

## Baseball Monikers

There's some interesting history behind the names of some American baseball teams. In the early years, teams didn't always have official names. For example, in the 1890s, the Pittsburgh baseball team was called the Alleghenies, after the Allegheny River. When the team stole some players from one of its rivals, the Alleghenies got a new name, the Pirates.

The team known today as the Los Angeles Dodgers made its debut in the National League in 1890 as the Brooklyn Bridegrooms. They got that moniker because seven of the players had gotten married in 1888. From 1914 to 1931, the team was often referred to as the Robins, after their manager, Wilbert Robinson.

The name "Dodgers" first appeared on the team's uniform in 1933. At the turn of the century, anyone from Brooklyn was called a "trolley dodger" due to the vast network of streetcars found along the city's busy streets. But the team did not become known by that name until a sports editor who was angry with Wilbert Robinson ordered his writers to use the name "Dodgers," and never again refer to the team as the Robins.

The Cincinnati Reds have changed names a few times also. One change was due to a propaganda campaign. In the early 1950s, the United States was consumed with fears that Communism was infiltrating the country. U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin led a government investigation to find Communists and those who sympathized with them. Communists also were known as "Reds." While McCarthy's investigation was going on, the Cincinnati team changed its name to the Redlegs. When the furor died down, the team quietly changed its name back to the Reds.

## Unit 5

- Cincinnati changed its team's name because of a coincidence. Can you think of some other coincidences that might cause a person or group to change its name?
  
- Sports events are associated with many traditions. Describe some of your favorite ones.
  
- Changing team names is just one of the ways sports have adapted over the years. What are some other examples?