

Read the article "The All-American Girls' Baseball League" before answering questions 46 through 56.



## The All-American Girls' Baseball League

In the 1940s, many young men enlisted in the armed forces and were sent overseas to fight in World War II. The absence of so many men greatly affected the economy of the United States, leaving a large number of businesses with dozens of positions to fill. In some situations, women left the domestic sphere to join the workforce. This became an exciting time for countless women who had never been employed outside the home. Many had jobs manufacturing war materials, some became substitute teachers in local schools, and others worked in health care. Of course, factories, hospitals, and schools were not the only enterprises that needed a solution to the lack of men.

The world of professional sports, a field composed almost entirely of men, was particularly hard hit by the war. Baseball, America's national pastime, saw many of its star players trade in bats and balls for helmets and rifles.

Many teams in the minor leagues were disbanded, and even some major league clubs faced empty stadiums and financial hardship. However, one man figured out a way to bring fans back to the game.

In 1943, Philip K. Wrigley started the All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League. Wrigley, who inherited a major chewing gum company and the Chicago Cubs after his father's death in 1932, recognized America's need for entertainment during this stressful wartime period. Because of a shortage of men, Wrigley decided to create a baseball league made up entirely of women athletes. Scouts scoured the country to find talented young women to take the field. Some of the women played on local softball teams, while others had only played baseball in backyard games with male relatives and friends.

Recognizing that the idea of women playing baseball would be shocking to many people at the time, Wrigley and his associates carefully composed a strict code of conduct that held the players accountable for their actions on and off the field. The women of the new league were amazing athletes, but they were also expected to be shining examples of femininity. Along with a manager and a coach, each team was assigned a female chaperone to ensure that the players behaved in an appropriate manner. After practicing their hitting and fielding skills during the day, the girls were required to take night classes in hygiene and etiquette. They were expected to look their best at all times. The uniforms included a short skirt, and the players wore makeup at all times, even during games. The required skirts made it particularly difficult to slide when stealing bases, but the women's protests about this problem were ignored.

The rules of play were similar to those for regular baseball, with a few modifications made to the field and the types of equipment that the women used. The league's first four teams — the Racine Belles, the Kenosha Comets, The Rockford Peaches, and the South Bend Blue Sox — started the inaugural season in May 1943. The teams were hosted by small cities outside Chicago, where the league was headquartered. Resourceful owners had to find ad hoc solutions to early challenges, such as the use of small community ballparks and grandstands, to get the league up and running. While it was curiosity that initially lured many people to the games, the women's performance on the field kept fans coming back every week. More than 175,000 fans attended games in the first season. Wrigley took the opportunity to expand the league to neighboring cities in the following years.

The women ballplayers in Wrigley's league were overjoyed to be able to play a game they loved and earn a living doing it. Even though people enjoyed the girls' league, there was never a doubt that the men fighting overseas were still on the minds of players and spectators both. At the start of most games, the two teams would form a "V" for victory around home plate as "The Star Spangled Banner" was played. Many of the women players also visited wounded soldiers at local hospitals to show their support for the war effort.

The league continued to grow as the war went on. Teams were added in Milwaukee and Minneapolis, and total attendance reached 450,000 in 1945, the year World War II ended. Some league cities even formed junior teams where girls under the age of fourteen could learn the basics of the game and play against each other. After the war, women's games continued to attract thousands of fans to every game. But Major League Baseball, with many of its former stars returning healthy and ready to play, returned to prominence. After a peak attendance figure of 910,000 fans in 1948, interest in the All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League started to wane. In 1954, the league disbanded after 12 years of operation.

Although the league existed for only a short period, it left a lasting impression not only on baseball but on sports in general, proving that women could succeed as professional athletes. In 1992 the league's story was made into a popular motion picture. *A League of Their Own* was a fictionalized account of the 1943 season, but it introduced a new generation to the extraordinary women who not only played a sharp brand of baseball but also broke down barriers and raised morale in America during the difficult days of World War II. In October 1988 the Baseball Hall of Fame added an exhibit honoring the women of the AAGBL. Decades after their groundbreaking efforts, these pioneering women ballplayers continue to inspire young girls everywhere to break down barriers and do their very best.

**Answer questions 46 through 56. Base your answers on the article "The All-American Girls' Baseball League."**

- 46 The main idea the author wants to convey in this article is that
- F. World War II forced women to take over jobs once held by men.
  - G. the women of the All-American Girls' Baseball League were portrayed in a 1992 motion picture.
  - H. the All-American Girls' Baseball League left a lasting impression on the sport of baseball and on American society.
  - I. since World War II, American women have been more active in the workforce and have found increased opportunities to compete in professional sports.



- 47 Compared to men's major league baseball, the game in the women's league was
- A. exactly the same regarding rules, equipment, and playing field.
  - B. slightly different regarding equipment and playing field.
  - C. slightly different regarding rules of the game and number of players on the field.
  - D. radically different regarding rules of the game, such as having four strikes instead of three.

- 48 Read the following passage from the article.

**The uniforms included a short skirt, and the players wore makeup at all times, even during games. The required skirts made it particularly difficult to slide when stealing bases, but the women's protests about this problem were ignored.**

The author included this passage to demonstrate that

- F. the women ballplayers had little influence on how the league was run.
  - G. the owner of the women's baseball league treated the players very badly.
  - H. the style of baseball was not important to the owner of the women's league.
  - I. the owner of the women's league did not want the players stealing bases.
- 49 What is the meaning of the word *scoured* as used in this sentence from the third paragraph of the article?

**Scouts scoured the country to find talented young women to take the field.**

- A. emptied
- B. rubbed
- C. harassed
- D. searched

- 50 Which phrase BEST describes the public's initial feelings about the All-American Girls' Baseball League?
- F. very curious
  - G. completely uninterested
  - H. extremely shocked
  - I. wildly enthusiastic

- 51 According to the article, players in the AAGBL wore short skirts and makeup because
- A. Wrigley sold more tickets if the players looked pretty.
  - B. the owners expected them to be examples of femininity.
  - C. the players themselves demanded it.
  - D. the rules of polite society pressured them to do it.

- 52 Read the following sentence from the article.

**Resourceful owners had to find ad hoc solutions to early challenges, such as the use of small community ballparks and grandstands, to get the league up and running.**

Which best expresses the meaning of the Latin phrase *ad hoc* as it is used here?

- F. impractical
  - G. unscrupulous
  - H. makeshift
  - I. ideal
- 53 According to the article, which statement is correct?
- A. Before the formation of Wrigley's league, women had never played baseball anywhere.
  - B. Attendance at women's league baseball games was poor, and the league disbanded as soon as World War II ended.
  - C. The women's baseball league lacked enough quality athletes to be a success.
  - D. Wrigley's women's baseball league was an example of how the absence of men during World War II gave women their first opportunity to work outside their homes.

- 54 Read the following sentence from the last paragraph of the article.

**Decades after their groundbreaking efforts, these pioneering women ballplayers continue to inspire young girls everywhere to break down barriers and do their very best.**

The phrase *groundbreaking efforts* refers to which of the following?

- F. the girls' skill as baseball players
- G. the girls' success in becoming the first female professional ballplayers
- H. the girls' introduction to a new generation of fans via a motion picture
- I. the girls' loyalty to the men who were away fighting in the war

- 55 According to the article, which of the following was the main reason for the decline of the All-American Girls' Baseball League?

- A. The female ballplayers gradually left the league to get married and start families.
- B. Major League Baseball demanded that the women's baseball league stop competing with it.
- C. Major League Baseball's attendance revived when its star players returned from fighting the war.
- D. The level of play in the All-American Girls' Baseball League became much worse in the 1950s.

- 56 With which of the following statements would the author of this article most likely agree?

- F. There is an urgent need in the U.S. for a new girls' professional baseball league.
- G. World War II had nothing but damaging effects on the sport of baseball.
- H. The All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League was an important step for women in sports.
- I. The All-American Girls' Professional Baseball League was an amusing stunt that never had a chance to succeed.

