

Forgotten Heroes:

Henry Kimbro



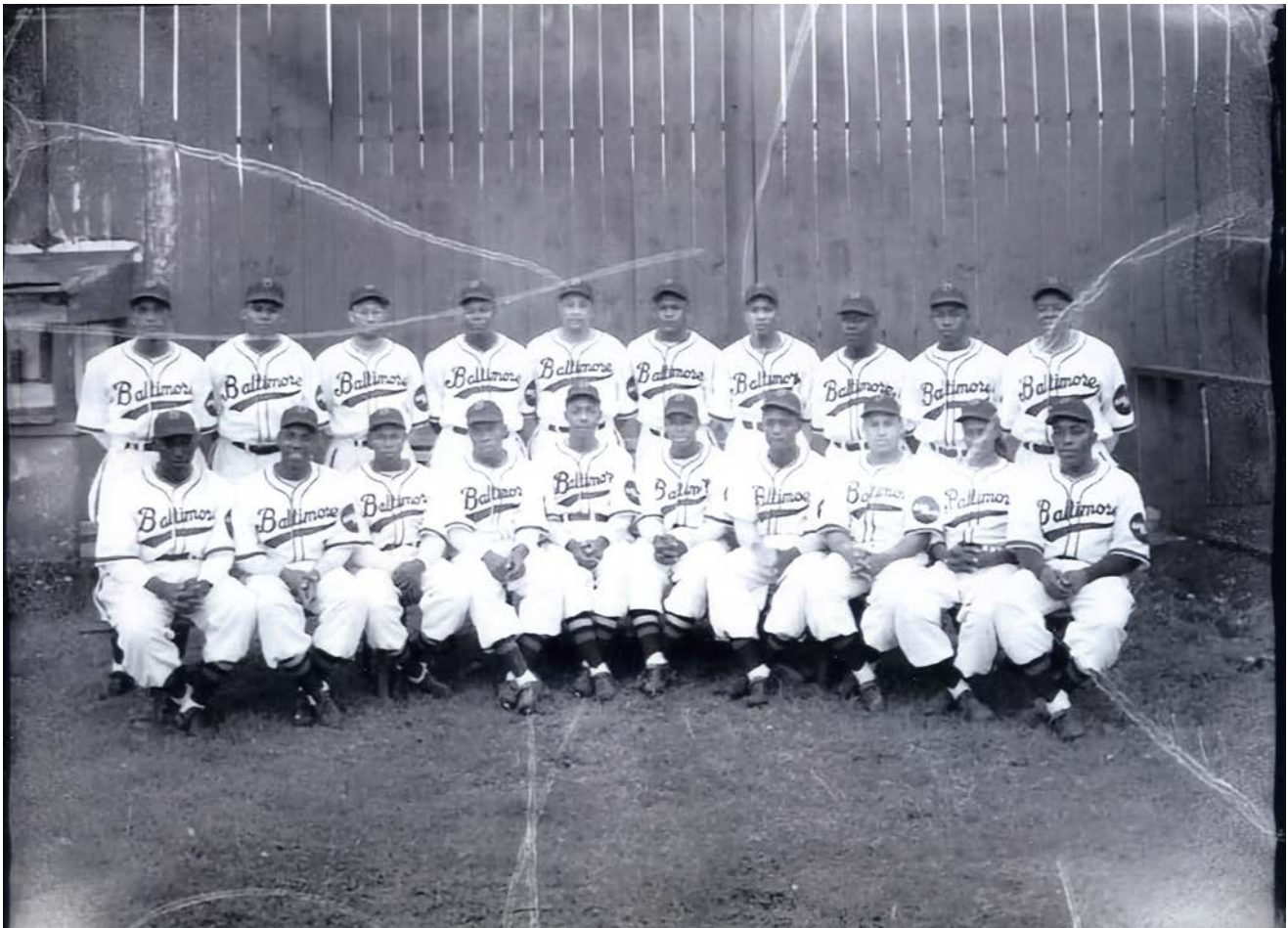
by

Center for Negro League Baseball Research

Dr. Layton Revel

Baltimore Elite Giants
Negro American League
Champions
1949

During his seventeen (17) year Negro League career, Henry Kimbro spent fourteen (14) seasons with the Baltimore Elite Giants. In 1949 he helped lead them to a Negro American League championship title.



Baltimore Elite Giants
Negro American League Champions
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(Back row left to right – **Joe Black**, Leroy “Toots” Ferrell, Charles Davidson, Lennie Pearson, **Bill Byrd**, Al Wilmore, Bob Romby, Johnny Hayes, **James “Junior” Gilliam** and Jesse “Hoss” Walker. Seated left to right – Butch Davis, Lester Lockett, Sylvester Rogers, **Henry Kimbro**, **Vic Harris**, Henry Bayliss, Frazier Robinson, Frank Russell, Thomas “Pee Wee” Butts and **Leon Day**.)

Henry Allen “Jimbo” Kimbro was born on February 10, 1912 in Nashville, Tennessee. Henry was one of nine children born to Will and Sallie King Kimbro. His father was a groundskeeper at the local Mount Olive Cemetery and also raised crops for Walden College. Henry’s mother raised the children and made extra money by taking in laundry. Henry grew up in West Nashville and completed school at the sixth grade. Furthering his education was evidently not an option because the closest African American junior high and high school were more than ten miles from where he lived. After working a series of manual labor jobs, Henry took a job at a local service station where he learned how to repair cars.

Kimbro stood five feet eight inches tall and weighed 175 pounds during his playing career. He was a powerful stocky built individual much like Kirby Puckett who starred for the Minnesota Twins. When asked about his physique, Henry would respond that he was “strong as an ox.” According to Henry he developed his strong arms and shoulders by constantly hanging on things when he was a youngster.

Kimbro batted from the left hand side of the plate and threw right handed. Usually hitting from the lead-off spot, he was a power hitter who also hit for average. One example of his power was hitting a homerun over the roof of Briggs Stadium in Detroit. During the height of his career which lasted from 1944 through the 1952 season, Kimbro hit .354 (.693 for 1,958) in games against Negro League opponents. He also led the Cuban Winter League in hitting during the 1947-48 winter league season with a .346 batting average and set a Cuban record for hits in one season with 104 base hits. Henry was said to have been very patient at the plate and reportedly always took the first pitch to help him gage the pitcher. Former teammate, Clinton “Butch” McCord, had the following to say about Henry Kimbro: “I never saw him swing at a first pitch.” During his career Henry feasted on low fast balls that usually ended up dropping in left field for a base hit.

Defensively, Henry played in the outfield. He possessed outstanding range and was known to have a strong accurate throwing arm.

His speed made him a threat on the base paths to steal a base or take an extra base when the opportunity was there. In the outfield, Henry used his speed to cover more than his share of the outfield and quite often robbed opposing players of a base hit.

Henry Kimbro played in the Negro Leagues from 1937 through the 1953 season. During his seventeen (17) year career he played fourteen (14) seasons for the Baltimore Elite Giants, two (2) seasons with the Birmingham Black Barons and one (1) season with the New York Black Yankees.

He was an outstanding overall player who played in ten (10) East-West All Star games. In short, Henry Kimbro was an excellent ball player who is often overlooked when talking about the stars of the Negro Leagues. He could hit, play defense and his speed was an asset both offensively and in the outfield.

The only potential negative related to Henry Kimbro is possibly people’s differing views related to his personality. By his own admission, he was a loner who tended to keep to himself. In addition Henry has been described as a little unruly and reportedly didn’t get along with umpires.



Henry Kimbro
Baltimore Elite Giants

When Negro League player and manager Ted “Double Duty” Radcliffe was asked to comment on Henry Kimbro, he had the following to say:

“the wildest man I ever saw in baseball and absolutely the hardest to manage.”

Dr. Revel, the author of this essay, had the opportunity to personally know Henry Kimbro and visited with him on numerous occasions over the years. Dr. Revel’s impression of Henry was that every time he saw him, he presented himself as a very humble and professional individual. Dr. Revel characterized Henry as a quiet and an unpretentious man who played the game of baseball with a fierce determination. It is Dr. Revel’s assessment that Henry being aloof was more from the fact that his lack of formal education made him uncomfortable around people and once he got the reputation of being non-social, it just stuck and followed him throughout his career. Dr. Revel’s position is somewhat confirmed in Henry Kimbro’s obituary that appeared in The New York Times. The newspaper published the following quote from an earlier interview that had been conducted with Henry Kimbro:

“I couldn’t express myself the way I wanted to because I didn’t go to school,” he said. “It just tore me all to pieces. People started to call me ‘bad’ and ‘evil’ and it just followed me around my whole baseball time.”

In short, Henry Kimbro was a complete ball player who could hit for both power and average. In his prime he was considered one of the best outfielders in the Negro Leagues. In addition, his speed was an asset both offensively and defensively.

Early Baseball Career

From an early age, baseball was always an important part of Henry Kimbro’s life. He honed his baseball skills on the playgrounds and sand lots of Nashville. In 1935 Kimbro joined a team that was leaving town to conduct a barnstorming tour of the South. Reportedly the barnstorming team was organized and managed by James “Candy Jim” Taylor of the Chicago American Giants. This gave Henry his first taste of professional black baseball and what life on the road as a ball player would be like.

Negro League Career

Henry Kimbro began his Negro League career in 1936 when he was signed to play for his home town team, the Nashville Black Vols of the Negro Southern League. During the 1936 Negro Southern League season there were eight (8) teams that played in the “league.” These eight teams were as follows: Atlanta Black Crackers, Birmingham Black Barons, Chattanooga Black Lookouts, Cincinnati Tigers, Hopkinsville Athletics, Memphis Red Sox, Montgomery Grey Sox and Nashville Black Vols. Tom Wilson who owned the Washington Elite Giants was the president of the Negro Southern League in 1936 and reportedly also owned an interest in the Nashville Black Vols.

The Nashville Black Vols were managed by Jesse “Hoss” Walker who was also the team’s starting shortstop. During their 1936 Negro Southern League season, the Nashville Black Vols played their home games at both Wilson Park and Sulphur Dell in Nashville.

Henry Kimbro was the starting left fielder for the Black Vols and according to newspaper accounts was the team’s leading hitter. Some of the other top players on the team during the 1936 season were Black Bottom Buford (3B), Red Longley (2B), Granville Lyons (1B), Frank Mc Allister (P), Jonnie Williams (P) and “Slow Time” Young (P). Newspaper articles report that “Slow Time” Young was the ace of the pitching staff. Unfortunately, no statistical records have been found for the 1936 Negro Southern League season.

VOLS ROUT BARONS.
Nashville, May 14.—(AP)—Nashville had a field day at bat today, bagging 16 hits to beat Birmingham, 11 to 6.

Nashville Black Vols vs Birmingham Black Barons

News and Observer
Raleigh, NC
05-15-36

One of the highlights of the 1936 season for Nashville was a double header reported in the Nashville Tennessean that was to be played at Sulphur Dell. The newspaper reported that the upcoming series between the Nashville Black Vols and the Southern Grays was for the “Colored City Championship of Nashville.” The outcome of the series is still unknown.

It appears that the Nashville Black Vols played solid baseball the entire season. In a newspaper article that appeared in the Columbus Daily Enquirer of Columbus (GA) on June 6th, it was reported the Nashville Black Vols “held the lead in the Negro Southern League title race.”

Negro League researcher and historian William Plott who wrote the book The Negro Southern League: A Baseball History 1920-1951 reports having found fifty (50) box scores, game accounts and newspaper articles for the 1936 Negro Southern League season. According to Plott there is a huge disparity in the documentation for each “league” team. Plott only found three games for the Cincinnati Tigers of which they won all three. There were more games found for the Birmingham Black Barons than any other team. Plott’s research uncovered nineteen (19) “league” games for the Black Barons and they had a record of 15-4 (.789) in these nineteen games. According to the research of Plott the Nashville Black Vols were 5-2 (.714) in “league” games and 8-2 (.800) in all games found.

Kimbro Becomes an Elite Giant

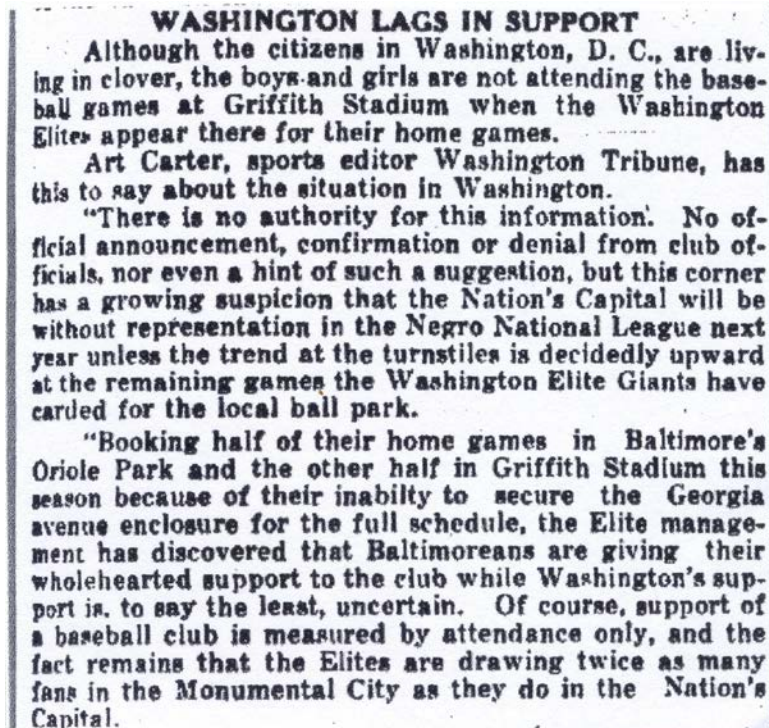
Tom Wilson had obviously been very impressed with Henry Kimbro’s play for the Nashville Black Vols of the Negro Southern League in 1936 because he signed Henry to play for the Washington Elite Giants for their 1937 Negro National League season. The Elite Giants were also referred to as the “Nashville Elite Giants” in newspaper coverage during their spring training before the 1937 season. When Henry joined the team he immediately became a starter in the team’s outfield that also included the Wright brothers (Burnis “Wild Bill” and Zollie). In the media the Wright brothers were often called “The Waner Brothers of Colored Baseball.” The Waner brothers were Lloyd and Paul who played for the Major League Pittsburgh Pirates of the National League and who are both members of the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

The team was managed by veteran Negro League player/manager Raleigh “Biz” Mackey who also caught for the team. The Elite Giants played half of their home games in Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. and the other half in Baltimore’s Oriole Stadium.

The Washington Elite Giants had an excellent hitting team in 1937. They were led by the hitting of Jim West (.390), Burnis “Wild Bill” Wright (.389), Sammy Hughes (.329) and Henry Kimbro (.290). Box scores have been found for thirty-two (32) games for the Elite Giants for the 1937 season. In these thirty-two (32) games the Elite Giants posted an impressive team batting average of .294. An interesting side note to the 1937 Washington Elite Giants is that their roster included a 15 year old rookie catcher by the name of Roy Campanella who would go on to a Major League career with the Brooklyn Dodgers and become a member of the National Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown.

Unfortunately for Tom Wilson the pitching staff didn't deliver on the same level as the hitters. Over the course of the season Mackey used at least eight (8) different pitchers. These pitchers included Bill Byrd (9-6), Jimmy Diraux (7-2), Tom Glover (6-2), Willie Williams (2-2), Bob Griffith (2-1), Andy Porter (1-6), Bob Griffith (1-1) and Jonas Gaines (0-2).

The majority of owner Tom Wilson's problems during the season were not on the field but at the box office. Even splitting the Elite Giants' home games between Washington, D.C. and Baltimore did not help. According to a newspaper article that appeared in the Detroit Tribune on August 7th, when the Washington Elite Giants played in Baltimore they consistently drew twice as many fans as in the Nation's capitol.



Detroit Tribune

Detroit, MI

08-07-37

According to an article that appeared in the Jersey Journal of Jersey City (NJ) on October 1st the Washington Elite Giants won the first half championship of the Negro National League.

There is conflicting research on the Washington Elite Giants' final won-loss record for the 1937 Negro National League season. The following three research groups (Seamheads, Larry Lester & Dick Clark and John Holway) report the following records and final "league" standings of the 1937 Washington Elite Giants:

Seamheads	Lester and Clark	John Holway
22-37-3 (.373) 7 th place	27-17 (.614) 3 rd	27-17 (.614) 3 rd

According to the Seamheads research team the Elite Giants were 19 ½ games behind the Homestead Grays (41-17-1) who won the Negro National League title.

After the 1937 Negro National League season Henry Kimbro joined a Negro League all-star team that was managed by Oscar Charleston to play a post season barnstorming schedule. The highlight of the tour was playing the Satchel Paige All Stars (also called the Dominican Stars) in a game at the Polo Grounds. According to newspaper reports there were between 20,000 to 35,000 fans in attendance. In what would be one of the best pitching duels in the history of Negro League baseball Satchel Paige and “Schoolboy” Johnny Taylor hooked up for a scoreless 0-0 game that went into the ninth inning when Jim West hit a homerun for a 1-0 win for the Negro National League All-Stars. A week later the two teams met again and this time Satchel Paige came away with a 9-4 victory.

Elite Giants Move to Baltimore

After two unsuccessful seasons in Washington, D.C. Tom Wilson moved his team to Baltimore, Maryland for the 1938 Negro National League season. This made the fifth move (Nashville, Detroit, Columbus, Washington, D.C. and Baltimore) that the Elite Giants had made since the team entered the Negro National League in 1933. In Baltimore the Elite Giants called Bugle Field their home ball park for the 1938 season. Another significant change that Tom Wilson made to the team was replacing Biz Mackey as manager with George “Tubby” Scales.



Tom Wilson
Baltimore Elite Giants
Owner

Henry Kimbro’s rookie season had been very successful and he was back as a starter in the outfield for Baltimore for the 1938 Negro National League season.

Overall the Baltimore Elite Giants had a solid hitting team and were able to drive in runs when it counted. Sammy Hughes (.348), Jim West (.322), Burnis “Wild Bill” Wright (.298), Raleigh “Biz” Mackey (.297) and Jesse “Hoss” Walker (.280) were the top hitters for the Elite Giants in 1938. Henry Kimbro suffered from the sophomore slump and his batting average for the season dropped to .262 which was the lowest season batting average of his entire Negro League career.

One major factor in the Elite Giants being so successful in 1938 was their pitching staff. The biggest reason for this was that Bill Byrd really came into his own as a dominant pitcher and established himself as the ace of George Scales’ pitching staff. In the twelve (12) box scores that have been found for Bill Byrd as the starting pitcher for the Elite Giants in “league” games, he went 7-2 (.778) with nine (9) complete games.

Negro League researcher John Holway credits Bill Byrd with a won-loss record of 9-2 (.818). Also in the starting rotation for Baltimore were Bob Griffith (7-4), Andy Porter (5-1) and Jimmy Direaux (2-1).

One of the highlights of the season for the Baltimore Elite Giants was playing in a four team Negro National League doubleheader. The teams that participated in the event were the Baltimore Elite Giants who played the Philadelphia Stars and the New York Black Yankees who took on the Pittsburgh Crawfords. The doubleheader was played in Washington, D.C. in late June. This was the first time that the Negro League baseball classic had been played outside New York City. The Elite Giants and Crawfords were victorious. These two teams met in late August back at Griffith Stadium for a double header. Baltimore took the first game by a score of 18-1 and Pittsburgh came back to take the second game by a 5-3 margin.

NEGRO TWIN BILL HERE

**New York, Pittsburgh, Baltimore,
Philly Nines Here Sunday.**

For the first time the classic double-header of the Negro National Baseball League will be seen outside New York as Washington plays host to the big twin bill next Sunday at Griffith Stadium

Four of the league's leading teams will see action as the New York Black Yankees meet the Pittsburgh Crawfords and the Philadelphia Stars face the Baltimore Elite Giants. The first game will start at 2 p.m. Last time in New York this attraction drew 38,000 spectators.

Negro National League
Doubleheader

Baltimore vs Philadelphia
New York vs Pittsburgh

Evening Star
Washington, D.C.
07-25-38

The combination of a new city with a new fan base, a new manager, solid hitting and a strong pitching staff resulted in a significant turnaround for the team. The Elite Giants went from last place in 1937 to second place in the final 1938 Negro National League standings. Baltimore finished the season with a record of 21-17-3 (.553) and were 9 ½ games behind the Homestead Grays (34-11) who won the “league” championship.

Before the start of the 1939 season, Tom Wilson hired Felton Snow as the Elite Giants’ player/manager. Wilson also secured a lease and moved the team to Oriole Park in Baltimore to serve as the team’s home field.

Henry Kimbro returned to Baltimore determined to improve on his poor performance from the prior season. During the 1939 season Henry did not disappoint and improved his season batting average by thirty-three (33) points from .262 in 1938 to .295 in 1939.

Bill Hoskins (.382), Sammy Hughes (.378), Burnis “Wild Bill” Wright (.365), Henry Kimbro (.295) and Felton Snow (.291) were the leading hitters for the Baltimore Elite Giants during the 1939 season. Henry’s hitting statistics in Negro League action were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1939	Baltimore	36	146	27	43	6	1	3	14	3	.295	.411

Bill Byrd was the ace of the pitching staff with a record of 7-2 (.778) with 7 complete games in 11 starts against Negro National League opponents. When both “league” and “non-league” games are added together Bill Byrd is credited with a record of 15-4 (.789) for the 1939 season. Other members of the starting rotation for the Elite Giants included Jonas Gaines, Willie Hubert and Tom Glover. Bill Harvey, Emery “Ace” Adams, Jim Willis, Johnny Johnson, Lefty Phillips and Andy Porter also pitched for Baltimore during the season.

According to the Seamheads research team, the Baltimore Elite Giants ended the season with a disappointing record of 19-23 (.452) and were in fifth place in the final 1939 Negro National League standings. They were nine and a half games behind the “league” champion Homestead Grays (34-19-1). According to the Seamheads research team they were 24-24 (.500) in games against all levels of competition. The research team of Larry Lester and Dick Clark credit the 1939 Elite Giants with a record of 25-21 (.543) and in third place in the final “league” standings.

The Baltimore Elite Giants’ poor won-loss record and fifth place standing is somewhat confusing because according to the Seamheads research team the Elite Giants had the second best hitting team and the third most effective pitching staff in the “league.”

Jacob Ruppert Memorial Cup Tournament

During the 1939 season a four team “championship” play-off series called the “Jacob Ruppert Memorial Cup Tournament” was held. The tournament was the brain child of Edward Barrow who was the president of the New York Yankees. Barrow held the event to honor the memory of Col. Jacob Ruppert who had been the owner of the New York Yankees and had passed away during the previous season. Barrow even donated an impressive trophy that was to be awarded to the winner of the four team Negro National League play-off.

The tournament was to originally have featured five doubleheaders to be played at Yankee Stadium for the summer of 1939. The format of the tournament was changed before the series even got underway. The teams selected for the series were the top four teams in the Negro National League. The Homestead Grays defeated the Philadelphia Stars and the Baltimore Elite Giants defeated the Newark Eagles in the first round. The Grays won their two game series with the Stars by the scores of 12-9 and 15-9.

The Homestead Grays and Baltimore Elite Giants advanced to the finals. Baltimore defeated Homestead by winning three games to one (one game ended in a tie) for Homestead to claim the title and trophy cup. Baltimore hitters took control of the series in game two and consistently Homestead pitchers couldn't get them out. The leading hitters for the Elite Giants in the tournament were Bill Hoskins (.467 – 14 for 30), Sammy Hughes (.448 – 13 for 29), Henry Kimbro (.444 – 16 for 36), Wild Bill Wright (.382 – 13 for 34) and Roy Campanella (.310 – 9 for 29). The Baltimore Elite Giants were led by the pitching of Jonas Gaines (2-0) and Bill Byrd (1-1). A summary of the final series between Baltimore and Homestead is as follows:

Game	Date	Location	Winning Team	Score	Winning Pitcher
1	Sept. 16 th	Philadelphia	Homestead	2-1	Roy Partlow
2	Sept. 17 th	Baltimore	Baltimore	7-5	Jonas Gaines
3	Sept. 17 th	Baltimore	Tie	1-1	-
4	Sept. 23 rd	Philadelphia	Baltimore	10-5	Bill Byrd
5	Sept. 24 th	New York City	Baltimore	2-0	Jonas Gaines



**Baltimore Elite Giants
Jacob Ruppert Memorial Cup Tournament Champions
(1939)**

(Standing left to right – Bill Hoskins, **Sammie Hughes**, Vernon Green, Felton Snow, Doug Smith, **Tom Wilson**, James “Soldier Boy” Semler and **Alex Pompez**. Kneeling left to right – Jonas Gaines, **Henry Kimbro**, Tom Glover, Red Moore, Jesse “Hoss” Walker, **Roy Campanella**, Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, Chester Washington, Bubber Hubert, **Bill Byrd**, Emery “Ace” Adams, Boogie Wolf, **Burnis “Wild Bill” Wright** and Thomas “Pee Wee” Butts.)

<p>ELITES WIN TITLE</p> <p>The Baltimore Elite Giants won the Negro National League baseball championship by defeating the Pittsburgh Homestead Grays, 2 to</p>	<p>0, at Yankee Stadium yesterday. In a seven-inning game which followed a picked team from the Elites and Grays played a 1-1 tie with a combination of minor league players.</p>
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Baltimore Elite Giants Win Ruppert Cup Title

Jersey Journal
 Jersey City, NJ
 09-25-39

Reportedly, the 1939 season was a huge success for Negro League baseball from a financial perspective. According to newspaper reports Negro League team owners had their best season financially in the history of black baseball. This success was attributed to fabulous weather conditions during the season which resulted in fewer rain outs, receipts from all star and exhibition games but most importantly from fan support for the high level of baseball that team owners put on the field.

Owners Of Teams In Negro National League Enjoyed Best Year In Campaign Just Closed

PITTSBURGH, Pa.—The 1939 baseball season is officially over. There are still playing exhibition games with various all-star clubs, and all-star team on the Negro National league is playing for a week in Cuba, and the Elite Giants are making their annual trek to the Pacific coast.

Cuba and Puerto Rico have proved a haven for some of our players who wished to continue playing throughout the winter.

Detroit Tribune
 Detroit, MI
 10-21-39

In October of 1939 the Baltimore Elite Giants played a series of weekend games against a team called the "Major League All Stars." Featured on the Major League All Stars were Doc Cramer, Frankie Hayes, Dee Miles and Mickey Vernon. A box score from a double header on October 8th shows the Major League All Stars won both games by the scores of 3-1 and 2-0.

Kimbro Travels to Cuba for American Series

After the 1939 Negro National League regular season had concluded play, Cumberland Posey (owner of the Homestead Grays) put together an all-star team to travel to Cuba to play in the American Series. Annually a team or teams from the United States would travel to Cuba to play against the best Cuban players in what was called the "American Series." Posey's team was called the "Homestead Grays" even though only five players (Buck Leonard, Josh Gibson, Vic Harris, Roy Partlow and Edsall Walker) on the team had actually played for the Homestead Grays during the regular season. Posey rounded out his "new" Homestead Grays roster with Negro

League stars like Sammy Hughes (Baltimore), Clarence “Fats” Jenkins (Brooklyn), Henry Kimbro (Baltimore) and Willie Wells (Newark).

Besides the Homestead Grays there were three Cuban teams (Habana, Almendares and a Picked Nine All Star team) that participated in the 1939 American Series. Numerous Cuban stars like Santos Amaro, Martin Dihigo, Fermin Guerra, Roberto Ortiz, Lazaro Salazar, Luis Tiant and Gilberto Torres participated in the tournament. These Latin stars should have made the Cuban teams formidable opponents but they were no match for the Homestead Grays. Posey’s team won all six games they played. The Cuban teams lost two games each.

Henry Kimbro batted lead-off spot for the Grays and hit .370 for the series. Other Homestead players who had a good series were Josh Gibson (.375), Sam Bankhead (.338), Vic Harris (.333) and Clarence Jenkins (.333). As a team the Homestead Grays compiled a very good team batting average of .280 (60 for 214), while the Cuban teams had a combined team batting average of a mere .192.

A summary of the 1939 American Series is as follows:

Game	Date	Opponent	Winner	Score	Winning Pitcher
1	Oct. 7 th	Habana	Homestead	7-4	Smokey Owens
2	Oct. 8 th	Almendares	Homestead	6-4	Bud Barbee
3	Oct. 10 th	Habana	Homestead	4-1	Henry Cozart
4	Oct. 12 th	Almendares	Homestead	5-1	Edsall Walker
5	Oct. 14 th	Picked Nine	Homestead	2-1	Roy Partlow
6	Oct. 15 th	Picked Nine	Homestead	5-0	Bud Barbee

All the games were played at Stadium La Tropical in Havana.

Henry Stays in Cuba



Henry Kimbro
Cuba

Instead of returning to the United States after the American Series, Henry Kimbro stayed in Cuba to play for the Almendares Alacranes for the 1939-40 Cuban Winter League season. The winter league season in Cuba started on October 21st of 1939 and ended on January 23rd of 1940. Four teams (Almendares, Cienfuegos, Habana and Santa Clara) competed in the “league.”

Major League and Cuban pitching great Adolfo Luque managed Almendares. Negro Leaguers Willie Wells (.328), John Washington (.307) and Henry Kimbro (.294) led the team in hitting during the season. Henry Kimbro led the Cuban Winter League in stolen bases with 18 and was named to the Cuban Winter League All Star team at the end of the season.

Ted “Double Duty” Radcliffe (7-3), Rodolfo “Rudy” Fernandez (7-4), Adrian Zabala (7-5), Silvino Ruiz (4-2) and Agapito Mayor (3-2) anchored the pitching staff for Almendares.

From the very start of the season all four teams were in the pennant race. Almendares took control of the title race during the last week of the season. A shutout win over Cienfuegos clinched the championship for the Almendares Alacranes. The final standings for the 1939-40 Cuban Winter League season were as follows:

Cuban Winter League (1939-40)

Team	Won	Lost	Pct.	Games Behind
Almendares Alacranes	28	23	.549	-
Cienfuegos Elefantos	26	25	.510	2
Santa Clara Leopards	24	27	.471	4
Habana Leones	24	27	.471	4

Kimbros Returns to Baltimore

Looking for a reversal of fortunes from their 1939 Negro National League season when they finished the year with a losing record (19-23) and were in fifth place in the final “league” standings, Tom Wilson felt significant roster changes were in order. Offensively Wilson signed George “Tubby” Scales to play right field and Bill Perkins as the team’s new catcher. In addition holdovers James “Red” Moore was given the job as the team’s starting first baseman and Thomas “Pee Wee” Butts replaced Hoss Walker at shortstop. Wilson did not stop with changing the starting line-up. He also revamped the pitching staff. Gone were Bill Byrd, Jonas Gaines, Tom Glover, Bill Harvey and Jim Willis. They were replaced by Emery “Ace” Adams, Nate Moreland, Bud Barbee, Roosevelt Davis and Woodrow “Woody” Williams.

Another decision that Wilson made before the start of the season was for the team to play their home games at both Oriole Park and Bugle Field in Baltimore. Oriole Park was considered one of the most impressive and finest ball parks in Major League baseball during this period of time.



Oriole Park
Baltimore, MD

With four new players in the starting line-up, three new starting pitchers, a new ball park and having just won the Jacob Ruppert Memorial Cup trophy in 1939, the Baltimore Elite Giants entered the 1940 Negro National League season with high hopes of improving their overall standing in “league” play.

Felton “Rufus” Snow was the manager of the Elite Giants and played third base.

Leading the way in hitting for the Elite Giants during the season were George Scales (.364), Bill Hoskins (.348), Felton Snow (.332) and Homer “Goose” Curry (.325). Henry Kimbro had an off year in 1940 as the team’s starting center fielder. Henry only hit .263 with a .338 slugging percentage during the season. During the 1940 season, Henry did show flashes of brilliance. Our research has identified at least six (6) “league” games during the season in which he had three or more hits in a game.

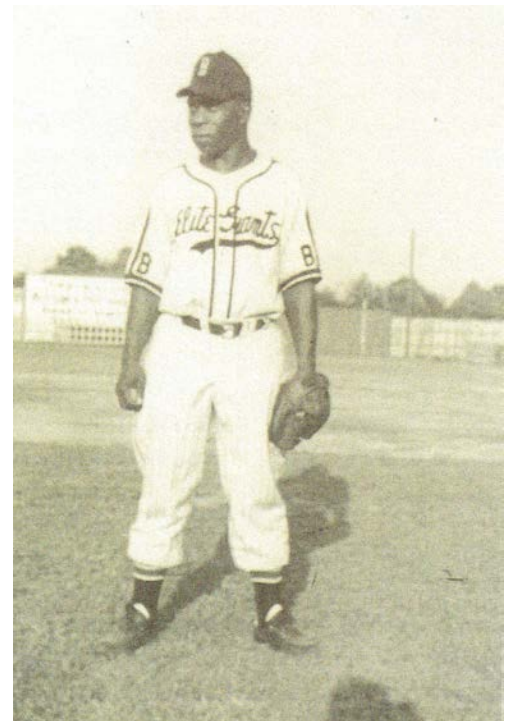
Bill Byrd going to play in Venezuela was a real loss for Baltimore but Emery “Ace” Adams (14-10) stepped right in and did more than an adequate job as the team’s primary starting pitcher. In addition Willie Hubert had an excellent season with a record of 8-1 (.889). Bud Barbee (11-9), Nate Moreland (8-6) and Woodrow “Woody” Williams (4-0) rounded out the starting rotation for the Elite Giants. Bill Barnes (1-4), Roosevelt “Satchel” Davis (3-0), Jesse Brown (0-1), Jimmie Reese (0-1), Lefty Phillips, Eddie Dixon, Duke Barnes, Goose Curry, Charles Davidson and George Gaines also pitched for the Elite Giants in 1940. The pitching highlight of the 1940 season for the Elite Giants was a seven inning no-hitter pitched by Roosevelt Davis and Willie Hubert on May 30th against Newark.

The Baltimore Elite Giants started their 1940 Negro National League season on a hot streak. According to an article that appeared in the Columbus Dispatch of Columbus (OH), Baltimore won eight of their first nine games including seven wins in a row. The Elite Giants continued their win streak when they took a doubleheader from the New York Black Yankees by the scores of 7-2 and 2-1. The doubleheader was played at Redbird Stadium in Columbus, OH with approximately 1,600 fans in attendance.

The highlight of the 1940 season for the Baltimore Elite Giants was winning their second straight Jacob Ruppert Memorial Tournament Cup. The tournament was played at Yankee Stadium in New York City. The Elite Giants defeated the New York Cubans to secure the championship.

Felton Snow and the Baltimore Elite Giants did not disappoint Tom Wilson during the 1940 season. The Elite Giants improved their won-loss record from 19-23 (.452) the previous year to 32-19-1 (.627) and finished the season in second place in the final “league” standings. They ended the regular season just one game behind the Homestead Grays (34-19). Sadly, Baltimore was leading the “league” going into the final few days of the season. Their downfall came at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. when they dropped both ends of a double header to the Homestead Grays by the scores of 6-1 and 6-5. Baltimore went from leading the “league” by a half game to being a game and a half down.

The research of John Holway credits the 1940 Baltimore Elite Giants with a record of 54-30 (.643) when games against “league” and “non-league” teams are added together.



Henry Kimbro
Baltimore Elite Giants

Baltimore's significant improvement in the won-loss record is a little mystifying when you first look at it because their team batting average actually went down from .296 in 1939 to .280 in 1940. In addition their team earned run average for the pitching staff even went up slightly from 4.38 in 1939 to 4.83 in 1940. The primary reason for their turnaround was that they just played better team baseball than the season before and got clutch hits when they needed them.

Henry Kimbro Travels to California

After the conclusion of the 1940 Negro National League season, Tom Wilson sent his Baltimore Elite Giants team to the West Coast to play in Joe Pirrone's California Winter League. Also playing in the 1940-41 California Winter League were two white teams (Pirrone's All Stars and White Kings) and one Latin team (Chihuahua Mexicans).

The Baltimore Elite Giants were led by the hitting of Henry Spearman (.500), Homer "Goose" Curry (.379), Henry Kimbro (.342), Sammy Hughes (.316) and Felton Snow (.310). Bud Barbee (3-1), Nate Moreland (3-1) and Barney Morris (2-0) anchored the pitching staff for Baltimore.

Pirrone's All Stars were a solid mix of Major League and Minor League players that included the following players: Bill Cissell (2B), Lou Novikoff (OF), Wally Berger (OF) and Jesse Flores (P). The White Kings were led by Major Leaguers Babe Herman (OF) and Jerry Priddy (2B).

The season started on October 13th with a game played at White Sox Park between the Elite Giants and Pirrone's All Stars. The 5,000 fans in attendance were treated to an exciting closely played game. Behind four hits (including two doubles and homerun) by Lou Novikoff, Pirrone's All Stars came away with a 4-3 victory.

After a shaky start in their first game, the Elite Giants caught fire and dominated California Winter League competition the rest of the season.

Incomplete standings at the end of the season show the Baltimore Elite Giants with a 9-4 (.692) record and winning the "league" title. Pirrone's All Stars (4-3) were in second place. According to newspaper coverage that has been found, they show the White Kings with a 0-2 record and the Chihuahua Mexicans with a 1-3 record. It is important to note that many of the games played during the 1940-41 California Winter League season may not have received newspaper coverage.



Baltimore Elite Giants
California Winter League Champions
1940-41

Red Sox Vs. Black Yanks Here Tonight

The Memphis Red Sox and the New York Black Yankees, outstanding Negro baseball clubs, are scheduled to play at Travelers Field tonight. The game starts at 8:15.

Memphis again is managed by "Double-Duty" Radcliffe, pitcher and catcher. Along with Radcliffe are such sluggers as Hyde and Robinson. The Red Sox defeated the Yankees, 4 to 2, earlier this season.

Black Yankee pitchers are Bill Holland and Connie Rector. In Nick Stanley the Yankees also boast a left-handed spitball pitcher. Henry Kimbro is rated as the "fastest center fielder in the world."

NEW YORK.	Hyde, lf
Kimbro, cf	MEMPHIS.
Walker, 3b	Bankhead, 2b
Barker, lf	Carter, 2b
Starks, 1b	Robinson, cf
Davis, ss	Bradford, rf
Patterson, rf	Dumas, 1b
Trammell, c	Longley, c
Cooper, c	T. Brown, ss

Kimbro is Traded to the New York Black Yankees

Prior to the start of the 1941 season, Tom Wilson knew he had to shake things up in order to get the Baltimore Elite Giants to become more competitive in the Negro National League. The biggest move that Wilson made in his reorganization plan was a massive trade with the New York Black Yankees. On January 2, 1941 an eleven (11) player trade was announced. The trade sent Henry Kimbro, catcher Bill Perkins, five pitchers (Bud Barbee, Charles "Spec" Roberts, Bob Griffith, Tom Parker and Willie Hubert) and cash to the New York Black Yankees for Charley Biot, Robert Clarke, Henry Spearman and pitcher Jesse Brown. Unfortunately the trade was not approved by the Negro National League office. The reason for the denial of the trade was that several of the players had a ban on them. Wilson then met with New York Black Yankees owner James "Soldier Boy" Semler and completed a "new" deal that sent Henry Kimbro (OF), Bill Perkins (C) and Bud Barbee (P) to the Black Yankees. The Baltimore Elite Giants got Charlie Biot (OF), Robert Clarke (C), Henry Spearman (3B) and Roy Williams (P) from New York.

The 1941 New York Black Yankees were managed by Tex Burnett and called Yankee Stadium in the Bronx their home field.

Arkansas Gazette

Little Rock, AR
04-24-41

Henry Kimbro led New York in hitting during the season with a .311 batting average. Box scores have been found for twenty-nine (29) "league" games that Henry played for the Black Yankees during the season. His batting statistics in these twenty-nine (29) games were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1941	New York	29	106	22	33	5	2	0	13	18	.311	.377

Traditionally a weak hitting team, New York did have a couple of players besides Kimbro who contributed at the plate. They were catcher Johnny Hayes (.293), shortstop Harry Williams (.295), right fielder Jim Williams (.281) and first baseman Jimmy Starks (.278).

The pitching staff for the 1941 Black Yankees included Satchel Paige (6-0), Robert Evans (6-3), John "Neck" Stanley (5-5), Spec Roberts (2-0), Connie Rector (2-7), Bill Holland (1-1), Bill Hoskins (1-1), Russ Direaux (1-1) and Luis Pillot (0-1).

For his outstanding play with the New York Black Yankees during the 1941 season, Henry Kimbro was selected to play in his first East-West All Star game. The 1941 East-West All Star game was played on July 27th at Comiskey Park in Chicago. The game set an attendance record as 50,256 fans crowded the stadium to see Buck Leonard hit a three run homerun and lead the East to an 8-3 victory. Henry had a good game in his first All-Star appearance. Kimbro batted lead-off for the East squad. He went 1 for 3, had two stolen bases, scored one run and had one run batted in.



Plaindealer

Kansas City, KS
06-27-41

According to the Seamheads research team the New York Black Yankees finished the 1941 Negro National League season with a 16-20 (.444) record in "league" games and had a 21-30 (.412) record in games against all levels of competition. New York was 16 ½ games behind the Homestead Grays (51-22-2) who won the "league" title.

Kimbro Returns to California

After his 1941 Negro National League season playing for the New York Black Yankees, Henry Kimbro returned to California to play baseball for the 1941-42 winter season. When he got to California Kimbro signed to play for the Royal Giants. Also playing for the Royal Giants were Sammy Hughes (2B), Jake Dunn (OF), Raleigh "Biz" Mackey (C) and Chet Brewer (P).

Only two box scores have been found for Henry Kimbro playing on the West Coast during the winter of 1941-42. Kimbro went 4 for 10 in these two games for a .400 batting average.

Joe Pirrone's All Stars were led by a host of Major League stars that included Jimmie Foxx (1B), Ted Williams (OF), Peanuts Lowery (3B), Lou "The Mad Russian" Novikoff (OF) and Jesse Flores (P).

From the limited newspaper coverage that has been located it appears that only the Royal Giants and Pirrone's All Stars played in the 1941-42 California Winter League.

The season started on Sunday, October 12th. The games were played at Wrigley Field in Los Angeles. The last box score for the 1941-42 winter league season was on October 26th.

Only four box scores have been found for the 1941-42 season and Pirrone's All Stars won all four games over the Royal Giants.

Kimbro is Traded Back to Baltimore

In February of 1942 Tom Wilson traded Charlie Biot (OF) and Bob Griffith (P) to the New York Black Yankees to get Henry Kimbro back on his team.

The 1942 Baltimore Elite Giants were managed by Felton Snow and played their home games at Bugle Field in Baltimore.

Burnis "Wild Bill" Wright (.317), Bill Hoskins (314), Roy Campanella (.295) and Henry Kimbro (.276) led the team in hitting. Pitcher Bill Byrd helped his pitching cause by hitting .339 for the season. From the fifty (50) box scores that have been found for the Elites 1942 season they compiled a mediocre team batting average of .258.

The outfield of Burnis "Wild Bill" Wright, Henry Kimbro and Bill Hoskins was considered the best outfield in black baseball.

Fortunately for manager Felton Snow he had an excellent pitching staff in 1942. Bill Byrd was the ace of Baltimore's pitching staff with a 10-3 (.769) won-loss record, seven (7) complete games and 2.91 earned run average (ERA) in "league" games. Byrd is credited with a won-loss record of 15-6 (.714) when "league" and "non-league" are added together. The Elite Giants' pitching staff also included Tom Glover (5-3), Jonas Gaines (4-4 w/ a 2.35 ERA), Bill Harvey

(4-3), Bill Barnes (3-2), Andy Porter (2-0 w/ 2.33 ERA), Emery “Ace” Adams (2-3) and Jesse Brown (1-2 w/ 2.53 ERA). The Baltimore Elite Giants had a team ERA of 3.70 which was the second best in the Negro National League in 1942.

In 1942 Henry Kimbro was selected to the roster of the East team for the East-West All Star game classic. Unfortunately, Henry did not play in the game. The West squad destroyed their Eastern competition by a score of 9-2.



**East-West All Star Game (1942)
East Team**

(Left to right – George Scales, Jim West, **Walter “Buck” Leonard**, Felton Snow, Sam Bankhead, Johnny Wright, **Jud Wilson**, Henry Spearman, **Henry Kimbro**, Gene Benson, Jerry Benjamin, Pat Patterson, Barney Brown, **Bill Byrd**, Matt Carlisle, **Josh Gibson** and Robert Clarke)

Researchers disagree significantly on the Baltimore Elite Giants won-loss record for the 1942 season. The Seamheads research team credit Baltimore with a record of 36-26 (.581) and finishing the season in second place nine (9) games behind the Homestead Grays (47-19-2). Research by the team of Larry Lester and Dick Clark credits the Elite Giants with a record of 37-15 (.712). In addition Lester and Clark credit the Homestead Grays with a record of 26-17 (.607) and have them winning both halves of the 1942 Negro National League season even though the Baltimore Elite Giants had a better won-loss record. Finally, Negro League historian and researcher John Holway credits the 1942 Elite Giants with a record of 38-22 (.633) and in second place three games back of the Homestead Grays. All three research groups agree the Homestead Grays were the Negro National League champions in 1942.

Henry Returns to the Elite Giants

Prior to spring training for the 1943 season, the Baltimore Elite Giants were faced with a tremendous amount of uncertainty for the upcoming season. Lured by high paying jobs in the defense industry, four Elite Giants players (Henry Kimbro, Bill Hoskins, Tom Glover and Bill Harvey) were considering not playing baseball and going to work for the Federal government in a defense plant. Fortunately all four decided to play baseball and reported for spring training.

Baltimore started the 1943 season with a new manager. George “Tubby” Scales replaced Felton Snow who had been the team’s manager since 1939. For George Scales it would be a long and disappointing season. The Elite Giants played their home games at both Bugle Field and Oriole Park during the season.



Bugle Field
Baltimore, MD

Scales didn't get hitting or pitching from his team during the season. The Elite Giants had a .249 team batting average which was fifth in the "league" and his pitching staff had a 5.11 team earned run average which was also fifth in the "league." It is important to note that there were only seven teams in the Negro National League in 1943.

Baltimore's top hitters for the season were Bud Barbee (.293), Henry Kimbro (.284) and Bill Hoskins (.275). Kimbro's hitting statistics for the 1943 season were:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1943	Baltimore	47	190	34	54	8	5	0	13	7	.284	.379

Bill Byrd was the only bright spot on the team's pitching staff. Byrd went 10-5 (.667) with a 2.98 ERA. Tom Glover (3-5 w/ 5.00 ERA), Bill Harvey (2-11 w/ 4.67 ERA), Andy Porter (2-3 w/ 6.17 ERA), Willie "Cowboy" Burns (1-3 w/ 8.12 ERA) and Ozzie Stewart (0-2 w/ 12.71 ERA) also pitched for Baltimore in 1943.

During the 1943 season, Henry Kimbro was selected to play in his second East-West All Star game. The 1943 game returned to Comiskey Park in Chicago after a financial disaster in Cleveland the year before. Attendance for the 1943 game at Comiskey Park topped over 50,000 (51,723 reported with 46,871 paid admission). The fans in attendance were treated to a real pitcher's dual. Satchel Paige pitched three scoreless innings with no hits, four strikeouts and no runs scored for the West's victory. The trio of Gread McKinnis, Theo Smith and Porter Moss pitched six innings for the West and only gave up one run on four hits. Paige got the win and Dave Barnhill took the loss for the East. Henry Kimbro made an appearance in the game as a pinch hitter but was unable to get on base.

The Baltimore Elite Giants had a poor season in 1943. They finished the regular season with a dismal record of 18-26-3 (.409) and were in fifth place in the final "league" standings. They were 23 ½ games behind the Homestead Grays (53-14-1). If their "league" record wasn't bad enough, the Elite Giants record was even worse in "non-league" games. According to the Seamheads research team they were 25-41-3 (.379) in games against all levels of competition.

On September 9th Henry Kimbro played in an exhibition game for the South All Stars. Henry had an excellent game going 4 for 5 with a double, walk, run scored and run batted in.

In post season play the Baltimore Elite Giants played a short series with the Major League All Stars that featured Early Wynn. Bill Byrd and Early Wynn faced off in the first game. The game was a 1-1 pitchers duel until the sixth inning when the Major League All Stars scored nine runs. In a second box score that was found for the series the Major League All Stars won this game also, this time by a score of 4-1.

Elite Giants Play in California

After the regular 1943 Negro National League season, Tom Wilson sent a team to California that was billed as the “Baltimore Elite Giants” to play baseball over the winter of 1943-44. Wilson sent a star studded team to the West Coast that included Sam Bankhead (.433), Buck Leonard (.355), Cowan “Bubba” Hyde (.353) and James “Cool Pappa” Bell (.323). Satchel Paige (3-1) was the ace of the pitching staff. Interestingly enough most of the players on the team had not played for Baltimore during the regular season. Reportedly, Henry Kimbro also played several games for the Elite Giants over the winter.

Apparently Baltimore and Pirrone’s All Stars were the only two teams that played in the 1943-44 California Winter League. Officially the season started on October 24th with all the games played at Hollywood Coast League Park. When the season ended the Baltimore Elite Giants were declared the winners with a record of 7-5-1 (.583) over Pirrone’s All Stars.

It is important to note that most of the baseball played on the West Coast over the winter of 1943-44 were exhibition games played by independent teams. These independent teams included two black teams (Kansas City Royals and Negro All Stars) and several white teams (Lane’s Major Leaguers, Feistner’s Major All Stars, Western Pipe and Steel Boilermakers and Long Beach All Stars).

During the winters of 1943 and 1944 Kimbro spent most of his time in Baltimore and worked in a defense plant.

Henry Kimbro Lights It Up at the Plate

After a very disappointing season in 1943, Tom Wilson brought Felton Snow back as the team’s manager. The Baltimore Elite Giants conducted their spring training in Hot Springs (AR). When spring training concluded, the Elite Giants barnstormed their way back to Baltimore for their Negro National League home opener. Wilson’s Elite Giants continued to play their home games at Bugle Field in Baltimore.

Henry Kimbro had one of the best seasons of his career in 1944. He compiled a batting average of .376 with a .552 slugging percentage for the season.

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1944	Baltimore	31	125	27	47	8	4	2	16	10	.376	.552

Other players who contributed offensively for the Elite Giants in 1944 were Roy Campanella (.395), Bill Hoskins (.385), Bob Clarke (.321), Norman Robinson (.319) and Felton Snow (.298). The 1944 Baltimore Elite Giants had a very solid team batting average of .286 which was the third best in the “league” during the season.



Baltimore Elite Giants (1944)

(Standing left to right – Roy Campanella, Lester Lockett, Unknown, Tom Glover, Lamon Yokeley, Wesley “Doc” Dennis, Bill Hoskins and Andy Porter. Kneeling left to right – Unknown, Felton Snow, Bill Harvey, **Henry Kimbro**, Norman Robinson, Thomas “Pee Wee” Butts, Frank Russell and **George Scales**.)

Seventeen year old Donald Troy was the most effective pitcher on Felton Snow’s staff during the 1944 season. Troy went 5-2 (.714) and five complete games in seven starts. Bill Byrd (8-7), Tom Glover (4-3), Bill Harvey (3-2), Andy Porter (3-1), Joe Black (3-3), Jonas Gaines (2-2), Tom Walker (2-2) and Laymon Yokely (0-0) all pitched for the Baltimore Elite Giants during their 1944 Negro National League season. The Elite Giants pitching staff had a team earned run (ERA) of 4.06 for the season. This was the fourth best ERA in the Negro National League in 1944.

One of the highlights of the 1944 season for Baltimore was a doubleheader that they played at Briggs Stadium in Detroit (MI). The doubleheader drew an amazing crowd of 25,500 fans. The Elite Giants played the New York Cubans. Baltimore won the first game by a score of 8-5 and Henry Kimbro’s homerun provided the only run for Baltimore in a 5-1 loss.

For the second straight year, Henry Kimbro was selected to the East squad to play in the East-West All Star game. The game was played on August 13th at Comiskey Park. Fan support for the East-West All Star game was still extremely strong in 1944, as a crowd of 46,247 witnessed the West squad score repeat as champions of the annual classic. Ted “Double Duty” Radcliffe was the hitting star (three hits including a homerun and two runs batted in) for the West as they defeated the East by a score of 7-4. The West batters had 14 hits for the game. Buddy Armour, Bonnie Serrell, Alex Radcliff and Artie Wilson all had two hits apiece for the West. Ray Dandridge led the East with three hits in five at bats. Like the season before, Henry Kimbro’s only appearance in the game was as a pinch hitter in the seventh inning and he failed to get on base.

According to the Seamheads research team, the Baltimore Elite Giants finished the 1944 Negro National League season with a won-loss record of 34-36 (.486) and were in fourth place in the final Negro National League standings. The Elite Giants were 12 ½ games behind the champion Homestead Grays who were 47-23-3 (.662). From box scores that have been found Baltimore had a record of 41-39 (.513) in games against all levels of competition.

Baltimore Has High Hopes for the 1945 Season

Tom Wilson entered the 1945 Negro National League season with high hopes. Felton Snow had met Wilson's expectations for the 1944 season and Snow had the Elite Giants playing very good team baseball starting the 1945 season.

Roy Campanella (.389), Burnis "Wild Bill" Wright (.363), Bill Hoskins (.307), Norman Robinson (.300) and Henry Kimbro (.291) led the Baltimore Elite Giants in hitting during the season. The Elite Giants had a team batting average of .279 for the Negro National League 1945 season. This was the second best team batting average in the "league" for the season.

Veteran Bill Byrd was the ace of the pitching staff for the 1945 season. Byrd went 11-4 (.733) with a 2.52 ERA and twelve (12) complete games in fourteen (14) Negro National League starts. Unfortunately other than Andy Porter (7-3 w/ 3.38 ERA) none of the rest of the pitching staff delivered. The pitching staff for the 1945 Elite Giants also included Sack Morgan (3-4), Bill Harvey (2-0), Tom Glover (2-2), Donald Troy (1-2), Archie Hinton (1-1) and Joe Black (0-1). Baltimore's pitching staff had a team ERA of 4.74 for the season.

The Baltimore Elite Giants finished the Negro National League season in second place with a record of 32-30-2 (.516). They ended the season nine games behind the "league" champion Homestead Grays (38-18-2).

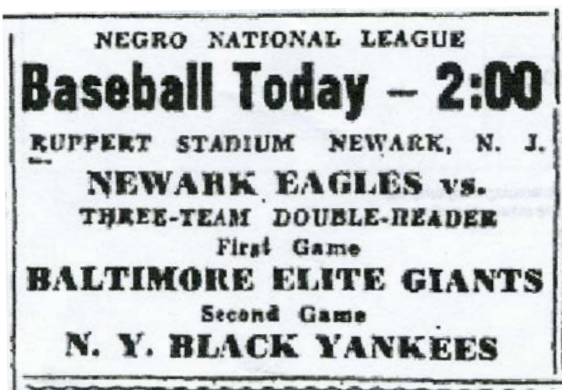
Kimbro Produces a Record Season

Henry Kimbro returned to Baltimore for the 1946 Negro National League season and ended up having the best season of his Negro League career in 1946. Kimbro had a .393 batting average with a .647 slugging percentage in Negro League games. His complete batting statistics for the season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1946	Baltimore	47	173	45	68	12	7	6	43	7	.393	.647

Norman Robinson (.342), Willie Wells (.325), Bill Hoskins (.310) and Thomas "Pee Wee" Butts also had very productive seasons in 1946. In any interesting side note to the 1946 season was that a seventeen (17) year old James "Junior" Gilliam was on the Elite Giants roster. In a limited role Gilliam hit .304 for the season. Baltimore had a team batting average of .260 which was fifth in the Negro National League for the 1946 season.

Jonas Gaines was the best pitcher on the Elite Giants staff during the season. Gaines had a record of 9-4 (.692) with a 3.43 ERA. Baltimore's pitching staff also included Joe Black (5-10), Andy Porter (5-5), Bill Byrd (5-8), Bill Barnes (3-1), Tito Figueroa (3-2), Archie Hinton (1-0), Ernest Burke (1-0), Bill Harvey (0-1), Calvin Hadley (0-2) and Bob Romby (0-2). The Elite Giants had the fourth most effective pitching staff in the "league" for the 1946 season with a 4.07 ERA.



Newark Star-Ledger

Newark, NJ
06-16-46

Felton Snow returned to manage the Baltimore Elite Giants in 1946.

In 1946 Henry Kimbro was selected to play in both East-West All Star games that were held that year. The first game was played at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. Kimbro batted lead-off for the East and went 1 for 2 with a walk and stolen base in the game as fellow team mate Bill Byrd pitched the East to a 6-3 win over Vibert Clarke and the West squad. Games played in cities other than Chicago had never drawn good crowds and this one was no exception. Unfortunately, the game at Griffith Stadium was a financial disaster because only 16,268 fans attended the game. The second East-West All Star game was played just three days later on August 18th. This time the game was returned to Comiskey Park and drew a crowd of 45,474 fans. Kimbro went 0 for 4 in the game and fellow Elite Giants pitcher Bill Byrd took the loss as the East went down by a score of 4 to 1.



**East-West All Star Game (1946)
East team**

(Standing left to right – Felton Snow, **Josh Gibson**, **Monte Irvin**, **Walter “Buck” Leonard**, **Raleigh “Biz” Mackey**, Pat Scantlebury, Lennie Pearson, **Larry Doby**, Fernando Pedroso, Silvio Garcia and Vic Harris.
Kneeling left to right – **Henry Kimbro**, Jonas Ganies, Murray Watkins, Bill Ricks, Gene Benson, **Leon Day**, Sam Bankhead and Howard Easterling.)

The Baltimore Elite Giants finished the 1946 Negro National League season with a won-loss record of 39-36-3 (.520). According to the Seamheads research team Baltimore ended the season in second place in the final Negro National League standings. Unfortunately they were 13 ½ games behind the Newark Eagles who won the “league” title with an amazing record of 50-20-2 (.714). Seamheads also credits the Elite Giants with a record of 43-36-3 (.544) in games against both “league” and “non-League” teams.

Research by the team of Larry Lester and Dick Clark report significant different won-loss records for the 1946 Baltimore Elite Giants. They credit Baltimore with a 28-31 (.475) record and when the season ended they were in fifth place. Lester and Clark do agree with Seamheads that the Newark Eagles won the “league” championship. According to the research team the Newark Eagles had a record of 47-16 (.746).

Kimbro Returns to Cuba

After an absence of several years, Henry Kimbro returned to Cuba for their 1946-47 winter league season. Kimbro signed with the Habana Leones to play in their outfield.

The 1946-47 Cuban Winter League season started on October 26, 1946 and ended on February 27, 1947. This was a historic season for baseball in Cuba because it was the year that the Gran Stadium in El Cerro district of Habana opened. The stadium was built by Bobby Maduro and Miguel Sanchez at the staggering cost of \$ 2,000,000. The ball park held 35,000 fans and was considered the finest stadium in Latin America.



Gran Stadium
Habana, Cuba

Four teams competed in the 1946-47 season. They were the Almendares Alacranes, Cienfuegos Elefantes, Habana Leones and Marianao Tigres.

The Habana Leones were managed by Miguel Gonzalez. Unfortunately for the Leones other than Lou Klein (.330) and Hank Thompson (.320) no other hitter really had a good season offensively. This included Henry Kimbro who had the worst season of his career at the plate with a meager .238 batting average. He went 43 for 181 with a .309 slugging percentage.

The pitching staff saved Habana's season. Manuel "Cociana" Garcia was the ace of the pitching staff with a 10-3 (.769) record. Fred Martin (9-8), James "Lefty" LaMarque (7-6) and Pedro Jimenez (6-3) rounded out the starting rotation for the Leones.

The season ended up being a two team race between Almendares and Habana. Going into the last month of the season, Habana held a six game lead over Almendares. Unfortunately, that lead disintegrated and when the season ended Almendares won the title by two games. The final "league" standings were Almendares (42-24), Habana (40-26), Cienfuegos (25-41) and Marianao (25-41). Both Cienfuegos and Marianao ended the season seventeen games out of first place.

An interesting side note to Henry's 1946 winter league season in Cuba was meeting the young lady who would become his future wife. Her name was Erbia de la Candida del Rosario Mendoza and she was a student at Havana's teacher's college.

Integration Comes to Major League Baseball

When Jackie Robinson signed with the Brooklyn Dodgers organization, Henry Kimbro was one of many Negro League players who were considered to be too old to be a viable candidate to be signed by “organized” baseball. In addition it didn’t help his case that he was considered a loner, temperamental and hard to manage. Henry Kimbro’s decision was real easy – return to the Baltimore Elite Giants because he didn’t have any other real options.

Tom Wilson had been the driving force of the Elite Giants for over twenty-five (25). With his health declining Tom Wilson would not see the full impact and problems of the integration of “organized” baseball or the financial hard times it would bring to Negro League baseball. Shortly after the start of the season Tom Wilson passed away on May 17, 1947. Vernon “Fat Daddy” Green became the new owner of the team and took over the management and difficult task of running the team

Before the start of the 1947 season, Felton Snow was replaced as the Elite Giants’ manager with Wesley Barrow. The first thing that Green did was to change managers. Out was Wesley Barrow who had gone 30-23-2 (.566) in his tenure with Baltimore and in came George “Tubby” Scales who had managed the Elite Giants in the past. After only a few games Scales was replaced with Felton Snow who had found success with the Elite Giants. Snow went 17-16-1 (.515) for the remainder of the Negro National League season.

Henry Kimbro followed up his career best season in 1946 with another outstanding season in 1947. Henry hit .384 with a .624 slugging percentage. His complete batting statistics for the 1947 Negro National League season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1947	Baltimore	63	242	81	93	24	5	8	52	11	.384	.624

Kimbro showed his power at the plate in a game during the 1947 season when he hit a ball over the roof of Tiger Stadium in Detroit.

The Seamheads research team considers Henry Kimbro as the best hitter in the Negro National League in 1947.



Other top hitters on the team during the 1947 season were Johnny Washington (.370), Thomas “Pee Wee” Butts (.352), Butch Davis (.336), Lester Lockett (.315) and Felix Guilbe (.292). For the 1947 Negro National League season, the Baltimore Elite Giants compiled an impressive team batting average of .287 which was the best team batting average in the “league.”

The Elite Giants also had a very effective pitching staff in 1947. Baltimore had a team earned run average of 3.18 which was second best in the Negro National League. Bob Romby was considered the best pitcher on the team during the season. Romby went 10-4 with a 2.43 ERA. Bill Byrd (8-5 w/ 2.61 ERA), Amos Watson (8-3 w/ 2.31 ERA), Joe Black (4-10 w/ 4.17 ERA) and Jonas Gaines (5-4) also were part of the starting rotation.

Richmond Times-Dispatch

Richmond, VA

05-01-47

The Baltimore Elite Giants opened their 1947 Negro National League season on Saturday, May 31st with only 2,000 fans in attendance. Behind the hitting of Henry Kimbro who had two doubles and two homeruns, Baltimore routed the Philadelphia Stars by a score of 20 to 4. Henry also made a spectacular catch in the game that robbed Wesley “Doc” Dennis of a homerun.

Despite all the problems of changes in managers and the death of owner Tom Wilson, the Baltimore Elite Giants had a fairly good season in 1947 against their Negro National League opponents. They ended the season with a record of 41-39-2 (.513) in “league” play. This left the Elite Giants in third place in the final Negro National League standings. In games against both “league” and “non-league” teams, the Elite Giants had a won-loss record of 50-42-3 (.543).

Like in 1946 Henry Kimbro was selected to play in both East-West All Star games that were played in 1947. The first game was played on July 27th at Comiskey Park (Chicago, IL) and drew 48,112 fans. Kimbro batted in the lead-off spot for the East and went 0 for 4 in the game. The entire East squad could only manage three hits in a 5-2 loss to the West. The second game was played two days later on July 29th at the Polo Grounds in New York City. For the first time in East-West All Star game history a game played outside Comiskey Park actually drew a good crowd. The official attendance for the game was 38,402. Henry Kimbro had a good game going 1 for 2 with one run batted in. The East got off to a good start by scoring two runs in the first inning then was held scoreless for the rest of the game. The West won the game by a score of 8-2.

Kimbro Leads Habana to a Championship

Henry Kimbro returned to Cuba for the 1947-48 winter league season determined to show Cuban baseball fans that he was a much better hitter than he had shown the season before. Henry accomplished what he had set out to do in grand style. At the end of the season Kimbro had won the “league” batting title with a .346 batting average, set a Cuban baseball record for the most hits in a single season with 104 base hits, was selected to the Cuban Winter League all-star team and had led the Habana Leones to a “league” championship.



**Habana Leones (1947-48)
Cuban Winter League Champions**

(Back row left to right – **Cocaina Garcia**, Joseito Rodriguez, **Pedro Formental**, Pedro Baez, Charles Harrington, Fred Meagher, **Lennie Pearson** and **James “Lefty” LaMarque**. Center row left to right – Chino Hidalgo, Tony Lorenzo, Toby Atwell, Mike Gonzalez, Yuyo Acosta, Calampio Leon, Luis Suarez, Mosquito Ordenana, **Hank Thompson** and Alex Patterson. Front row left to right – **Henry Kimbro**, Tony Zardon, Jiqui Vega, Bat Boy, Woody Bell, Clubhouse Attendant, Emilio Cabrera and **Rufus Lewis**)

The seventy-two (72) game Cuban season started on October 9, 1947 and ended on February 24, 1948. Almendares, Cienfuegos, Habana and Marianao all fielded teams for the 1947-48 season. Miguel Gonzalez managed the Habana Leones. Negro Leaguers Henry Kimbro (.346), Hank Thompson (.318) and Lennie Pearson (.284) led Habana in hitting during the season. Henry Kimbro's complete hitting statistics for the 1947-48 season were:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1947-48	Habana	-	301	52	104	9	4	0	26	8	.346	.402

The Leones went with a three man starting rotation that was comprised of Alex Patterson (12-9), Rufus Lewis (11-6) and James "Lefty" La Marque (11-7).

The 1947-48 Cuban Winter League season was very competitive. Habana prevailed by winning the "league" title by just one game over Almendares. The final "league" standings were as follows:

Cuban Winter League (1947-48)

Team	Won	Lost	Pct.	Games Behind
Habana Leones	39	33	.542	-
Almendares Alacranes	38	34	.528	1
Cienfuegos Elefantes	35	37	.486	4
Marianao Tigres	43	40	.444	7

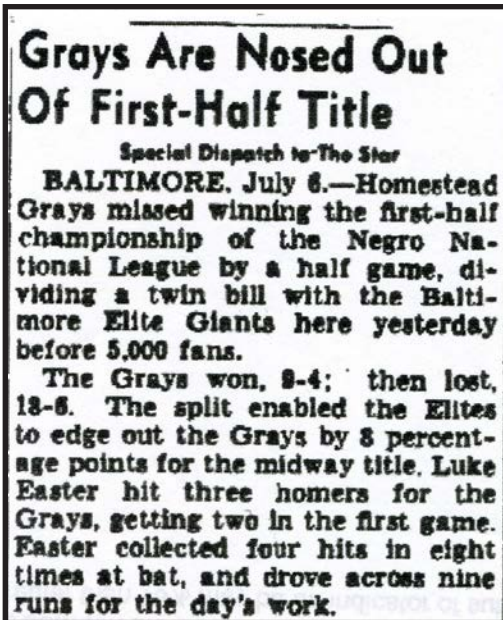
Kimbro returns to Baltimore

Over the off season between the 1947 and 1948 seasons, Vernon Green made two major changes in the management of the Elite Giants. First he turned over the day-to-day operational management of the team to Dick Powell. Then Green hired James "Candy Jim" Taylor to manage the Baltimore Elite Giants. Taylor who had been sick for some time was a no show for spring training because he had been hospitalized in Chicago. During spring training which was conducted in Nashville, Green appointed Henry Kimbro as interim manager until Candy Jim joined the team. Unfortunately Taylor never left the hospital and passed away on April 3, 1948.

To take the place of Candy Jim Taylor, Vernon Green hired Jesse "Hoss" Walker to manage the Elite Giants.

During their 1948 Negro National League season, the Baltimore Elite Giants were led by the hitting of Lester Lockett (.370), Henry Kimbro (.314), Frank Russell (.312), Johnny Washington (.306), Thomas "Pee Wee" Butts (.302) and James "Junior" Gilliam (.287). Baltimore compiled a team batting average of .278 which led the Negro National League in 1948 and their .363 slugging percentage was second in the "league."

The Elite Giants also led the Negro National League in pitching in 1948 with a team earned run average of an amazing 2.47 ERA. Baltimore had an outstanding starting rotation in 1948 that was comprised of 40 year old veteran Bill Byrd (10-4 w/ 1.68 ERA), Joe Black (9-3 w/ 1.92 ERA), Jonas Gaines (7-3 w/ 2.92 ERA) and Bob Romby (5-3 w/ 1.59 ERA). Having three starting pitchers each with a season ERA under 2.00 was unheard of until Baltimore accomplished the feat in 1948. Ernest Burke (3-3), Al Wilmore (1-2), Toots Ferrell (1-0) and Clyde Sowell (0-2) also pitched for the Baltimore Elite Giants in 1948.



Baltimore Wins 1st Half Title
 Evening Star
 Washington, D.C.
 07-06-48

With both excellent hitting and pitching the Baltimore Elite Giants had a very successful season in 1948. The team under the management of Hoss Walker seemed to get stronger as the season progressed. The Elite Giants won the first half of the 1948 Negro National League season and faced the Homestead Grays (41-19) who were the winners of the second half of the season in a play-off series. Unfortunately for Walker his team ran out of luck in the play-offs. The Grays beat the Elite Giants in three straight games. The Baltimore Elite Giants compiled a won-loss record of 45-25 (.643) for the 1948 Negro National League season. The Seamheads research team credits the 1948 Baltimore Elite Giants with a record of 53-30-2 (.639) in all games played for the season.

Kimbro's Last Season in Cuba

The 1948-49 Cuban Winter League season was Henry's last on the Caribbean island. The winter league season started on October 8th of 1948 and ended on February 17th of 1949. The same four teams (Almendares, Cienfuegos, Habana and Marianao) from the 1947-48 season competed in the 1948-49 Cuban Winter League season.

Hank Thompson (.321), Manuel "Chino" Hidalgo (.318), Pedro Formental (.288), Carlos Blanco (.281), Herberto Blanco (.281) and Henry Kimbro (.271) led the Leones in hitting. Kimbro also led the "league" in walks with 73 free passes.

The pitching staff for Habana was anchored by Charles Stanceau (11-6), Ray Yochim (9-6) and Rufus Lewis (8-5).



Habana Leones (1948-49)

(Back row left to right - Trainer Luis Navarro, Emilio Cabrera, Oliverio Ortiz, Rufus Lewis, Ray Yochim, Charles Stanceau, **Lennie Pearson**, Ferrell Anderson, Gilberto Torres, Alfredo Suarez and Assistant G.M. Middle row left to right - Paul Calvert, Calampio Leon, **Hank Thompson**, Bill Schuster, **Mike Gonzalez**, Carlos Blanco, Pablo Garcia, Herberto Blanco, **Pedro Formental** and **Henry Kimbro**. Front row left to right - Bat Boy, Tony Lorenzo, Carlos Cola, Chino Hidalgo, Rafael Rivas, Jose Cendeno, **Cocaina Garcia** and Clubhouse Attendant Alfarito)

The 1948-49 season provided little excitement for Cuban baseball fans. The Almendares Alacranes with a record 47-25 (.653) dominated play the entire season and easily won the "league" title by eight (8) games over Habana (39-33). Marianao (29-42) was seventeen and a half games behind and Cienfuegos (28-43) ended the season eighteen and a half games behind in last place.



Baltimore Elite Giants (1949)

(left to right – **Henry Kimbro**, Robert “Butch” Davis, Lester Lockett and Lennie Pearson)



Baltimore Elite Giants (1949)

(left to right – **Henry Kimbro**, Bill Byrd, Vic Harris and Jesse “Hoss” Walker)

Baltimore Joins the Negro American League

Before the start of the 1949 baseball season, the Negro National League disbanded. This event caused the Negro American League to expand into an Eastern and Western Division. The Baltimore Elite Giants, New York Cubans and Philadelphia Stars joined the newly created Eastern Division of the Negro American League. The Newark Eagles were sold and the new owner moved the team to Houston where they played in the Western Division of the Negro American League. The always dominant Homestead Grays played an independent schedule and were also members of the Negro American Association. Lastly, the New York Black Yankees didn't join another league but played a barnstorming schedule.

Jesse "Hoss" Walker managed the Baltimore Elite Giants in 1949. Bugle Field continued to be the Elite Giants' home ball park.

The Baltimore Elite Giants had a very strong hitting team in 1949. They compiled a team batting average of .285 (909 for 3137) with a .401 slugging percentage both of which were the best in the Negro American League for the 1949 season. The starting line-up and their season batting averages in "league" games were as follows:

Baltimore Elite Giants (1949)

Position	Player	Avg.	Position	Player	Avg
1B	Clinton Mc Cord	.275	OF	Henry Kimbro	.360
2B	James Gilliam	.301	OF	Butch Davis	.366
SS	Thomas Butts	.264	OF	Lennie Pearson	.340
3B	Ed Finney	.308			
C	Henry "Frazier Robson	.257	P	Bob Romby	13-7
			P	Bill Byrd	12-3
			P	Joe Black	11-7



Baltimore Elite Giants (1949)

(Back row left to right – **Joe Black**, Luther Ferrell, Charles Davidson, Lennie Pearson, **Bill Byrd**, Al Wilmore, Bob Romby, Johnny Hayes, **James "Junior" Gilliam** and Jesse "Hoss" Walker. Seated left to right – Robert "Butch" Davis, Lester Lockett, Sylvester Rogers, **Henry Kimbro**, **Vic Harris**, Henry Bayliss, Frazier Robinson, Frank Russell, Thomas "Pee Wee" Butts and **Leon Day**)

Henry Kimbro's complete batting statistics in Negro American League games for the 1949 season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1949	Baltimore	89	328	70	118	18	4	0	31	9	.360	.439

The outfield of Henry Kimbro, Robert "Butch" Davis and Lennie Pearson dominated "league" pitchers the entire season.

The pitching staff for Baltimore performed extremely well the entire season. No one pitcher in the starting rotation dominated his team mates. They all pitched brilliantly. Hoss Walker used a five man starting rotation during the season that included Bob Romby (13-7), veteran Bill Byrd (12-3), Joe Black (11-7), Al Wilmore (10-7) and Leroy "Toots" Ferrell (8-2). In addition Hall of Fame member Leon Day (7-5) pitched and played in the outfield during the season.



Detroit Tribune
 Detroit, MI
 10-01-49

The Baltimore Elite Giants won the Eastern Division of the Negro American League with a record of 59-30 (.663). They played the Chicago American Giants (48-35) who were awarded the Western Division title of the Negro American League. Baltimore and Chicago met in a play-off series for the Negro American League title. The Baltimore Elite Giants won the play-off series in four straight games and were crowned the 1949 Negro American League champions.



Baltimore Wins Title

Fort Worth Star-Telegram
 Fort Worth, TX
 09-24-49

After the regular season Henry Kimbro was recruited to play for the Jackie Robinson All Stars for their barnstorming tour against the Negro American League All Stars. Robinson recruited fellow Major League players Don Newcombe (P), Roy Campanella (C) and Larry Doby (OF) to play for his all-star team. The rest of Jackie's roster was filled in with Negro League players. Besides Henry Kimbro, the following Negro League players played on the Jackie Robinson All Stars: Marvin Barker, William Cash (C), John Hayes, James Jenkins (P), Walter "Buck" Leonard (1B), Louis Loudon (C), Alex Newkirk (P), Pat Scantlebury (P) and John Watkins (3B). Leon Ruffin managed the Negro American League All Stars. Ruffin's roster was comprised of players from the Birmingham Black Barons, Chicago American Giants, Cleveland Buckeyes, Houston Eagles and Memphis Red Sox.

Kimbro Steps in to Manage Baltimore

The Baltimore Elite Giants almost took a significant loss before the 1950 season ever got underway. In February of 1950 the Chicago Cubs purchased the contracts of James “Junior” Gilliam and Leroy “Toots” Ferrell. Both had a tryout with the Springfield Cubs of the New England League but were returned to the Elite Giants before the start of the season.

Henry Kimbro had another great season at the plate in 1950. He led all starting players with a .370 batting average in Negro American League games. His complete batting statistics in “league” games for the season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1950	Baltimore	45	165	43	61	11	4	2	35	9	.370	.521

Other Baltimore Elite Giants who had very good seasons offensively were Clinton “Butch” McCord (.349), Ed Finney (.333), Fleming Reed (.299) and Johnny Hayes (.270). Pitchers Bob Romy (.381) and Willie Hubert (.286) also contributed at the plate. As a team the Elite Giants led the Negro American League in hitting with a .288 team batting average.

Unfortunately for the Elite Giants they would lose Butch Davis, Lester Locket and Lennie Pearson before the end of the season.



(left to right – **Henry Kimbro**, Butch Davis and Lester Lockett)

The starting rotation for Baltimore during the 1950 season was as follows: Joe Black (8-3), Al Wilmore (6-4), John “Lefty” Coleman (5-2) and Toots Ferrell (4-6). After the starters it was anybody’s guess who might pitch. Over the course of the season the Baltimore Elite Giants used at least sixteen (16) different pitchers. Hubert Simmons (1-0) and Bob Romy (0-4) pitched in relief and were spot starters. Clyde Agnew, James Banks, Bill Byrd, Sonny Carroll, Leon Day, Fannell (no first name), Hank Mainor, Robert Preston, Sylvester Rogers and Lefty Whitfield also pitched briefly for Baltimore during the 1950 season.

1949 World Negro Champions

BASEBALL TEAM

Baltimore Elite Giants

vs.

Lexington Hustlers

Blue Grass Athletic Park
LEXINGTON, KY.

Tuesday Night, June 6

GIANTS LINE UP

14—Henry Kimbro, CF	.....	380
10—Thomas Butts, SS	.....	280
18—James Gillian, 2B	.....	301
27—Lemox Davis, LF	.....	388
30—Leonard Pearson, 1B	.....	341
17—Edward Finney, 3B	.....	308
18—Clinton McCord, RF	.....	275
25—John Hayes, C	.....	340
28—Bill Byrd, P.		

Game Time 8 P.M.

Gen. Adm. \$1.00. Children 30c

Lexington Herald
Lexington, KY
06-04-50

In July of the 1950 season Lennie Pearson who was the player/the manager of the Elite Giants signed a contract with the Milwaukee Brewers of the American Association. With Pearson's departure, Richard Powell who ran the day-to-day operations of the team named Henry Kimbro as the interim manager. Under Kimbro's leadership the team played good baseball and compiled a won-loss record of 14-11 (.560) that put them in first place of the Eastern Division of the Negro American League.

The 1950 season was financially disastrous for the Baltimore Elite Giants. Some of the measures that team owner Richard Powell employed to deal with the team's financial problems were:

1. First, he released fan favorites Bill Byrd and Leon Day. Powell rationalized that the reason behind getting rid of two of the team's most notable players was that they were making too much money.
2. Then Powell did away with players' contracts and went to a system that paid players based on a percentage of the gate. Unfortunately for black baseball, several other Negro American League teams adopted the same compensation plan.
3. In addition, Richard Powell even went so far as to stop the game if a foul ball went into the stands and the game could not resume until the baseball was retrieved.

When all was said and done the Baltimore Elite Giants reported that they lost \$ 18,000 for the season. To make matters even worse for management, they were also faced with losing two of their best players in Junior Gilliam and Joe Black both of whom were recruited by Major League Baseball.

The Baltimore Elite Giants finished the 1950 Negro American League season with a won-loss record of 24-20-1 (.545). This left them in second place in the Eastern Division.

Elite Giants Last Season

In January of 1951 it was announced that the Negro American League would operate with only eight (8) teams for the 1951 season. The Baltimore Elite Giants, Birmingham Black Barons, Chicago American Giants, Houston Eagles, Indianapolis Clowns, Kansas City Monarchs, Memphis Red Sox and Philadelphia Stars comprised the Negro American League in 1951.

In 1951 the ownership of the Baltimore Elite Giants changed hands and Soo Bridgeforth became the new owner of the team. Reportedly, Soo purchased the team for the bargain basement price of \$ 11,000. Bridgeforth was able to afford a professional baseball team because he had made a significant amount of money in his gambling operation and was the owner of the very profitable New Era night club in Nashville. According to Soo he had always been a baseball fan and being a team owner just seemed a good fit for him. According to newspaper accounts Bridgeforth's first action as team owner was developing a plan to move the team to Nashville. One of the primary reasons cited for moving the team was that Bugle Field had been torn down and the Elite Giants

had not been able to secure a permanent home field in Baltimore. In addition the management of the team saw Nashville as a “hot bed” for black baseball.

When the 1951 season started, Henry Kimbro was the only surviving player from the 1938 Elite Giants team to still be playing for the Elite Giants.



Henry Kimbro
Baltimore Elite Giants
(1938-1951)

James “Hoss” Walker was named the manager of the team by Soo Bridgeforth. Some resources also list Henry Kimbro as having managed Baltimore for a portion of the 1951 season. For the third season in a row, Henry Kimbro hit over .360 for the Baltimore Elite Giants. Henry hit .366 in “league” games for the 1951 season.

Henry’s complete batting statistics for the 1951 Negro American League season were as follows:

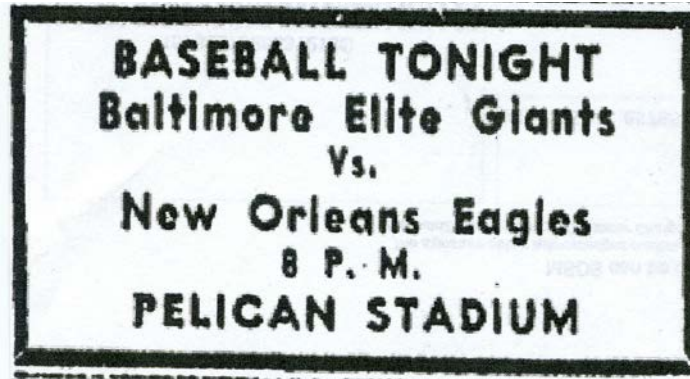
Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1951	Baltimore	-	224	73	82	-	-	10	57	8	.366	-

Kimbro’s seventy-three (73) runs scored were second only to Ray Neil’s seventy-seven (77) runs scored which led the Negro American League.

Fleming “Buddy” Reedy (.343) and Wesley “Doc” Dennis (.335) also had outstanding seasons at the plate in 1951.

The pitching staff for the Elite Giants in 1951 was anchored by Frank “Groundhog” Thompson (8-7), Ulysses Holimon (7-3), Gene “Lefty” Richardson (5-2), Frank “Junior” Russell (2-1), Kelly Searcy and Tom Coleman.

The Elite Giants struggled severely at the start of the season and were 0-10 to open the season. The Elite Giants played better baseball during the second half of the season and went 15-12 (.556). According to research by the team of Larry Lester and Dick Clark, the Elite Giants ended the regular season with a record of 28-36 (.438) and were in second place in the Eastern Division of the Negro American League. The Indianapolis Clowns won the Negro American League championship



Baltimore vs New Orleans

Times-Picayune
New Orleans, LA
05-29-51

At the end of the season Kimbro was selected to play in the 1951 East-West All Star game that was played on August 12th in Chicago at Comiskey Park. Negro League officials had a short glimmer of optimism for the all-star game after the final tabulation of the fans votes from around the country was counted. According to Negro League officials there were more votes placed for the 1951 all-star teams than had been cast in recent years. Unfortunately, the increased voting did not translate into sales at the ticket office. The 1951 East-West All Star game drew less than the year before with only 21,312 fans attending the game. Henry was named in the starting outfield for the East and batted in the lead-off spot. He went 1 for 4 in the game. The East pitchers only gave up six hits in leading the East to a 3-1 victory.

With their finances exhausted the Elite Giants folded quietly at the end of the season. In addition to Baltimore dropping out of the “league,” the New Orleans Eagles also disbanded. This left only six teams (Birmingham Black Barons, Chicago American Giants, Indianapolis Clowns, Kansas City Monarchs, Memphis Red Sox and the Philadelphia Stars) to compete in the 1952 Negro American League.

Henry Kimbro Signs with the Birmingham Black Barons

When Baltimore disbanded, Henry Kimbro and his Elite teammates were left without jobs. Kimbro who had been a star in the Negro Leagues for years had no problem finding employment. The Birmingham Black Barons offered him a contract and Henry became a Black Baron.

In his first season in Birmingham, Henry Kimbro led the Birmingham Black Barons in hitting with a .341 batting average. His hitting statistics for the 1952 season were as follows:

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1952	Birmingham	82	290	75	99	25	-	4	55	13	.341	-

Kimbro led the Negro American League in runs scored with 75 and in doubles with 25 for the 1952 season.

Other top hitters for Birmingham during the season were Wesley “Doc” Dennis (.322), Frank Russell (.297), Eddie Brooks (.294) and Willie “Cap” Brown (.288).

Kimbro, Dennis, Brooks Give Black Barons Punch

Knoxville News-Sentinel

Knoxville, TN

07-25-52

The Birmingham Black Barons went with basically a two man starting rotation of Frank "Groundhog" Thompson (13-6) and Taylor Smith (10-8) during the season. Groundhog Thompson was considered the top pitcher in the Negro American League for the 1952 season. Hiram Gaston (6-7), Willie Scruggs (3-4), J.D. Johnson (1-3), McLemore (1-1), Jim Bolden, Joe Chestnut, Manny Cartledge, James Jenkins, T.W. Richardson and Sam Williams also pitched for Birmingham.

Henry Kimbro was selected to play in the East-West All Star game in 1952. This was Henry's ninth appearance in the East-West classic. The game was played on August 17th at Comiskey Park. For the fifth straight year attendance was down for the East-West All Star game. Attendance for the game dropped to 18,279 in 1952. This was an all-time low for a Negro League all-star game played at Comiskey Park. Henry was the East's starting center fielder and went 1 for 3 with a walk, stolen base and run batted in. The West scored a 7-3 victory with Dick Phillips of the Kansas City Monarchs being credited with the win.

SATURDAY NIGHT
At 8:00 P.M.
BILOXI ATHLETIC FIELD
Negro World Series Game
BIRMINGHAM BLACK BARONS
vs.
INDIANAPOLIS CLOWNS
Featuring King Tut
Also One-Band Man & Entertainment
Adults \$1.10 — Children 55c
INCLUDING TAX
Soldiers in Uniform 55c
RESERVED SEATS FOR WHITE FANS

The Birmingham Black Barons had an excellent season in 1952 and finished the year with an impressive record of 51-36 (.586). Unfortunately they came in second place in the final "league" standings. The Indianapolis Clowns (44-30) won the first half of the 1952 Negro American League season and the Birmingham Black Barons (51-36) won the second half of the season. Birmingham went 23-15 (.605) and the Indianapolis Clowns were in second place with a record of 18-15 (.520) for the second half of the season. According to an article that appeared in the Arkansas Gazette of Little Rock (AR) on September 11th, the Birmingham Black Barons and Indianapolis Clowns were scheduled to play a "Negro World Series" game at Travelers Field in Little Rock on September 16th. According to newspaper reports the series was scheduled for seven games.

During the "Negro World Series" games were played in Little Rock (AR) at Travelers Field, Knoxville (KY) at Caswell Field, New Orleans at Pelican Stadium and in Biloxi (MS) at Biloxi Athletic Field. Led by the hitting of Henry "Hank" Aaron, the Indianapolis Clowns won the series and were declared the Negro American League champions for the 1952 season.

Daily Herald

Biloxi, MS

09-26-52

After the "Negro League World Series" play had concluded, the Birmingham Black Barons went on a barnstorming tour with the Roy Campanella All Stars.

Kimbro's Last Season in Professional Baseball

By the start of the 1953 Negro American League season, the "league" was down to just four teams (Birmingham Black Barons, Indianapolis Clowns, Kansas City Monarchs and Memphis Red Sox) because the Chicago American Giants and Philadelphia Stars had disbanded after the 1952 season.

Going into the season, Henry Kimbro was 41 years old and he knew that he was at the end of his career. One of the most interesting aspects of the 1953 season in regards to Henry Kimbro was the fact that the Birmingham Black Barons management listed him on their roster as being only 29 years old. This is documented in a newspaper article that appeared in the Kansas City Star on June 7th of 1953. In addition, the Kansas Whip of Topeka (KS) published an article that William Dismukes who was a scout for the New York Yankees had signed 17 year old Birmingham Black Barons pitcher Donald Johnson the week before and was also interested in three other Birmingham players. They were Henry Kimbro (left field), Wesley "Doc" Dennis (first base) and Carl Long (centerfield).

It was a common practice during this time for black players to shave a few years off their age in hopes of being signed by "organized" baseball but twelve (12) years is a real stretch. When Negro League historian and researcher Dr. Layton Revel asked Henry about this, all he did was laugh.

Yankees Glue Eyes on Three Black Barons

The New York Yankees have their eyes on three outstanding players with the powerful Birmingham Black Barons.

This is made known by William Dismukes, Yankee scout, who only last week inked one of the Black Barons pitchers, 17-year old Don Johnson, to a contract.

These three outstanding players include Henry Kimbro, left fielder; Wesley (Doc) Dennis, first baseman, and Carl Long, center fielder.

Kansas Whip
Topeka, KS
07-03-53

Even though he only hit .275 for the season he was still the Birmingham Black Barons' fourth best hitter and hit significantly better than the team batting average which was an anemic .232 (454 for 1955). Wesley "Doc" Dennis (.350), Al Mobley (.329) and William Scott (.292) led Birmingham in hitting during the season.

At 41 years of age and in the final season of his professional baseball career, Henry does not seem to have lost much in the speed department. Henry Kimbro's fourteen (14) stolen bases for the season were second in the Negro American League. Jeff Williams of the Kansas City Monarchs had sixteen (16) stolen bases.

At least thirteen (13) pitchers appeared in a Black Barons uniform during the season. Frank "Groundhog" Thompson (7-7), Manny Cartledge (5-3), Danny Wright (3-7), Hiram Gaston (2-4), Taylor Smith, Donald Johnson (3-0), Kelly Searcy (2-0), Walker Kelly (1-1), Frank Russell (1-1), Wallace Guthrie, Harold Hairston and Tommy Jackson were some of the players who pitched for the Black Barons in 1953.

On August 16th of 1953 the 21st East-West All Star game was played and hit an all-time low in attendance for any game in the history of the classic. An estimated 7,000 to 10,000 fans barely made a dent in the bleachers. The attendance at the game was so disappointing that Dr. J.B. Martin, President of the Negro American League, presented an open invitation for Negro League fans to write him at his office in Chicago with suggestions about what should be done with the East-West classic. Henry was selected as the starting right fielder for the East's team. In his last season in professional baseball Henry Kimbro went out on top as an "all-star." Henry went 1 for 3 with a run batted in. The lack luster game did not impress the fans or Major League baseball scouts. The contest ended with the West team taking home a 5-1 victory.

The Birmingham Black Barons had a won-loss record of 28-34 (.452) and were in second place in the final Negro American League standings. The Kansas City Monarchs were 56-21 (.727) and were the only team in the "league" with a winning record. The Afro-American credits the 1953 Kansas City Monarchs with a won-loss record of 79-24 (.767) in games against all levels of competition.

Henry Kimbro retired from professional baseball after the 1953 season. He was 41 years old.

Life After Baseball

After retiring from baseball, Henry made his home in Nashville. There he drove a taxi cab until he purchased a gas station and then he bought Bill's Cab Company in West Nashville. Kimbro owned the taxi cab company for twenty-two years until he sold it and retired. Both of Henry's business ventures were very successful and provided Henry Kimbro with a very comfortable life style. He also attended Negro League reunions around the country on a regular basis.

According to his daughter Dr. Harriet Kimbro-Hamilton, her father continued to play baseball long after he had retired from the Negro Leagues. In her book about her father, Dr. Hamilton talks about going to watch her father play for a local sandlot team at Hadley Park in Nashville.

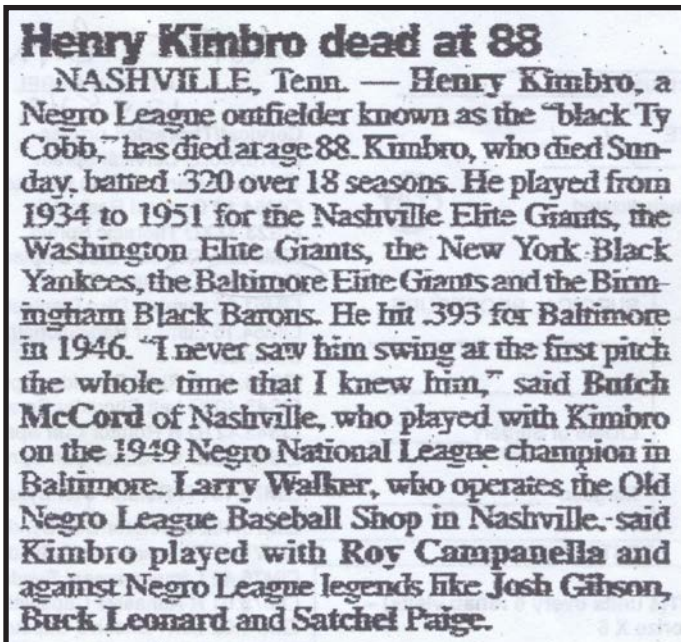
One of the highlights of Henry's retirement occurred in 1993 when he and twenty-four other former Negro League players were honored at the 64th Major League All Star game that was played at Camden Yards in Baltimore (MD). The program was called "The Stars of Early Black Baseball."

In 2004 Henry Kimbro was posthumously inducted into the Tennessee State Sports Hall of fame.

Passing of a Negro League Legend

In his later years Henry Kimbro suffered with a severe heart condition. Over the last several years of his life he required several hospitalizations. Henry Allen Kimbro passed away at his home in Nashville on July 11, 1999 of congestive heart failure. Henry was 87 years old. His funeral services were held at Patterson Memorial United Methodist Church and he was laid to rest in the Greenwood Cemetery in Nashville.

Daily Advocate
Stanford, CT
07-14-99



**Baltimore Elite Giants (1949)
Championship Teammates**



Jesse "Hoss" Walker (Manager), Frazier Robinson, Johnny Hayes and Vic Harris (Coach)



Baltimore Elite Giants – Pitching Staff

(Joe Black Leroy Ferrell, Bill Byrd, Charles Davidson, Al Wilmore, Bob Romby, Sylvester Rodgers and Leon Day)

Playing Career

Regular Season:

Year	Team	League
1936	Nashville Black Vols	Negro Southern League
1937	Washington Elite Giants	Negro National League
1938-1940	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro National League
1941	New York Black Yankees	Negro National League
1942-1948	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro National League
1949-1951	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro American League
1952-1953	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League

Post Season Play and Winter Leagues:

1937	Negro National League All Stars	Independent Barnstorming Tour
1937	Negro National League All Stars	Game vs Satchel Paige All Stars @ Polo Grounds
1939	Baltimore Elite Giants	Series vs Major League All Stars
1939	Homestead Grays	American Series (Cuba)
1939-40	Almendares Alacranes	Cuban Winter League
1940-41	Baltimore Elite Giants	California Winter League
1941-42	Royal Giants	California Winter League
1943	South All Stars	Independent
1943	Baltimore Elite Giants	Series vs Major League All Stars
1943-44	Baltimore Elite Giants	California Winter League
1946-47	Habana Leones	Cuban Winter League
1947-48	Habana Leones	Cuban Winter League
1948	Negro National League All Stars	Independent
1948	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro National League Play-Off Series
1948-49	Habana Leones	Cuban Winter League
1949	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro American League Play-Off Series
1949	Jackie Robinson All Stars	Post Season Series vs Negro American League All Stars
1952	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro League World Series vs Indianapolis Clowns
1952	Birmingham Black Barons	Post Season Barnstorming Tour vs Roy Campanella's All Stars

Career Statistics – Hitting (Regular Season – Negro Leagues)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1937	Washington	30	111	19	33	5	2	3	11	0	.297	.459
1938	Baltimore	32	130	30	34	4	3	0	20	1	.262	.338
1939	Baltimore	36	146	27	43	6	1	3	14	3	.295	.411
1940	Baltimore	54	213	48	56	6	2	3	27	8	.263	.338
1941	New York	29	106	22	33	5	2	0	13	18	.311	.377
1942	Baltimore	49	196	37	54	8	5	2	28	3	.276	.398
1943	Baltimore	47	190	34	54	8	5	0	13	7	.284	.379
1944	Baltimore	31	125	27	47	8	4	2	16	10	.376	.552
1945	Baltimore	41	172	31	50	10	9	2	20	5	.291	.465
1946	Baltimore	47	173	45	68	12	7	6	43	7	.393	.647
1947	Baltimore	63	242	81	93	24	5	8	52	11	.384	.624
1948	Baltimore	71	239	60	75	12	4	0	21	7	.314	.397
1949	Baltimore	89	328	70	118	18	4	0	31	9	.360	.439
1950	Baltimore	45	165	43	61	11	4	2	35	9	.370	.521
1951	Baltimore	-	224	73	82	-	-	10	57	8	.366	-
1952	Birmingham	82	290	75	99	25	-	4	55	13	.341	-
1953	Birmingham	61	200	39	55	10	5	2	32	14	.275	.405
Total		807	3250	761	1055	172	62	47	488	133	.325	-

Career Statistics – Hitting (Play-Off Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1939	Baltimore	-	36	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	.444	-

Career Statistics – Hitting (East-West All Star Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1941	New York	1	3	1	1	0	0	0	1	2	.333	.333
1943	Baltimore	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1944	Baltimore	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000	.000
1946	Baltimore	2	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	.167	.167
1947	Baltimore	2	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	.167	.167
1951	Birmingham	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	.250	.250
1952	Birmingham	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	.333	.333
1953	Birmingham	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	.333	.333
Total		10	27	2	6	0	0	0	3	4	.222	.222

Career Statistics – Hitting (Exhibition Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1937	Negro League All Stars	2	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	.500	.500
1943	South All Stars	1	5	1	4	1	-	-	1	-	.800	1.000
Total		2	7	2	5	1	-	-	1	-	.714	.857

Career Statistics – Hitting (Non-League Games)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1939	Baltimore	1	5	1	2	-	-	-	1	1	.400	.400
1940	Baltimore	1	4	2	2	-	-	-	2	-	.500	.500
1941	New York	3	12	5	9	2	-	1	2	1	.750	1.167
1950	Baltimore	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2	0	1.000	4.000
Total		6	22	9	14	2	-	2	7	2	.636	1.000

Career Statistics – Hitting (Cuba)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1939	Homestead	6	27	2	10	2	0	0	-	1	.370	.444
1939-40	Almendares	-	194	33	57	5	3	0	15	18	.294	.351
1946-47	Habana	-	181	40	43	6	2	1	15	12	.238	.309
1947-48	Habana	-	301	52	104	9	4	0	26	8	.346	.402
1948-49	Habana	-	266	57	72	3	4	0	15	16	.271	.312
	Total	-	969	184	286	25	13	1	71	55	.295	.351

Career Statistics – Hitting (California Winter League)

Year	Team	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
1940-41	Baltimore	9	38	-	13	1	-	-	-	-	.342	-
1941-42	Royal Giants	2	10	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	.400	-
1943-44	Baltimore	No statistics										
	Total	11	48	-	17	1	-	-	-	-	.354	-

Career Hitting Statistics (Totals)

	Games	AB	Runs	Hits	2B	3B	HR	RBI	SB	BA	SLG
Negro League	807	3250	761	1055	172	62	47	488	133	.325	-
Negro League - Play-Off	-	36	-	16	-	-	-	-	-	.444	-
East-West All Star Games	10	27	2	6	0	0	0	3	4	.222	.222
Exhibition Games	2	7	2	5	1	-	-	1	-	.714	.857
Non-League	6	22	9	14	2	-	2	7	2	.636	1.000
Cuba	-	969	184	286	25	13	1	71	55	.295	.351
California	11	48	-	17	1	-	-	-	-	.354	-
Total	836	4359	958	1399	201	75	50	570	194	.321	-

Batting and League Leader Titles

Category	Year	League	Number
Batting Average	1947-48	Cuban Winter League	.346
Games	1946	Negro National League	45
	1948	Negro National League	81
At Bats	1945	Negro National League	172
Runs Scored	1946	Negro National League	45
	1947	Negro National League	81
	1948	Negro National League	60
	1952	Negro American League	75
Hits	1947-48	Cuban Winter League	104
Doubles	1947	Negro National League	24
	1952	Negro American League	25
Triples	1945	Negro National League	6
	1946	Negro National League	7
Walks	1948-49	Cuban Winter League	73
Stolen Bases	1939-40	Cuban Winter League	18
	1944	Negro National League	10



Baltimore Elite Giants (1945)

(Back row left to right – Andy Porter, Tom Glover, Bill Hoskins, James Dudley, Harry Williams, Duncan, **Bill Byrd**, Wesley “Doc” Dennis and Don Troy. Front row left to right – **Roy Campanella**, Robert Clarke, Tom Walker, Norman Robinson, **Henry Kimbro**, Archie Hinton and Felton Snow)



Baltimore Elite Giants (1949)

(Left to right – Ed Finney, **Henry Kimbro**, Johnny Hayes, **Leon Day**, Thomas “Pee Wee” Butts, **Vic Harris**, Clinton “Butch” McCord, **James “Junior” Gilliam**, Bob Romby, Frazier Robinson, Al Wilmore, Jesse “Hoss” Walker, Robert “Butch” Davis, Lennie Pearson, Leroy “Toots” Ferrell and **Joe Black**)

Assessing Henry Kimbro's Career

Even though Negro League historians and researchers differ on Henry Kimbro's yearly hitting statistics and career batting average, all agree that Henry Kimbro was **consistently an outstanding hitter throughout his entire professional baseball career**. The chart below presents Kimbro's yearly batting average and career batting average by eight (8) of the leading Negro League historians and researchers.

	CNLBR	Lester & Clark	Seamheads	Baseball Reference	Howe News Bureau	John Holway	James Riley	MacMillan Baseball Encyclopedia
1937	.297	.257	.297	.254	-	.218	.276	.276
1938	.262	.246	.262	.289	-	.254	.318	.318
1939	.295	.267	.295	.244	.287	.289	.310	.275
1940	.263	.269	.263	.266	.235	.284	.269	.260
1941	.311	.284	.311	.242	.326		.247	.319
1942	.276	.270	.276	.259	.259	.290	.288	.278
1943	.284	.293	.284	.270	.270	.289	.333	.285
1944	.376	.361	.376	.359	.329	.329	.329	.372
1945	.291	.318	.261	.361	.291	.301	.291	.259
1946	.393	.322	.342	.331	.371	.396	.371	.393
1947	.384	.255	.384	.278	.363	.363	.353	.363
1948	.314	.227	.290	.111	.314	.314	.314	.314
1949	.360	-	-	-	.360	-	.352	.352
1950	.370	-	-	-	.370	-	.370	.370
1951	.366	.250	-	-	.366	-	-	-
1952	.341	.333	-	-	.341	-	-	-
1953	.275	.333	-	-	.275	-	-	-
At Bats	3250	1481	2106	1162	2777	-	-	2337
Hits	1055	418	641	324	906	-	-	749
Career Batting Average	.325	.282	.304	.279	.326	-	-	.320

(Note: CNLBR stands for the Center for Negro League Baseball Research and Lester & Clark stands for the research team of Larry Lester and Dick Clark.)

- According to research by the Center for Negro League Baseball Research, during the height of his career which was from 1944 through the 1952 season, Kimbro only failed to hit .300 in one season. **During these eight seasons when Henry was at the height of his career he hit on average .354 (693 for 1958) per season.**

His top seasons offensively were 1944 (.376), 1946 (.393), 1947 (.384), 1949 (.360), 1950 (.370), 1951 (.366) and 1952 (.341).

- There is a **significant problem with all the missing hitting statistics** for Henry Kimbro's professional baseball career. Some examples of these missing statistics are:
 1. We do not have any of Henry's batting statistics for his first season (1937) in professional baseball for the Nashville Black Vols of the Negro Southern League.
 2. The number of games played, doubles and triples are missing for his 1951 Negro American League season with Baltimore. In addition we do not have the number of triples he hit in 1952. These numbers are important because he had an extremely high batting average in both 1951 (.366) and 1952 (.341).

East-West All Star Game Classic

During his Negro League career, Henry Kimbro played in ten (10) East-West All Star games (1941, 1943, 1944, 1946 – 2 games, 1947 – 2 games, 1951, 1952 and 1953). He was also selected to the 1942 “classic” but did not play.

In event of rain, the game will be played on Monday night, Aug. 18, starting at 8 o'clock. Tickets are on sale at the Hotel Grand, 51st and South Parkway and on Saturday and Sunday at the Comiskey park box office.

BATTING ORDER—EAST

No.	Player	Position	Batting Ave.	Team
2	Eddie Brooks	2B	.278	Birmingham
12	Fate Smith	3B	.301	Philadelphia
14	Henry Kimbro	CF	.338	Birmingham
15	Jimmy Jones	LF	.359	Philadelphia
20	Jim Wilkes	RF	.325	Indianapolis
19	Wesley Dennis	1B	.306	Birmingham
2	Carl Dent	SS	.247	Philadelphia
27	Al “Buster” Haywood	C	.206	Indianapolis
23	Ted Richardson	P(L)	.210	Indianapolis

(8) Otha Bailey, catcher, Birmingham Black Barons (223); (18) Frank “Groundhog” Thompson, pitcher, Birmingham Black Barons (10-4); (37) Henry Merchant, outfield, Indianapolis Clowns (.281); (30) Jim Cohen, pitcher, Indianapolis Clowns (8-5); Joseph Chestnut, pitcher, Philadelphia Stars (6-7).

Manager, Buster Haywood, Indianapolis Clowns. Coach—Oscar Charleston, Manager, Philadelphia Stars.

BATTING ORDER—WEST

No.	Player	Position	Batting Ave.	Team
4	Lawrence Raines	SS	.293	Chicago
10	Henry Bayliss	2B	.250	Kansas City
18	Sherman Watrous	CF	.328	Memphis
25	Duke Henderson	RF	.276	Kansas City
1	Felix McLaurin	LF	.378	Chicago
29	Willie Patterson	1B	.272	Chicago
	Jackson	C	.291	Kansas City
18	Dick Phillips (2-4)	P(L)	.300	Kansas City

(24) John Jackson, pitcher, Kansas City Monarchs (6-4); (18) William Beverly, pitcher, Chicago American Giants (7-7); (8) Gilbert Varona, first base, Memphis (.220); (10) Manuel Valdez, infielder, Memphis (.240); (17) Sam (Buddy) Woods, pitcher, Memphis Red Sox (11-7); (15) Issiah Harris, pitcher, Memphis Red Sox (6-6); Winfriedl S. Welch, Manager; Jack Marshall (No. 16) coach.

Umpires: Simon Lewis at the plate). T. H. Jefferson (first base), R. W. Garrett (second base), Simmie Gardner (third base), Wallace Williams, right field and Andrew Summers (left field).

East-West All Star Game (1952)
Starting Line-ups and Rosters

3. “Non-league” games were a very important part of Negro League baseball and we currently have found only six games against “non-league” opponents for his entire career. We are most definitely missing box scores for several hundred games.
 4. We don’t have the number of games for any season that he played in the Cuban Winter League. He played five season of winter ball in Cuba and had 969 at bats.
 5. Henry Kimbro spent at least three seasons playing winter ball on the West Coast and we are missing most all of his batting numbers.
- Henry Kimbro was a **perennial all-star throughout his entire career**. Some of these all-star teams were as follows:

Year	Team	League
1939-40	Almendares Alacranes	Cuban Winter League
1941	New York Black Yankees	Negro National League
1943	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro National League
1944	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro National League
1946	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro National League (both games)
1947	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro National League (both games)
1947-48	Habana Leones	Cuban Winter League
1951	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro American League
1952	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League
1953	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League

- Kimbro **played on several championship teams** during his career. Some of these were:

Year	Team	Championship
1937	Washington Elite Giants	Negro National League (1 st half)
1939	Baltimore Elite Giants	Jacob Ruppert Memorial Cup
1939	Homestead Grays	American Series (Cuba)
1939-40	Almendares Alacranes	Cuban Winter League
1940	Baltimore Elite Giants	Jacob Ruppert Memorial Cup
1940-41	Baltimore Elite Giants	California Winter League
1943-44	Baltimore Elite Giants	California Winter League
1947-48	Habana Leones	Cuban Winter League
1948	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro National League (1 st half)
1949	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro American League (Eastern Division)
1949	Baltimore Elite Giants	Negro American League
1952	Birmingham Black Barons	Negro American League (2 nd half)

- Even through his last season in Negro League baseball, **speed was an incredibly important part of Henry Kimbro’s game**. Offensively his speed coupled with smart base running enabled him to turn a single into a double, turn a double into a triple, score when others might have been thrown out and steal a base when necessary. Defensively his speed made him a better outfielder.
- Defensively, Henry Kimbro was an **extremely good outfielder**. Over his career he played all three outfield positions. He possessed outstanding range and was known to have a strong, accurate throwing arm.
- Henry Kimbro was an **all-around complete ball player**. He was a lead-off batter who could hit for average and power. Henry possessed excellent speed. He also was an exemplary outfielder with outstanding range and a strong throwing arm.
- The **longevity of Henry Kimbro’s career** is very impressive. He played Negro League baseball for eighteen (18) years from 1936 through the 1953 season. In addition he was a starter for nearly his entire playing career.

Henry Allen Kimbro

New York Times Obituary

The New York Times

ARCHIVES | 1999

Henry Kimbro, 87, Speedy Star Of the Negro Baseball Leagues

By RICHARD GOLDSTEIN JULY 15, 1999

Henry Kimbro, a perennial All-Star center fielder during the 1940's in a Negro leagues career that spanned 17 seasons, died Sunday at his home in Nashville. He was 87.

An outstanding hitter, speedy on the basepaths and a superb outfielder with a strong arm who played mostly with the Baltimore Elite Giants, Kimbro appeared six times in the showcase event of black baseball, the East-West All-Star Game.

Statistics for the Negro leagues are sketchy, but Kimbro is believed to have hit over .300 in 10 different seasons. A left-handed leadoff batter who invariably let the first pitch go by, Kimbro was adept at slashing low fastballs to the opposite field.

Describing himself as "strong as an ox," Kimbro had a stocky build, at 5 feet 8 inches and 175 pounds, with powerful shoulders and arms developed from swinging on ladders in schoolyards as a youngster.

Kimbro claimed to have hit a ball over the right-field roof at Briggs Stadium in Detroit while touring against the Homestead Grays, but received no plaudits. As he recalled it: "The next morning I picked up the newspaper, and you know who hit that ball out of the park? Hoskins, my left fielder. I was really disgusted, but I never did say anything."

Kimbro's speed enabled him to make great catches, but scooping up bounding balls was another matter.

"I saw my best friend, a shortstop, lose two front teeth when the ball caught a bad hop," he remembered. "Fields in those days had rocks, gravel, all kind of stuff to make a ball kick up in your face. A grounder would come at me, and everyone would hold their breath."

By the time the Negro leagues got to the ball park, they were likely to be worn out by the bus rides through a segregated America.

"People wouldn't let you in a restaurant," Kimbro recalled, "so we'd stop and buy cold cuts in the store, put it in the bus, ride that night, get to where we were going the next day."

A native of Nashville, Kimbro had a grade-school education, played sandlot baseball, then made his debut in the Negro leagues in 1937. He played in the 1941 All-Star Game while with the New York Black Yankees and then appeared in five consecutive All-Star Games, from 1943 to 1947, as an Elite Giant.

Kimbro retired after playing with the Birmingham Black Barons in 1953, then owned a taxi company and a gas station in Nashville.

He is survived by his wife, Erbia; two sons, Phillip, of Nashville, and Larry, of Dayton, Ohio; two daughters, Harriet Hamilton, of Nashville, and Erbia Maria Drew, of Atlanta; two sisters, Martha Jordan and Louis Hancock, of Nashville, six grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

A quiet man, Kimbro was regarded by some players as an outcast.

"I couldn't express myself the way I wanted to because I didn't go to school," he said. "It just tore me all to pieces. People started calling me 'bad man' and 'evil' and it just followed me all around my whole baseball time."

"A lot of people misunderstood Henry," said Stanley Glenn, an outstanding catcher for the Philadelphia Stars. "He was quiet and he stayed to himself and didn't talk an awful lot. I found him a real fine baseball player."

Kimbro was a teammate of the future Brooklyn Dodger stars Roy Campanella, Jim Gilliam and Joe Black while playing for the Elite Giants. But he was too old for the major leagues by the time the color barrier was broken.

"I took things as they come, and went on and did the best I could," he said. "We just loved to play."

Selected Career Highlights

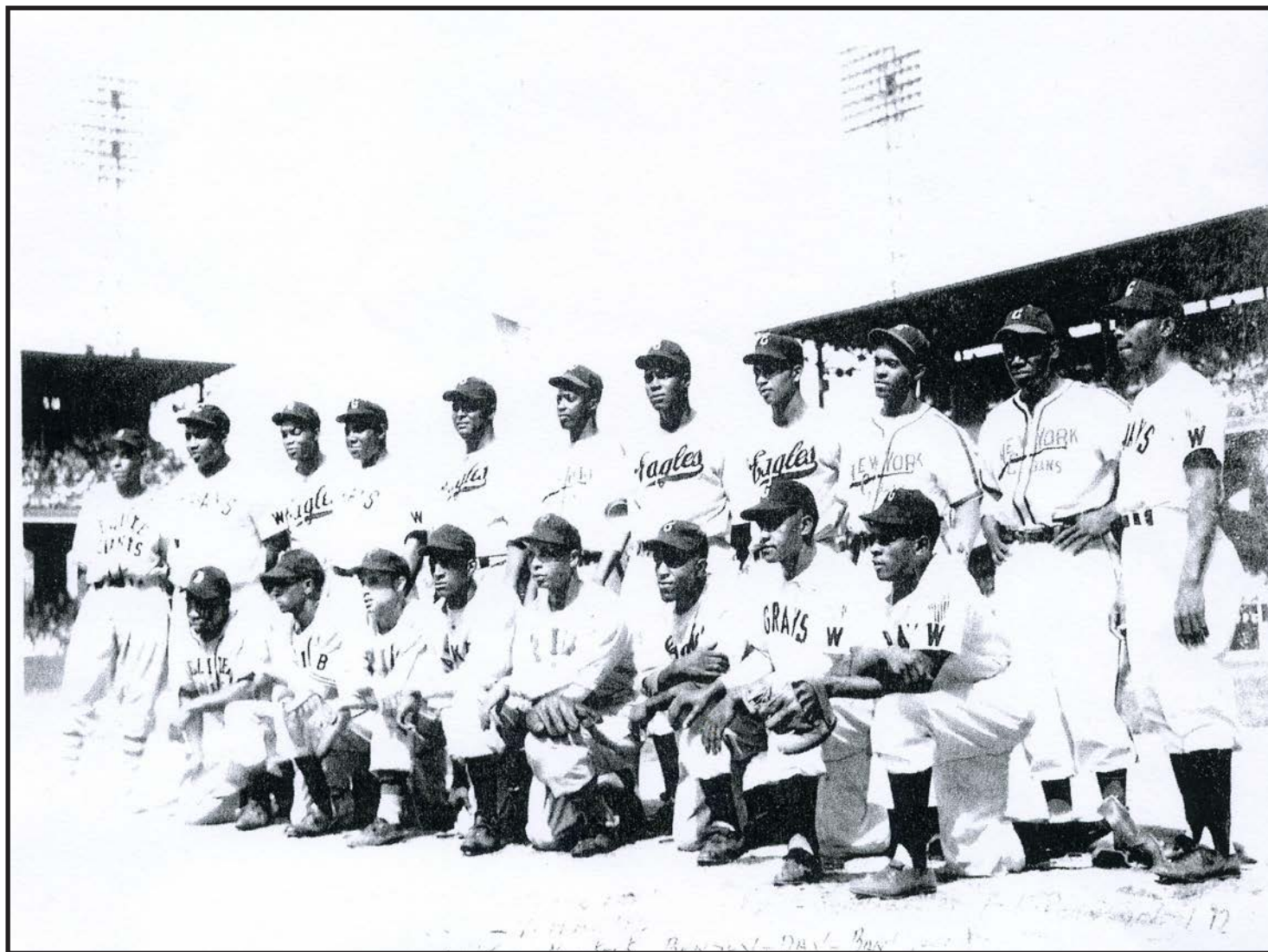
- Henry Kimbro had a Negro League career batting average of .325 and in games against all levels of competition Henry had a .321 career batting average.
- During the height of his Negro League career which was from 1944 through the 1952 season, Kimbro failed to hit .300 in only one season. During these nine seasons Henry hit .354 (693 for 1958).

His top seasons offensively during this time frame were 1944 (.376), 1946 (.393), 1947 (.384), 1949 (.360), 1950 (.370), 1951 (.366) and 1952 (.341).

- Henry Kimbro was selected to play in ten (10) East-West All Star games during his Negro League career.
- During his career, Henry Kimbro was the member of at least twelve (12) championship teams.
- Kimbro was a member of the Baltimore Elite Giants club that won the Jacob Ruppert Memorial Cup Trophy in both 1939 and 1940.
- He helped lead the Baltimore Elite Giants to the 1940-41 California Winter League championship. Kimbro hit .342 during the season.
- Henry Kimbro had the best season of his Negro League career in 1946. He compiled a .393 batting average with a .647 slugging percentage in Negro National League games.
- During the 1947 Negro National League season, Henry hit .384 with a .624 slugging percentage in 63 “league” games. He also had 24 doubles, 5 triples, 8 homeruns and 52 runs batted in.
- In Cuba during the 1947-48 season Henry Kimbro led the league in hitting with a .346 batting average and also set a “league” record for the most hits in a season with 104 base hits. He also led his team, the Habana Leones, to a Cuban Winter League title that season.
- In 1948 he helped lead the Baltimore Elite Giants to a first half title of the Negro National League.
- In 1949 Henry Kimbro hit .360 and led the Baltimore Elite Giants to the Negro American League title in their first year in the “league.” He also collected a career high 118 hits for the season in Negro American League games.
- In 1951 he hit a career high 10 homeruns in games against Negro American League opponents. He also had 57 runs batted in and hit .366 for the season in “league” games.
- At the age of 40, Henry Kimbro hit .340 for the 1952 season, was named as a starter to both East-West All Star games and led his Birmingham Black Barons team to win the second half title of the Negro American League. In “league” play during the 1952 season Henry had 25 doubles, 55 runs batted in and 13 stolen bases.
- In conclusion, Henry Kimbro was a complete ball player who could hit for both power and average. In his prime he was considered one of the best outfielders in the Negro Leagues. In addition, his speed was an asset both offensively and defensively. He truly is a “forgotten hero” of Negro League baseball.

East-West All Star Game

During his career Henry Kimbro played in ten (10) East West All Star games. He was also selected as a member of the East squad for the 1942 East-West All Star game but did not play.



East Team
East-West All Star Game
Comiskey Park
Chicago, IL
1946

(Standing left to right – Felton Snow, **Josh Gibson**, Monte Irvin, Walter “Buck” Leonard, Raleigh “Biz” Mackey, Pat Scantlebury, Lennie Pearson, **Larry Doby**, Fernando Pedroso, Silvio Garcia and Vic Harris.
Kneeling left to right – **Henry Kimbro**, Jonas Gaines, Murray Watkins, Bill Ricks, Gene Benson, **Leon Day**, Sam Bankhead and Howard Easterling.)