cover illustration really says it all. This is a nice introduction for kids to the barnstorming that mid-20th century ballplayers did, which, of course, was the only way Paige and

DiMaggio would have faced each other in Paige's prime.

Back matter is short, but does cover the differences in the careers and how the Hall of Famers were separated by race throughout their entire lives. Brief mention is made, and I think more could be said on this, how Satch said he would not accept a spot in a segregated Hall...if he wasn't going in the way other players went in he wasn't going in. Negro League players are now honored in the Hall the same way other inductees are. The story here is a *little* over-told. I have no problem with big words in kids' books, in fact I kind of like it, but you are already dealing with Satch, who was quite a character, and all the crazy names he had for his pitches. The 4-year-old liked the "wobbly ball" the best. With that going on, the rest of the language feels overdone...there's an overdose of adjectives here and I feel like if that had been cut back on the sheer character of Satch would come through better. But overall a great read for any budding baseball historian.

Emma Aly says

This book tells the story of a game between Satchel Paige and Joe Dimaggio. Paige was known as the best pitcher around. Dimaggio was a rookie expected to do great things. Dimaggio and his team of white major league players had a strong upperhand against Paige and his team of amateur African American players. Is Dimaggio able to prove his skill? Does Paige show off his ability to the prejudiced major league fans and players?

I think this is a pretty good book. I think the story is very interesting and provides a good conversation point for young children when learning about segregation. I think it is a little wordy at times and may be difficult for young students to read and comprehend.

I might recommend this to upper elementary students who may not enjoy reading but enjoy sports. I would be cautious to recommend this to struggling readers though.

Carol says

Although Satchel Paige was not allowed to play in the major leagues due to his skin color, the big wigs knew and respected his skills. This gorgeously illustrated picture book biography tells of how the Yankees tested Joe DiMaggio's talent by pitting him against the great Paige in a barnstormer game. Satchel was playing with an unskilled team against a whole team of major-leaguers. That didn't worry him any. He threw his incredible arsenal of amazing pitches as well as provided some hits for his team. It came down to a tie and extra innings. Joe DiMaggio was up at bat for the fourth time! He finally got a hit! Now the Yankee scout could report to the owners that DiMaggio was as great as they had hoped; he had batted 1 for 4 on Satchel Paige. DiMaggio went on to help his team win the World Series that year. Satchel Paige continued playing in the Negro Leagues and barnstorming in the off season. He would eventually get a chance at the majors, but not for quite a while after being the test for Joe DiMaggio! Whether you are an avid baseball fan or just a casual reader, you will be charmed by this wonderful story of two incredible athletes!

Eli says

This biography is about Satchell Paige and Joe DiMaggio. They were baseball players in the minor leagues in 1936. Satchell Paige was an awesome, if not the best, pitcher in the world at that time, but they wouldn't

let him play in the major leagues because of the color of his skin. He played in the Negro Leagues.. Joe DiMaggio was a rookie trying to get good enough to be on the New York Yankees. Joe was white so he could play in the major leagues. This book tells about a game where Joe and Satchell faced off. Joe proved that he was good enough to be in the major leagues because he got a hit (one out of four) off of Satchell and that was really hard. DiMaggio was drafted to the Yankees, but Paige was not.

Using text to text analysis, Howard Thurman and Satchell Paige are a lot alike. They both were African American men in the early part of the 1900s. They both overcome big struggles because of the color of their skin. They have to work harder than other people to achieve their goals.

Jill says

In the winter of 1936, the manager of the New York Yankees wanted to test a 21-year-old prospect named Joe DiMaggio. He couldn't think of any better way to see how he held up before a top pitcher than to call upon Leroy 'Satchel' Paige. Paige was thought to be the greatest pitcher in the world, but he was excluded from major league baseball because of his race. But he wouldn't turn down the opportunity for a game. On February 7, 1936, the Dick Bartell All-Stars, a white barnstorming team, met the Satchel Paige All-Stars in an exhibition game.

They went ten innings, with the score deadlocked 1-1, with Paige striking out fourteen major leaguers. Then at his fourth at-bat, DiMaggio bounced a hard ball to the pitcher's mound. Paige knocked the ball toward the second baseman, who seemed to freeze. DiMaggio got to first base and Bartell, who had singled and then stolen two bases, made it home. DiMaggio was ecstatic to get a hit off of Satchel Paige, and the Yankees scout telegraphed the Yankees:

"DIMAGGIO ALL WE HOPED HE'D BE. HIT SATCH ONE FOR FOUR."

But Paige was the real star of the game. DiMaggio later said Paige was "the best and fastest pitcher I ever faced." Casey Stengel, a well-known American Major League Baseball outfielder and one-time manager of both the New York Yankees and New York Mets, agreed, noting "He threw as far from the bat and as close to the plate as anyone I ever saw." Nevertheless, no would sign Paige to the major league because he was black. As the author reports, "Phillies manager Connie Mack stated he'd pay one hundred thousand dollars [over \$1.7 million in today's dollars, at a time when the top paid man in baseball - the commissioner - made less than \$50,000 a year] to sign Satchel . . . if only he were white." [The highest paid player on the Yankees in 1936 was Lou Gehrig, who pulled in \$23,000 a year. Most players made under \$10,000 a year.]

The story concludes by reporting that twelve years later, and one year after Jackie Robinson broke the color line, Satchel was hired by the St. Louis Browns at 42 years old - the oldest rookie ever.

An Author's Note at the end of the book gives more facts about DiMaggio and Paige and a selected bibliography.

The multiple award-winning illustrator Floyd Cooper uses grainy sepia-toned illustrations to lend a historical feel to the story. The soft focus is surprisingly effective for the action sequences as well, such as when Satchel is sliding toward base, or Joe is kicking the dirt on the field.

Evaluation: The author does an excellent job at telling the story as if you were watching the play-by-play on the television, in a way that will keep even reluctant readers turning the pages as they can't wait to see what happens next. He also manages subtly to convey a lesson about the recent history of racism in America, the unfairness of Jim Crow, and the love of sports in spite of everything. It's a great story!

Rating: 4.5/5

Barbara says

Once again the fight for civil rights is played out on baseball's infields. Drawing on a little-known incident involving two men who have something to prove (Satchel Paige, the great pitcher, and Joe Dimaggio, the rookie looking to make a name for himself as a hitter), this picture book describes what happens when they meet on the field. Despite his prowess, Paige was not allowed to play in the major leagues due to the color of his skin. He accepts an invitation from the New York Yankees general manager to pitch against Dimaggio. Dimaggio is delighted when he eventually manages to get a hit off the great athlete. The story makes it clear that both men have respect for one another, and the back matter poignantly describes how Paige has to wait 12 more years before he can play Major League Baseball. The Author's Note also provides information about the debate over whether Negro League players inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame would have their plaques hung in the main wing or a separate wing. As always with the work of Floyd Cooper, the illustrations are memorable and filled with a zest for life and the love of the game. This title is a worthy addition to a text set on baseball and one on civil rights.

Francesca Justine says

This book was a great non fiction story about race and justice in america. This book took place in 1936. This was a time where african americans were judged and looked at differently then white americans. These two african americans had something to prove in the baseball community. The illustrations were amazing and brought the words to life. The writing also brought a lot of new vocabulary.

Rachel says

well - written, succinct discussion of a single day in baseball history. followed by an overall picture of race in baseball. excellent for young readers.

Alison says

One of the highlights of my trip to Cooperstown, NY in the fall of 2010 was seeing Satchel Paige's plaque. Here was a man that my grandfather probably saw on one of his famous barn storm tours. Satchel is a legend in the game I love who was barred from playing in the major leagues for most of his career due to to color of his skin.

Here comes a story of one of those famous barn storming games, where he actually did play a game against another giant, a peer among the legends of baseball, Joe DiMaggio. Joe was a young up and coming player in 1936, not yet signed by the New York Yankees! It's a story I never heard of before, and kudos to Robert Skead and FLoyd Cooper for bringing this chapter of baseball history to life in a great new picture book from Carolrhoda Books. This one is a must for baseball lovers of all ages. Great for read aloud in a story time or classroom setting (book reports anyone?) for children ages 6 and up.

in 1936, DiMaggio had yet to become Joltin' Joe or The Clipper as generations of baseball fans have come to know him. He was still a rookie, playing for the San Francisco Seals with his brother Vince. The New York Yankees were very interested in this up and coming 21 year old player, but wanted proof he was the real deal.

Enter Satchel Paige-and the barn storm game in Oakland, CA that was set up would be DiMaggio's try out for the New York Yankees. As a Yankee fan, it's amazing to think how everything would have gone down if he had not performed to expectations against the master pitcher, Satchel Paige. In the end, a hard fought game ended with the victory going to Joe DiMaggio's SF Seals (does anyone know if the questionable call at first in bottom of the 9th was ever addressed?). The telegram to Yankee Management after the game was as follows, " DIMAGGIO ALL WE HOPED HE'D BE. HIT SATCH ONE FOR FOUR" DiMaggio passed the audition, by only getting one hit off of Paige-amazing to consider.

Cooper's art here is stunning. Reminiscent of old photographs and film footage that may have faded over the years-the story leaps from each page through his art. Facial expressions of each of the characters is spot on, a green yet formidable hitter in DiMaggio trying to prove himself against the powerhouse that was Paige. The stoic and professional posture of Paige on the mound, ready to deliver a pitch he knew not many hitters would even dare to attempt a swing at.

So DiMaggio went on to baseball immortality with the Yankees. Baseball may not have been enlightened enough in 1936 to sign Satchel Paige as the first African American player, that would come in another 11 years when the Dodgers signed Jackie Robinson. Paige was honored by the Baseball Hall of Fame as the first African American player to be inducted to the Hall in 1971, 11 years after Joltin' Joe.

Merin says

As a huge baseball fan, I was surprised that I'd never heard that DiMaggio faced Satchel Paige once upon a time. I liked this story, particularly how it focused on just how great Paige was, and how even the white players who faced him gave him due credit. It's unfortunate that racial relations were what they were, because Paige very much deserved to play in the huge stadiums in front of thousands of fans.

One thing that struck me in the writing of this book, though, was the vocabulary used. Words like "barnstorming" and "flummoxed" aren't in my students' vocabulary at all, and while I'm always excited about books that teach them new words, I think this one would definitely be something that would need to be read aloud so that the reader could discuss the word choices with the students. I think it would be too difficult of a book for my readers who gravitate toward the picture books.

Still, this is a very well put together book, and I'm glad I gave it a read! I will keep it in mind when it comes time to put together my next book order.

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Carson Atkin says

Skead, R., & Cooper, F. (2013). *Something to prove: The great Satchel Paige vs. rookie Joe DiMaggio*. Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books.

Something to Prove is filled with drama and provides a full immersion experience when describing a baseball game, along with action shot pictures. Joe DiMaggio, a rookie player trying to prove himself worthy of the big leagues faces off against a seasoned veteran who - while he has never been allowed to play major league baseball because of the color of his skin - is known as an incredible player. DiMaggio must pour everything he has into a game that will propell him into a historic career. However this book has a lot to do with racial justice as well, and as it is a true story, the inside cover is adorned with real photos and historic excerpts of their lives
