

Florida State Negro League (1927-1954)

The Florida State Negro League was the top tier of “black” baseball in Florida from the late 1920’s through the mid 1950’s.

It regularly produced talent for higher level teams especially in the Negro American and Negro National Leagues.

It is unclear if there was a “league” in 1937-1944, 1948, 1952 and 1955-1956.

The information contained here was compiled by Negro League historian and researcher. Kenneth Clawson.

1927

According to Clawson’s research there was an attempt to organize a Negro League in Florida in 1927.

The cities that participated in this endeavor were Daytona Beach, Mimi, Orlando, Sanford, St. Petersburg and West Palm Beach. With this many teams involved in putting together a professional league in Florida it shows that black baseball already had a long and rich presence in the state.

The season was cancelled about July 4th because of poor attendance and bad weather.

Florida State Negro League (1932)

In March of 1932 David “Fats” Waitman held an organizational meeting in Tampa to form a professional negro League in Florida.

Teams and their “official” representatives that attended the meeting were as follows:

Team	Official (s)
(Bartow) Polk County All Stars	Ben Williams
Bradenton Nine Devils	Bish Christopher
Daytona Beach Black Cats	James Keys
Jacksonville Red Caps	Carl “Bobbie” Ford
Lakeland Tigers	Jesse Richardson
Orlando All Stars	Felix Crosby
St. Petersburg Florida Stars	Jack Peters and E.H. McLin
Tampa Pepsi Cola Giants	David “Fats” Waitman
West Palm Beach Black Yankees	Bill Elam

During the organizational meetings, two “league” officers were elected. They were:

James Keyes	President
E.H. McLin	Executive Secretary

The formation of the “league” is referenced in an article that appeared in the St. Petersburg Times in 1945. The article was written by E.H. McLin.

Currently no specific details as to which teams actually played in the “league,” win-loss records, rosters, player statistics and final “league” standings have been located.

Florida State Negro League (1945)

1945	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	Orlando All Stars	19	16-3	.843	1 st
	Daytona Beach Black Cats	17	13-4	.765	2 nd
	Bradenton Nine Devils	21	15-6	.714	3 rd
	West Palm Beach Black Yankees	18	11-7	.611	4 th
	Lakeland Tigers	21	12-9	.571	5 th
	Tampa American All Stars	20	5-15	.250	6 th
	Bartow Polk County All Stars	19	4-15	.215	7 th
	St. Petersburg Peter’s Palace Stars	21	3-18	.143	8 th

Florida State Negro League (1946)

1946	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	Tampa Pepsi Cola Giants	27	21-6	.778	1 st
	Lakeland Tigers	25	16-9	.640	2 nd
	Daytona Beach Black Cats	26	16-10	.615	3 rd
	Bartow Polk County All Stars	25	14-11	.539	4 th
	Orlando All Star	29	14-15	.483	5 th
	Bradenton Nine Devils	29	14-15	.483	5 th
	Miami Giants	28	13-15	.464	7 th
	West Palm Beach Black Yankees	30	13-17	.433	8 th
	St. Peterburg Pelicans	29	11-18	.379	9 th
	Cocoa Black Indians	26	6-20	.230	10 th

Florida State Negro League (1947)

1947	Games	Record	Pct.
Tampa Rockets	13	11-2	.846
Daytona Beach Black Cats	13	8-5	.615
Lakeland Tigers	15	8-7	.533
Orlando	14	7-7	.500
West Palm Beach	11	5-6	.456
Sanford	14	6-8	.429
Bradenton Nine Devils	16	6-10	.333
Bartow All Stars	15	4-11	.267

Standings are as of June 4, 1947 as published in the Afro American.

The Florida State Negro League officials were:	C.J. Keyes	President
	F.E. Crosby	Vice President
	Allen Spotford	Secretary
	G.D. Rogers	Treasurer
	E.H. McLin	Publicity Director & Statistician

Tampa won the Florida State Negro League title with a final record of 18-4. According to a newspaper article published in the Chester Times (Chester, PA) on August 5, 1947, the Tampa Rockets had a season record of 46-11 when they traveled north to barnstorm.

Florida State Negro League (1948)

1948	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	West Palm Beach Rockets	27	19-8	.704	1 st
	Orlando All Stars	31	21-10	.694	2 nd
	Bradenton Nine Devils	31	19-12	.613	3 rd
	St. Petersburg Pelicans	32	14-18	.438	4 th
	Tampa Rockets	30	7-23	.233	5 th
	Sanford Giants	28	6-22	.214	6 th

Team	Team Owner (s)
Bradenton Nine Devils	Bish Christopher
Lakeland Tigers	Henry Alpin and Jesse Richardson
Orlando All Stars	F.E. Crosby
Sanford Giants	Roosevelt Harris
St. Petersburg Pelicans	George Grogan
Tampa Rockets	C. Blythe Andrews
West Palm Beach Rockets	Dr. W.E. Edgecomb

Florida State Negro League President: C.Y. Keyes (Daytona Beach)
Florida State Negro League Secretary: Henry Lee (Daytona Beach)

The Daytona Black Cats dropped out of the "league" and were for sale.
 Bartow under the ownership[of Ben Williams folded because of poor attendance and poor field condition.

Florida State Negro League (1949)

1949	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	Orlando All Stars	17	14-3	.824	1 st
	Tampa Rockets	15	12-3	.800	2 nd
	St. Petersburg Pelicans	15	11-4	.733	3 rd
	Bradenton Nine Devils	18	8-10	.444	4 th
	Palatka	18	5-13	.278	5 th
	Dayton Beach Black Cats	17	4-13	.235	6 th

Florida State Negro League (1950)

1950	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	Orlando All Stars	27	19-8	.704	1 st
	Daytona Beach Red Wings	29	20-9	.688	2 nd
	Tampa Athletics	25	17-8	.680	3 rd
	St. Petersburg Pelicans	26	12-14	.462	4 th
	Bradenton Nine Devils	23	8-15	.347	5 th
	Belle Glade Red Wings	27	3-24	.111	6 th
	Jacksonville Tigers	-	-	-	-
	Palatka Blue Caps	-	-	-	-

Florida State Negro League (1951)

1951	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	Orlando All Stars	25	15-10	.600	1 st
	Tampa Athletics	27	15-12	.556	2 nd
	Daytona Beach Red Wings	29	16-13	.552	3 rd
	St. Petersburg Pelicans	31	16-15	.516	4 th
	West Plam Beach Lincoln Giants	20	10-10	.500	5 th
	Bradenton Nine Devils	28	12-16	.429	6 th

Florida State Negro League (1952)

1952	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	St. Peterburg Pelicans	4	3-1	.750	1 st
	Tampa All Stars	4	3-1	.750	1 st
	Orlando All Stars	4	3-1	.750	1 st
	Bradenton Nine Devils	4	3-1	.750	1 st
	Clearwater Black Sox	4	2-2	.500	5 th
	Ocala Black Barons	3	0-3	.000	6 th
	Cocoa	3	0-3	.000	6 th
	Daytona Beach	1	0-1	.000	8 th

Florida State Negro League (1953)

1953	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	Tampa All Stars	15	11-4	.773	1 st
	Orlando All Stars	12	7-5	.583	2 nd
	Cocoa Brownies	11	6-5	.545	3 rd
	St. Petersburg Pelicans	13	7-6	.538	4 th
	Daytona Beach Red Wings	13	6-7	.462	5 th
	Ft. Lauderdale Braves	8	2-6	.250	6 th

Florida State Negro League (1954)

1954	Team	Games	Record	Pct.	Standing
	Cocoa				
	Daytona Beach				
	Orlando				
	Tampa Bay				