



As Branch Rickey had predicted, Jackie Robinson faced all kinds of mistreatment after he became a Brooklyn Dodger.

The passage of time has blurred the exact date when Pee Wee Reese, the Dodgers' captain, became fed-up with all the racial slurs and humiliating treatment his teammate had to endure. Jackie tells us what happened when Pee Wee took a stand:

*...In Boston during a period when the heckling pressure seemed unbearable, some of the Boston players began to heckle Reese. They were riding him about being a Southerner and playing ball with a black man. Pee Wee didn't answer them.*

*Without a glance in their direction, he left his position and walked over to me. He put his hand on my shoulder and began talking to me. His words weren't important. I don't even remember what he said. It was the gesture of comradeship and support that counted.*

*As he stood talking with me with a friendly arm around my shoulder, he was saying loud and clear, "Yell. Heckle. Do anything you want. We came here to play baseball."*

*The jeering stopped, and a close and lasting friendship began between Reese and me. We were able, not only to help each other and our team in private as well as public situations, but to talk about racial prejudices and misunderstanding. (I Never Had It Made, page 64.)*

Robinson and Reese remained friends for the rest of Jackie's life. Pee Wee was with his former teammate when Jackie was honored at the World Series in 1972. It was just nine days before his unexpected death of a heart attack.

Credits:

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Jackie Robinson and Pee Wee Reese

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