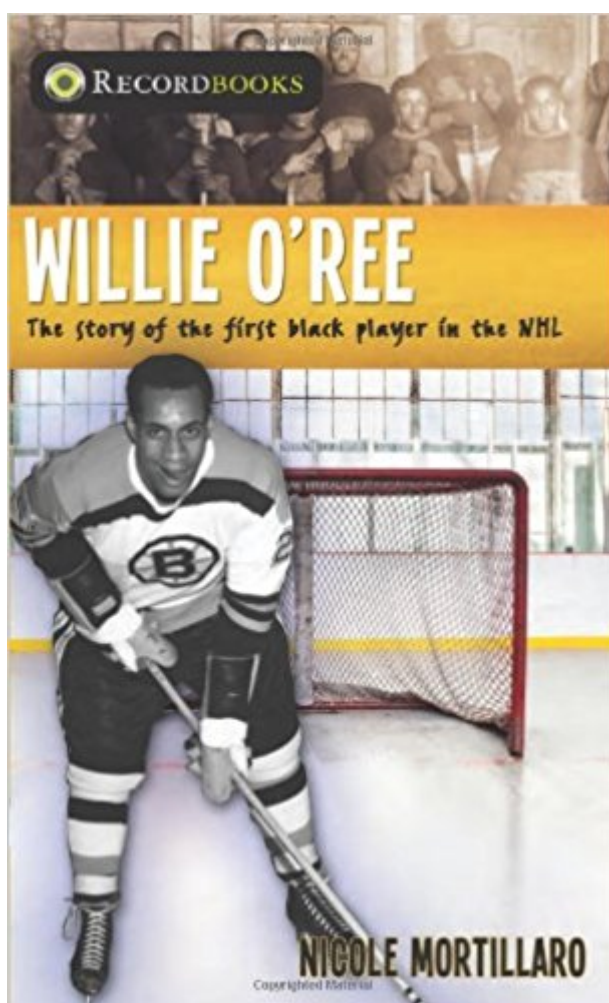


The book was found

Willie O'Ree: The Story Of The First Black Player In The NHL (Lorimer Recordbooks)



Synopsis

Willie O'Ree quietly made NHL history at the Montreal Forum on January 18, 1958, when he became the first black player to take to the ice. In the dressing room before the game, his Boston Bruins teammates told him not to worry. If any one of the Montreal players said anything to him, they'd have his back. There was a round of applause when O'Ree stepped onto the ice, and newspapers ran the story. The colour barrier in the NHL had been broken, yet it would be sixteen years before the next black player, Mike Marson (also a Canadian), was drafted. Four decades later, the NHL pulled O'Ree out of retirement to honour his achievement and make him an ambassador for the NHL's "Hockey is for Everyone" program to encourage kids from all backgrounds to play hockey. This new book by Nicole Mortillaro traces the early life of O'Ree in Fredericton, New Brunswick, his journey to the NHL, highlights from his hockey career, and his work encouraging diversity in the NHL. [Fry reading level - 4.9]

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 790L (What's this?)

Series: Lorimer Recordbooks

Paperback: 120 pages

Publisher: Lorimer; Reprint edition (September 12, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1459401956

ISBN-13: 978-1459401952

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 1 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 0.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.6 out of 5 stars 6 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,551,566 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in [Books > Teens > Sports & Outdoors > Hockey](#) #12 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > Canada](#) #86 in [Books > Teens > Biographies > Sports](#)

Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

More an isolated precursor than a true Jackie Robinson-style barrier breaker, Canadian Willie O'Ree played for the Boston Bruins in just 45 games between 1957 and 1961 (he had a fairly long career with pro and semi-pro teams in other leagues) and so will probably be

unknown even to confirmed hockey fans. Nonetheless, because he was good enough on the ice not only to overcome racial prejudice but to conceal the fact that he had been blinded in one eye by a puck, his story is unusually compelling. In later years, he took charge of the NHL's diversity programs and training. Mortillaro includes almost no game action in her admiring tribute, but she does paint clear pictures of the sport's history and significance, especially in Canada, as well as the racial hostility that O'Ree braved through much of his playing career. There is no statistical table, and the black-and-white photos are both rare and murky, but the generous resource list at the end will be helpful to readers who want to know more about this undeservedly obscure player. Grades 4-6. --John Peters

"Willie O'Ree is an inspiring biography that tells how a brave young man was determined to realize his dream... If you are studying human rights or slavery this is a great account to share with your children. And if you have a child that is already interested in hockey this would be a wonderful tool to use to share history with them." (Hammock Home School Blog 2013-04-08)"Willie O'Ree is well-researched. [Mortillaro has made Willie O'Ree's story an engrossing one. Her writing style is easy to read and suitable for young readers." Highly Recommended. (Thomas F. Chambers CM: Canadian Review of Materials 2012-11-30)Featured as a "Book of Interest" in The Seniors' Advocate (2012-12-01)"[Mortillaro does paint clear pictures of the sport's history and significance, especially in Canada, as well as the racial hostility that O'Ree braved through much of his playing career." (John Peters Booklist (U.S.) 2013-05-01)"[Mortillaro's touch is light and energetic, so that O'Ree's life story advances quickly... I would highly recommend this book for literacy collections, classroom libraries, and general libraries. It could also make a nice gift for young hockey fans"; Rated E, excellent, enduring, everyone should see it! (Leslie Vermeer Resource Links 2013-02-15)"This biography stands on its own as a well written life story of a man who had his fifteen minutes of fame but supplements the Willie O'Ree story with a running anecdote of racism in society and modern sports, physical impairment, the history of the development of the NHL, the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 60s. Willie O'Ree is a gem to be discovered." (Kent Miller Canadian Teacher 2014-01-15)

I think I was expecting "more" from this book as far as size or images, based on the price, which seems quite high for a slim volume about the size of a Harlequin Romance. This is not an indictment of the author, but more of the publisher. This is a book written mainly for children, upper elementary

or middle school grades. Warning: "The N Word" is included, as a quotation as historical fact, which does not bother me in the context, but parents/teachers may want to be prepared. The story of Willie O'Ree, "the Jackie Robinson of professional hockey" is an important story. O'Ree is much less well-known than Robinson, but no less important in the boundaries broken. Hockey remains probably the least diverse of professional sports in North America. O'Ree's accomplishment as the first person of African descent to break the color barrier cracked a door, but unfortunately it took several years after O'Ree's career ended for others of African or Native descent to join the ranks of professional hockey players.

The book description did not indicate that the book was a children's book. The writing was very juvenile. It covered the professional life of Willie O'Ree but I was anticipating a more adult focused biography.

A great intro to a great and timely athlete.

Book does no mention of Don McKenney nor the rest of Valiant Boston Bruins of the Late 1950s!

review overstated the grade and age level this book was written for.

I had to do a research project on him, and this book saved me. Without this book I wouldn't have been able to complete my project.

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