

National League's Best Teams

Chapter Five

The 1949-56 Brooklyn Dodgers: Finally, a Challenger to the '06-10 Cubs

No major league team in the twentieth century had the longevity of success—eight years—with the same core group of players as the **1949 to 1956 Brooklyn Dodgers**. Not even any of the various great New York Yankees teams. With a core of Gil Hodges at first, Jackie Robinson at second (through 1952) and then alternating between third and left field, Pee Wee Reese at shortstop, Duke Snider in center field, Carl Furillo in right field, Roy Campanella catching, and pitcher Don Newcombe (except for two years of military service during the Korean War) playing all eight of those years; starting pitcher Carl Erskine and relief ace Clem Labine as regulars on the pitching staff for six of the eight years; pitcher Preacher Roe and third baseman Billy Cox as regulars for five; and multi-position regular (second base and outfield) Jim Gilliam playing in four of those years, Brooklyn won five pennants and finished second three times between 1949 and 1956. They did so under three different managers: Burt Shotton in 1949 and 1950; Charlie Dressen from 1951 to 1953; and Walter Alston, who became manager in 1954 after Dressen had led the Dodgers to back-to-back pennants and their best season ever in 1953 because Dressen believed his managerial accomplishments earned him the right to a multi-year contract that Brooklyn owner Walter O'Malley was unwilling to give.

Four times these Dodgers had the best record in the major leagues, better even than the Yankee teams they faced in the 1949, 1952, 1953, and 1955 World Series. And two of their three second-place finishes went down to the last game of the season. The Dodgers lost to the Phillies in the regular season finale in 1950 with the potential game-winning run that would have forced a three-game playoff gunned down at the plate in the last of the ninth, after which Dick Sisler's three-run home run gave the game and the pennant to Philadelphia in the tenth. The very next year, Brooklyn famously lost to their New York rivals on Manhattan Island—after blowing the 13½-game lead they held on August 11—on the dramatic Bobby Thomson “the Giants win the pennant! the Giants win the pennant!” home run in the third and deciding 1951 playoff game.

The 1951 pennant race was almost the exact inverse for the Dodgers of the 1950 race. The Dodgers started play on September 19, 1950, in third place, trailing the Phillies by a seemingly insurmountable nine games with only 17 games and 13 days remaining. They won 13 of their next 16 games, however, while Philadelphia was losing 9 of 12, setting up a showdown in their regularly-scheduled meeting on the last day of the season, Brooklyn one game down with first place on the line. Only center fielder Richie Ashburn's throw and Sisler's home run, along with Robin Roberts' great pitching, prevented the 1950 Phillies from an implosion as great as the Phillies implosion in the last weeks of 1964.

Finally, the 1906-10 Chicago Cubs had a team in the same discussion about the best National League team to that point in the twentieth century (although, if not for discount baseball during World War II, the 1941-46 Cardinals would also be in the discussion). When I began this project, before any application of a multidimensional structured analytical methodology, I thought for sure that the 1949-56 Dodgers were the better team, never mind that Brooklyn managed to win only one World Series in five pennant-winning years; after all, the Cubs had only two World Series wins to show for their great run. I was confident of this not because it could easily have been—and perhaps even should have been—seven pennants in eight years, including five in a row to match the 1949-1953 Yankees, but because the core Brooklyn players had much greater individual legacies than those of the 1906-10 Cubs. Informed by historical accounts, as well as the historical greatness of their players, I began this analysis with the assumption that these Brooklyn Dodgers were the second-best National League team of all time, behind only the 1972 to 1976 Cincinnati Reds.

The Dodgers had also won a pennant in 1947, Robinson's rookie season when he played first base, but the core of this team was not really set until 1949. By then, Campanella was in his second season with Brooklyn, already establishing himself as the best catcher in the National League, and Newcombe as a rookie immediately made a case for himself as one of the best pitchers in the league. It is, of course, well known history that the Dodgers' trailblazing by breaking the color barrier was an important foundation for their success in the 1950s. Robinson, Campanella, and Newcombe—along with Reese, Snider, Hodges, and Furillo—were the cornerstones of Brooklyn's extended success over eight years. Three other African-American ballplayers joined along the way to play instrumental roles in Dodger pennants: Joe Black, who as a rookie reliever won 15 and saved another 15 of Brooklyn's 96 victories in 1952—a pennant the Dodgers won by 4½ games; Jim Gilliam, a second baseman whose arrival in 1953 allowed Manager Dressen to move Robinson, whose skills at 34 years old were declining, to more of a platoon role between third base and left field; and Sandy Amoros, Cuban-born, who arrived in 1954 and platooned in left field with Robinson during the 1955 and 1956 pennant runs.

While Robinson, Campanella, and Newcombe were legitimately outstanding players in their primes—indisputably better than most of their fellow white major leaguers—it was the opportunities given to Black, Gilliam, and Amoros (and by the end of the decade, to Charlie Neal, Johnny Roseboro, and Maury Wills) that were potentially more significant in validating and consolidating racial integration in the major leagues. The burden of breakthrough necessitated that the trailblazers be players that had the talent, skills, and excellence exemplified by Brooklyn's second baseman, catcher, and pitching ace. They proved they belonged in the major leagues, notwithstanding the persistent hostility and harassment they faced in the early years of integration. And because of what they endured in breaking the color barrier and making it stick, I generally rate Campanella and Newcombe,

and possibly even Robinson, probably higher in my rankings of the National League's best players based on their best consecutive years than I would otherwise if relying only on their player value as measured by wins above replacement (WAR). Their success made it certain that great players who happened to be black—players like Willie Mays, Hank Aaron, Ernie Banks, and Frank Robinson—would find a place on a major league roster. But—

—It was the ability of lesser-talented players like Black, Gilliam, and Amoros to make the most of the opportunities given them to contribute to a winning team that allowed black players to compete for jobs at the major league-level with white players of comparable talent. Meaningful integration could not occur until black players were given a realistic chance to win a job in a fair competition with a comparably talented white player without having to be clearly much superior to the white player. Even among a major league baseball ownership group that was in general not enlightened about racial diversity, winning was the bottom line. The example set by the Brooklyn Dodgers, and also the New York Giants and Milwaukee Braves, in winning every National League pennant between 1951 and 1959 with blacks—and not just superstar black players—as integral members of their teams, paved the way for the broader acceptance of African-Americans and black Latinos in the major leagues on the basis of merit.

Full integration—by which I mean blacks able to compete for major league positions against whites, where the better player wins out without having to be a superstar—might have been slower if the Dodgers had been more like the New York Yankees. The Yankees, of course, were enormously successful without an integrated roster. Their ownership was very slow to embrace racial diversity, and certainly could afford to be because of the depth of white talent at both the major league and minor league levels. The Yankees were not integrated until Elston Howard made the roster in 1955, but the Yankees still did not have any blacks among their core regulars until Howard became their regular catcher in 1960.

No other National League team in history had as strong a core group of players with regard to player legacies as the 1949-56 Dodgers, and in fact their “players score” of 37, according to my methodology, is far higher than any other NL team in consideration for best in the league in the twentieth century, including the 1972-76 Reds and 1906-10 Cubs. In the American League, the 1936-42 New York Yankees (no surprise), with 51, and 1928-32 Philadelphia Athletics (not really surprising), with 39, both have a higher players score than the Dodgers.

- Seven of the twelve regulars who were the core of the 1949-56 Dodgers—first baseman Hodges, second baseman Robinson, shortstop Reese, center fielder Snider (as one of three outfielders), catcher Campanella, and Newcombe and Roe as starting pitchers (among five for at least five consecutive years)—were the best at their positions for at least half the seasons of Brooklyn's eight-year run. Based on their five or more best consecutive seasons during these years, all seven also counted among the league's 10 best position players or five best starting pitchers in the surrounding decade of 1948 to 1957.
- Three of these Brooklyn Dodgers—Robinson, Snider, and Campanella—are not only among the National League's best players since 1901, based on their best consecutive years falling in whole or in part from 1949 to 1956, but I judge them to be easily in the top 25. Reese also has a century-plus legacy, according to me, but his best seasons were from 1942 to 1949 (with a three-year interruption

necessitated by World War II) and so do not count for this team. Newcombe, had he not missed two years of his baseball prime in the Army during the Korean War, might well have made my list of the 18 best NL pitchers in the second-half century had his player value as measured by WAR in those two years been consistent with his performance in the three years before he became a US military draft pick.

Going back half-a-century for comparison, six of the 1906-10 Cubs' thirteen core regulars were the best at their positions for at least three consecutive years of their stretch, and six (not all the same players) were among the best NL players or pitchers of the 10-year "decade," 1904-13, within which they won four pennants in five years. Three-Finger Brown and Johnny Evers, according to me, both have century-plus legacies based on their best consecutive years including all or the majority of those years for the Cubs, and Ed Reulbach has a legacy as one of the NL's 15 best pitchers in the first half-century. Like the Dodgers with Reese, the Cubs with Frank Chance have a player with a century-plus legacy who does not count for the team under consideration because the majority of his best consecutive years (1903-07) were not between 1906 and 1910.

In terms of achievement, the Cubs' four pennants and two World Series championships in five years trumps the Dodgers' five pennants and one World Series triumph in eight years. If extended to an eight-year period during which the 1906-10 core players were intact—including 1905 to 1912 for Tinker, Evers, Chance, Brown, and Reulbach—the Cubs were not as successful. We are focused here, however, on each team's best seasons, which were eight years for Brooklyn and five for Chicago. What tilts the achievement balance definitively to the 1906-10 Cubs, according to me, is that they faced a tougher competitive environment in their pennant races than did the 1949-56 Dodgers. The competitive balance between the top tier and bottom rung teams may have been better in the 1950s, but—

—Pittsburgh and New York combined for eight 90-win seasons during the *five* years the Cubs won four pennants, while Brooklyn also faced off against eight 90-win teams, but over *eight* years, not five. As a percentage of games, the Cubs played 23 percent of their games against teams with 90 or more wins, compared to only 14.5 percent for the Dodgers half-a-century later. Moreover, the Cubs played their toughest rivals better than the Dodgers played theirs. Chicago won four of their eight season series between 1906 and 1910 against teams with at least 90 wins, split two others, and lost only two. For their part, against the eight other teams that won 90 or more games between 1949 and 1956, Brooklyn took only two season series, split two, and lost four. The Cubs' winning percentage against 90-win competition was .560 from 1906 through 1910. The Dodgers' winning percentage against 90-win competition was a losing .480, and they posted losing records against 90-win teams in three of their five pennant-winning seasons. Combining percent of games against 90-win competition and winning percentage against those teams, the 1906-10 Cubs stand at 789 (.229 + .560), the 1941-46 Cardinals at 710 (.121 + .589), and the 1949-56 Dodgers at a far less impressive 625 (.145 + .480).

Still, wouldn't you rather bet on the team that had Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Duke Snider, Pee Wee Reese, Gil Hodges, and Don Newcombe than the one with Tinker-to-Evers-to-Chance and Three-Finger Brown, with a nod to Ed Reulbach? Well, yes—

—Except that the Cubs dominated their league to a far greater extent than did the Dodgers. By my methodology, the Chicago Cubs’ “dominance score” of 60 is by far the highest of any National League team in the twentieth century. The Brooklyn Dodgers’ dominance score of 31 is merely above average among those teams in the discussion for the eight best NL teams of the twentieth century.

Truly indicative of the Cubs’ dominance from 1906 to 1910—years in which the Giants and Pirates were perennially competitive with their own 90-plus win seasons—Chicago won 100 or more games four times and finished first by at least eight games three times. The Dodgers had only one 100-win season (1953, when they won 105) between 1949 and 1956 against less formidable competition for the pennant, and twice took the NL banner by decisive margins—in 1953 by 13 games and 1955 by 13½. Both teams won close pennant races: the Cubs, famously, in 1908—with an assist from umpires who agreed with Johnny Evers’ argument that Fred Merkle, the runner on first, was obligated to touch second base on a game-winning hit or be called out on a force play—and the Dodgers winning in 1949 by one game over the Cardinals, and in 1956 by one game over the Braves and two over the Reds. In 1949, Brooklyn trailed St. Louis virtually the entire month of September—although never by more than 2½ games—before closing out the season with nine wins in their final twelve games to overtake the Cardinals. And in 1956, Brooklyn began the final month of the season 2½ games behind Milwaukee and a game up on Cincinnati, but had the best record in the league thereafter to wrap up the pennant.

The only pennant race that the 1949-56 Dodgers failed to compete in all the way till the end was in 1954, when they finished five games back of the New York Giants, who benefited from Willie Mays having his breakout season. And even then, Brooklyn trailed by only a game-and-a-half with four weeks remaining, before falling out of contention relatively quickly with eight losses in their next ten games.

If not for the Korean War, which claimed Mays for the US armed forces in 1952 and 1953, the New York Giants from 1950 to 1954 might have made a play for one of the National League’s best teams in the century. The Giants finished strong in 1950; shocked the world with their relentless pursuit of the Dodgers in 1951 that culminated in Bobby Thomson’s (and radio broadcaster Russ Hodges’) moment in history; finished second—4½ back—in 1952, without Mays in the line-up (which means they might well have overtaken Brooklyn if they had the Say Hey Kid); and won both the pennant and the World Series in 1954. Even with Mays, however, the Giants were not a great team, certainly not with the same caliber stars as Brooklyn had. New York’s other notable core players for the majority of their five-year run between 1950 and 1954 included outfielder Monte Irvin, shortstop Alvin Dark, and the intimidating pitcher Sal Maglie. They were good, but not Robinson, Snider, Campanella good. The Giants were the league’s stingiest team in giving up runs in their two pennant-winning seasons, and were either second or third in scoring all five years.

Despite their star power, the 1949-56 Dodgers were not as well-balanced as the 1906-10 Cubs. While the Dodgers were an offensive powerhouse, leading the league in scoring six times and finishing second the two other years, their pitching was merely good, not great. In the six years the Dodgers led the league in scoring, they had an impressive differential over the teams with the second-most runs scored—an average of 104 runs per season in their favor. Brooklyn’s most imposing year was 1953, when they scored a staggering 955 runs—the most since the 1930 St. Louis Cardinals broke the 1,000-run barrier on their way to a

pennant—and outscored their game-opponents by 266 runs. On the other hand, Brooklyn was one of the top three teams (in an eight-team league at the time) in fewest runs allowed only five times in eight years. The one time this team was the stingiest in surrendering runs was in 1955, when they won 98 games and also led the league in scoring. The Dodgers' position players had a lopsided 74-to-26 advantage over their pitchers in their percentage contribution to Brooklyn's team WAR between 1949 and 1956.

As overpowering as Brooklyn's offense was, the 1906-10 Cubs' combination of pitching and offense was, all things considered, more impressive. The Cubs' ratio of position player-to-pitcher contributions to the team's overall WAR was much more balanced at 58-to-42. In their five years of winning ways, the Cubs led the league in scoring once, and the other four seasons were second, and four times they allowed the fewest runs, clearly demonstrating dominance both offensively and in pitching/defense. This was reflected in the Cubs outscoring their game opponents by 53 percent (an average of 226 runs per season), compared to the 1949-56 Dodgers doing so by only 25 percent (an average of 167 runs).

Dodger pitchers, of course, had the disadvantage of half their games being in Ebbets Field—a ballpark that favored hitters. Five times in the eight years from 1949 to 1956, more runs were scored by both teams in Brooklyn's home park than any other in the National League. While NL pitchers during those eight years gave up 5.5 percent *more* runs on the road than they did at home, according to data compiled by *retrosheet* and available on *baseball-reference.com*, Brooklyn's pitchers surrendered 3 percent *fewer* runs on the road than at Ebbets Field. They also gave up 28 percent more home runs than was the league average for pitching staffs in their home ballpark, but were whacked for 3 percent *fewer* home runs than the league average for pitchers in other teams' ballparks. Nonetheless, home *is* home, and Dodger pitchers in four of the eight years had a better earned run average at Ebbets Field, and in all but one year—1954, when they did not win the pennant—held the opposing team to a lower batting average at home than in away games.

Indicative of the quality of the Dodgers' pitching staff during these years, they surrendered more runs at home than the league average only twice—1950 and 1954, both years in which they did not win the pennant—despite the Ebbets disadvantage. On the road, Brooklyn hurlers gave up fewer runs than other teams' pitchers averaged away from home every year but two; in one of those years (1951) they gave up only one run more than the league average, and in the other (1954) were exactly even.

Relative to the league, Brooklyn's pitching was probably better in the latter four years of their run than the first four. Taking into account adjusted earned run average—which normalizes ERA for the context of the offensive level of the league and the team's home park—the Dodgers' staff from 1949 to 1952 was second best in the league in 1949, twice third-best, and once worse than the league average. These were the years Don Newcombe and Preacher Roe not only headlined the staff, but were two of the five best National League pitchers at the time and in the surrounding decade, according to me based on WAR. Ralph Branca—whose claim to fame was surrendering that Thomson home run, which ironically would not have cleared the fence in Ebbets Field—was Brooklyn's only other regular starter over successive years as Dodger managers worked numerous pitchers into the rotation. With Hugh Casey by now having succumbed to personal demons, Brooklyn had no real relief ace until Joe Black burst on the scene with 54 relief appearances (and 15 saves) in 1952. Black's tenure as Brooklyn's ace reliever—and his career in the major leagues—turned out to be short-lived.

The Dodgers' pitching staff was more settled from 1953 to 1956 with Newcombe, Carl Erskine, Johnny Podres, and Billy Loes the rotation mainstays. And Brooklyn benefited enormously in 1956 when Sal Maglie was acquired early in the season, which helped compensate for the loss of Podres to Uncle Sam. Without Maglie, it is doubtful the Dodgers would have won the pennant that year, given that only two games separated the top three teams. Newcombe struggled when he returned from two years in the service in 1954, but went 20-5 in 1955 and 27-7 in 1956. Clem Labine, Brooklyn's relief ace, was one of the best out of the bullpen in major league baseball, although he had the misfortune of being a direct contemporary of first Hoyt Wilhelm and then Roy Face, who successively claimed the mantle of the NL's best reliever, at least according to me. Notwithstanding half their games being played in Ebbets Field, the Dodgers in 1955 and 1956 had the best pitching in the league based on adjusted ERA.

Perhaps, therefore, the more apt comparison for a challenge to the 1906-10 Chicago Cubs as the NL's best team of the twentieth century to this point should be the 1952-56 Dodgers. In those five years, after all, the Dodgers won four pennants—the same as the Cubs. Given that the 1949-56 Dodgers' only 100-win season and both of their run-away pennants (by eight games or more) occurred between 1952 and 1956, Brooklyn's achievement and dominance scores are higher for the more limited five-year period than the full eight-year period that the team's core regulars were intact. Chicago's achievement score, however, would be slightly better because they won two World Series, compared to Brooklyn's one, and the Cubs' would still hold the dominance advantage by a considerable margin.

Even though the Brooklyn "Boys of Summer" were at their most imposing from 1952 to 1956, the Dodgers' "players score" for those five years is substantially less than for the full eight years their core players were together. The principal reason is that the best consecutive years of Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella do not include at least three of the years Brooklyn won four pennants in five years. Campanella's technically does, but persistent injuries were a significant handicap to his performance in 1954, which was barely above replacement-level, according to the WAR metric. He rebounded to have a terrific year in 1955—in fact, won the NL Most Valuable Player award for the third time—which is why I extended Campanella's best consecutive years from 1949 to 1955, but the anomaly of 1954 forces me to discount that season when looking at the narrower time frame from 1952 to 1956 for the Brooklyn Dodgers. Don Newcombe and Gil Hodges also fail to make the grade among the league's five best pitchers or 10 best position players in the surrounding 1950-59 decade, according to me—Newcombe because he missed two seasons serving his country and had a mediocre comeback season in 1954, and Hodges because the NL's best players in the surrounding decade now included the likes of Ernie Banks and Hank Aaron, neither of whom had been around long enough to be considered for best players in the 1948-57 decade within which the 1949-56 Dodgers are considered.

Taking a narrow look at the great Brooklyn team of 1949 to 1956 by focusing on the five years from 1952 to 1956, therefore, makes no difference in my considering the 1906-10 Chicago Cubs a better team. Indeed, notwithstanding the impact of World War II on the quality of major league baseball between 1943 and 1945, the more narrow look would cause me to rank the 1941-46 Cardinals ahead of the 1952-56 Dodgers. Either way, however, the 1952-56 Dodgers would still come in ahead of the 1904-08 New York Giants—and for Brooklyn fans, that might be its own reward.

6 BEST NATIONAL LEAGUE TEAMS, 1901-1956

	P-WS	W - L %	Ach	Dom	Play	Total
Chicago Cubs, 1906-10	4 - 2	530-235 .693	32	60	33	125
Brooklyn Dodgers, 1949-56	5 - 1	767-466 .622	28	31	37	96
St. Louis Cardinals, 1941-46	4 - 3	606-319 .655	32	50	21	103
New York Giants, 1904-08	2 - 1x	487-278 .637	22	40	24	86
New York Giants, 1910-14	3 - 0	478-286 .626	26	45	21	92
New York Giants, 1920-24	4 - 2	461-306 .601	32	25	22	79

x = no World Series in 1904

P = Pennant WS = World Series Ach = Achievement Score
 Dom = Dominance Factors Score Play = Players Score Total = Total Score

TRANSPARENCY ANNEX

BROOKLYN DODGERS, 1949-1956

5 Pennants (1949, 1952, 1953, 1955, 1956)
1 World Series Win (1955)

ACHIEVEMENT

1 st place (x 3)	2 nd place (x 2)	3 rd place (x 1)	World Series (x 1)	Score
5 x 3 = 15	3 x 2 = 6	0	1 x 1 = 1	22

ACHIEVEMENT SCORE = 22 / 8 years x 10 = **27.5**

DOMINANCE

100 Wins	8 Games Ahead	NL1/Runs Scored	NL1/Fewest Runs Allowed	Score
1	2	6	1	10

DOMINANCE SCORE = 10 / 32 (4 x 8 seasons) x 100 = **31**

PLAYERS

CORE REGULARS	WAR 1949-56	BEST at POSITION	Decade 1948-57	2 nd 1/2 20 th C	20 th C +
1B Gil Hodges, 1948-59	37.0	1949-57	1951-55	no	
2B-3B/LF Jackie Robinson, '48-56*	54.3	1948-52 2B	1948-53	yes	yes
SS Pee Wee Reese, 1940-57	38.6	1942-54	1951-55	^	^
3B Billy Cox, 1949-53	5.4	no	no		
2B/OF Jim Gilliam, 1953-66	16.4	no	no		
CF Duke Snider, 1949-62	53.3	1949-56	1949-56	yes	yes
RF Carl Furillo, 1946-58	24.3	no	no		
C Roy Campanella, 1948-57	33.5	1949-55	1949-55	yes	yes
P Don Newcombe, 1949-57 (-2)	20.7	1949-57 (-2)	'49-56 (-2)	no	
P Preacher Roe, 1948-53	21.0	1947-52	1948-52	no	
P Carl Erskine, 1951-56	14.6	no	no		
RP Clem Labine, 1951-59	7.3	no	no		
TEAM WAR, 1949-56 = 378.2	326.4				
Core WAR= 86.3 % of Team 47.3 Av. Team WAR + 86.3 %	88.1 / 10 8.8	7 / 12 x 10 5.8	7 x 1 7	3 x 2 6	3 x 3 9

* Robinson began his career with Brooklyn at 1B in 1947, shifting to 2B in 1948.

^ Reese, 1942-49 (-3) has 20th century-plus legacy as one of NL's best position players.

PLAYERS SCORE = 8.8 (Base WAR) + 5.8 (Best at Position) + 22 (NL Best) = **36.6**

BROOKLYN DODGERS, 1952-1956

4 Pennants (1952, 1953, 1955, 1956)
1 World Series Win (1955)

ACHIEVEMENT

1 st place (x 3)	2 nd place (x 2)	3 rd place (x 1)	World Series (x 1)	Score
4 x 3 = 12	1 x 2 = 2	0	1 x 1 = 1	15

ACHIEVEMENT SCORE = 15 / 5 years x 10 = **30**

DOMINANCE

100 Wins	8 Games Ahead	NL1/Runs Scored	NL1/Fewest Runs Allowed	Score
1	2	3	1	7

DOMINANCE SCORE = 7 / 20 (4 x 5 seasons) x 100 = **35**

PLAYERS

CORE REGULARS	WAR 1949-56	BEST at POSITION	Decade 1948-57	2 nd 1/2 20 th C	20 th C +
1B Gil Hodges, 1948-59	24.5	1949-57	no		
SS Pee Wee Reese, 1940-57	22.8	1942-54	1951-55	^	^
MPR Jackie Robinson, 1947-56 *	26.7	no	1950-54	^	^
2B/OF Jim Gilliam, 1953-66	16.4	no	no		
CF Duke Snider, 1949-62	38.6	1949-56	1950-56	yes	yes
RF Carl Furillo, 1946-58	13.8	no	no		
C Roy Campanella, 1948-57	17.5	1949-55	1950-55	^	^
P Don Newcombe, 1949-57 (-2)	7.2	1949-57 (-2)	no		
P Carl Erskine, 1951-56	14.5	no	no		
P Billy Loes, 1952-55	7.5	no	no		
P Johnny Podres, 1953-65 (-1)	2.7	no	no		
RP Clem Labine, 1951-59	5.2	no	no		
TEAM WAR, 1952-56 = 227.7	197.4				
Core WAR= 86.7 % of Team	84.9 / 10	5 / 12 x 10	4 x 1	1 x 2	1 x 3
45.5 Av. Team WAR + 86.7 %	8.5	4.2	4	2	3

* Robinson began his career with Brooklyn at 1B in 1947, shifting to 2B in 1948, and playing 3B and LF beginning in 1953.

^ Reese, 1942-49 (-3), Robinson, 1948-52, and Campanella, 1949-55, all have 20th century-plus legacy among the NL's best position players.

PLAYERS SCORE = 8.5 (Base WAR) + 4.2 (Best at Position) + 9 (NL Best) = **21.7**

BEST PLAYERS IN SURROUNDING DECADE

(based on best consecutive years, informed by wins above replacement)

1949-56 DODGERS		1952-56 DODGERS
10 BEST NL POSITION PLAYERS, 1948-57		10 BEST NL POSITION PLAYERS, 1950-59
Stan Musial, OF/1B, 1948-57		Willie Mays, OF, 1954-59
Jackie Robinson, 2B, 1948-53		Eddie Mathews, 3B, 1953-59
Eddie Mathews, 3B, 1953-57		Ernie Banks, SS, 1955-59
Willie Mays, OF, 1951-57 (-2)		Stan Musial, OF/1B, 1950-57
Duke Snider, OF, 1949-56		Duke Snider, OF, 1950-56
Roy Campanella, C, 1949-55		Jackie Robinson, 2B-3B/OF, '50-54
Richie Ashburn, OF, 1953-57		Hank Aaron, OF, 1955-59
Pee Wee Reese, SS, 1951-55		Roy Campanella, C, 1950-55
Ralph Kiner, OF, 1948-52		Richie Ashburn, OF, 1953-57
Gil Hodges, 1B, 1951-55		Pee Wee Reese, ss, 1951-55
5 BEST NL PITCHERS + BEST RELIEVER, 1948-57		5 BEST NL PITCHERS + BEST RELIEVER, 1950-59
Robin Roberts, 1950-54		Robin Roberts, 1950-54
Warren Spahn, 1949-57		Warren Spahn, 1950-57
Don Newcombe, 1949-56 (-2)		Johnny Antonelli, 1954-59
Sal Maglie, 1950-54		Sal Maglie, 1950-54
Preacher Roe, 1948-52		Bob Friend, 1955-59
Hoyt Wilhelm, RP, 1952-56		Hoyt Wilhelm, RP, 1952-56

BEST AT POSITION

1B	Hodges-----→Cepeda-----→
2B	J.Robinson-----→Schoendienst-----→Mazeroski-----→
SS	(42) Reese-----→Banks-----→Wills-----→(65)
3B	B.Elliott-----→Mathews-----→
OF	(39) Slaughter-→Ashburn-----→F.Robinson-→(65)
OF	Kiner-----→Mays-----→(66)
OF	Snider-----→Aaron-----→(69)
MP	(43) Musial, OF/1B-----→F.Robinson, OF/1B---→ Gilliam, 3B/2B-----→
C	Campanella-----→Bailey-----→
P	(43) Brecheen--→Roberts-----→Friend-----→
P	Spahn-----→
P	Roe-----→Antonelli-----→Koufax-----→(66)
P	Jansen-----\Maglie-----→Drysdale-----→(66)
P	Newcombe-----→Jackson-----→(65)
RP	Wilhelm-----→Face-----→
	46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64