



MAJOR TAYLOR

“THE WORCESTER WHIRLWIND”

1899 WORLD CYCLING CHAMPION



A curriculum guide written by Virginia Walsh, Janet Dufault, and Arnold Pulda
for the Major Taylor Association, Inc. www.majortaylorassociation.org

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MAJOR TAYLOR

“THE WORCESTER WHIRLWIND”

INTRODUCTION

At the turn of the last century, bicycle races could fill Madison Square Garden in New York City, and the biggest draw of all was Major Taylor, “the Worcester Whirlwind.” He was the second black world champion in any sport and the first African-American athlete to achieve international fame -- half a century before baseball's Jackie Robinson “integrated” the Brooklyn Dodgers. Major Taylor had to fight prejudice just to get to the starting line. He endured hostility with remarkable dignity and became the 1899 world champion and “The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World,” the fitting title of his autobiography.

The Major Taylor Association, Inc., is a nonprofit organization that salutes Taylor’s athletic achievements and strength of character. In 2008 the association put up a statue of Major Taylor, the first monument to an individual African-American in Worcester, Mass.

The Educational Association of Worcester and the Worcester Public Schools worked with the Major Taylor Association to develop this curriculum focusing on the life and times of Major Taylor. The curriculum is coordinated with city and state education frameworks. It fits with character development education and the social studies curriculum, and can be used, for example, for Black History Month or to illustrate the concept of “Hometown Hero.”

Arnold Pulda, a social studies teacher for Grades 9-12 in the Worcester Public Schools, wrote the high school section for U.S. history classes in 2011. The section for Grades 5-8, added in 2005, includes a one-page biographical sketch that can also be used to introduce Major Taylor to any audience. The skill sheets in the Grades 3-4 section were developed for a Major Taylor Reading Week. The reading selection and discussion questions that follow are appropriate for Grades 7-12.

The Major Taylor Read-a-thon materials, which have been used for an annual community project in the Worcester Public Schools, were developed as a fund-raising model for the Major Taylor Association; fund-raising in conjunction with these materials is optional, and other fund-raising models are welcome.

Teachers using these materials may request a free classroom poster. Contact the Major Taylor Association at info@majortaylorassociation.org or MTA, PO Box 20131, Worcester, MA 01602.

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RESOURCES

Major Taylor Association, Inc.
PO Box 20131
Worcester, MA 01602
www.majortaylorassociation.org
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A Brief History of Jim Crow
teachdemocracy.org/online-lessons/black-history-month/a-brief-history-of-jim-crow

The Rise and Fall of Jim Crow
www.pbs.org/wnet/jimcrow/index.html

Indiana State Museum
1. Main menu: Select **Collection**.
2. Scroll down to Browse Our Collection and click **Start Exploring**.
3. Type “Major Taylor” in the search bar.
Or go directly to the search page:
collection.indianamuseum.org/mwebcgi/mweb.exe?request=home

Major Taylor’s scrapbooks
(University of Pittsburgh –
ULS Digital Collections)
digital.library.pitt.edu/islandora/object/pitt%3AUS-PPiU-ais198407/viewer

Biographies

Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer
by Andrew Ritchie (Bicycle Books, 1988; paperback, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996; revised edition, Van der Plas/Cycle Publishing, 2009; paperback, 2017)

Major: A Black Athlete, A White Era, and the Fight to Be the World’s Fastest Human Being
by Todd Balf (Crown Publishers, 2008)

Major Taylor in Australia
by Jim Fitzpatrick (Star Hill Studio, 2011)

Autobiography

The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World
by Marshall W. Taylor (1929)
Abridged editions from Microcosm Publishing (2023) and Arcadia Publishing (2023)

Children’s books

Major Taylor: World Cycling Champion
by Charles R. Smith Jr., illustrated by Leo Espinosa (Candlewick, 2023)

Major Taylor, Champion Cyclist
by Lesa-Cline Ransome, illustrated by James E. Ransome (Simon & Schuster, 2004)

Marshall “Major” Taylor
by Marlene Targ Brill (Lerner Publishing, 2007)

Major Taylor, Bicycle Champion
by Luke Hayes (J. Porter Publishing, 2011, e-book only)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
RESOURCES.....	2
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
MAJOR TAYLOR BIOGRAPHY AT A GLANCE.....	4
GRADES 3-4	
Major Taylor -- <i>reading comprehension</i>	5
Major Taylor, the Sprinter -- <i>reading comprehension</i>	6
The Worcester Whirlwind -- <i>reading comprehension with numbers</i>	7
The Velodrome -- <i>drawing</i>	8
Words From a Champion -- <i>sportsmanship</i>	9
Major Taylor Word Search -- <i>puzzle</i>	10
MAJOR TAYLOR READ-A-THON	
Introduction	11
Sign-up Sheet	12
Certificate of Participation ... www.majortaylorassociation.org/curriccertif.pdf	
GRADES 5-8	
Superstar	13
Strategy	14
Investigations	15
Comparing Money Then and Now	16
News and Public Opinion	17
Adverse Conditions	18
Creative Recognition Project	19
GRADES 7-12	
Major Taylor reading selection	20
Discussion Questions	21
GRADES 9-12	
Introduction and Teacher's Guide	22
Lesson 1: Major Taylor	25
Lesson 2: Major Taylor, The Racial Component	28
Lesson 3: Major Taylor, The Adult Man	34
Lesson 4: Major Taylor Abroad	38
Lesson 5: Major Taylor and the Sport, on the Bicycle	41



Major Taylor

1899 WORLD CHAMPION BICYCLE RACER

"Life is too short for a man to hold bitterness in his heart."

www.majortaylorassociation.org/who.htm

"Worcester Whirlwind"

Black cyclist breaks records, defeats bias

A hundred years ago, when bicycle races drew crowds that filled Madison Square Garden, the biggest draw of all was Major Taylor. He was the Michael Jordan or Tiger Woods of his time.

Taylor won his first race at age 11 in Indianapolis. Soon bicycle manufacturer and former racer Louis "Birdie" Munger hired Taylor as a factory helper and nurtured his racing career.

Blacks were banned from amateur bike racing in the United States in 1894, just as bicycling's popularity surged. But the move stimulated the growth of black cycling clubs and black races, which gave Taylor his early opportunities to prove his ability.

By the time Munger decided to set up a factory in Worcester -- in part to take advantage of the biking boom, but also to find a more tolerant atmosphere for his black protege -- Taylor was black champion of the United States.

"I was in Worcester only a very short time before I realized

In 2008 the Major Taylor Association put up a monument in Worcester recognizing Taylor's strength of character, marked by his sportsmanship, concern for the less fortunate, devotion to God, and personal struggle for equality.
www.majortaylorassociation.org

Major Taylor *biography at a glance*

- > **Nov. 26, 1878:** Marshall W. Taylor is born in Indianapolis.
- > **1890:** Nicknamed "Major" because of a soldier's jacket he wears while performing cycling stunts outside an Indianapolis bike shop.
- > **Fall 1895:** Moves to Worcester, Mass., with his racing manager.
- > **Nov. 16, 1898:** Concludes record-setting campaign in Philadelphia with 7 world records for various distances (motor-paced).
- > **Aug. 10, 1899:** Wins world 1-mile championship in Montreal to become the second Black world champion athlete, following boxer George Dixon.
- > **September 1900:** Wins American sprint championship.
- > **October 1900-January 1901:** Performs in vaudeville act with Charles "Mile-a-Minute" Murphy, racing on rollers on theater stages.
- > **1901-1904 and 1907-1909:** Competes as a superstar in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and U.S.
- > **1910:** Retires from racing at age 32.
- > **June 21, 1932:** Dies in a Chicago hospital charity ward.
- > **May 1948:** Ex-racers have Taylor's remains moved to a more prominent spot in Mount Glenwood Cemetery in Illinois and put up a marker stating:

***"World's champion bicycle racer
who came up the hard way
without hatred in his heart."***

that there was no such race prejudice existing among the bicycle riders there as I had experienced in Indianapolis," Taylor wrote in his 1929 autobiography, "The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World."

In 1897, the "Colored Cyclone," as the newspapers called Taylor, had to abandon the quest to become national sprint points champion when Southern promoters refused him entry to key races.

When he did compete, he faced hostility from white riders, including threats and physical assault. But Taylor didn't lose his nerve, or his popularity.

He held seven world records in 1898 and won the world championship in 1899.

Book list

- * Major Taylor by Andrew Ritchie (1988/1996/2009)
- * Major Taylor by Lesa Cline-Ransome (2004, for children)
- * Marshall 'Major' Taylor by Marlene Brill (2007, youth)
- * Major by Todd Balf (2008)
- * Major Taylor in Australia by Jim Fitzpatrick (2011)
- * The World's Fastest Man by Michael Kranish (2019)
- * Major Taylor by Charles R. Smith Jr. (2023, for children)
- * The Black Cyclone by John K. Howard (2023, biographical fiction)

Taylor was a steadfast member of the John Street Baptist Church in Worcester.

For years, he resisted invitations to compete in Europe because he refused to race on Sundays. He finally signed a European contract in 1901, was welcomed as a hero in France, and went on to beat every European champion.

Directions: Read the paragraph and answer the questions with a complete sentence.

Marshall W. “Major” Taylor

Major Taylor was known as the “Worcester Whirlwind” and he became the world champion of bicycling in 1899. A part of Mill Street in Worcester has been named the Major Taylor Bikeway. Applebee's restaurant, on Park Avenue, has a display of Major Taylor memorabilia. There is a group of people known as the Major Taylor Association, trying to raise money to build a statue in the courtyard at the Worcester Public Library in honor of Major Taylor. Some people know about Major Taylor. Soon, we hope a lot more will know about him.

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

Find three details in the paragraph about Major Taylor.

What does the Major Taylor Association hope to accomplish?

Name _____ Date _____

Major Taylor, the Sprinter

According to stories told about Major Taylor he was a very smart competitor and was determined to win. Most of the other racers were interested in winning money; Major Taylor wanted to prove that he was the best. Time after time he outsmarted his enemies. They often tried to hurt him during races because that was the only way they could beat him. He was a great sprinter and often was the last man going into the final stretch; then Taylor would sprint and pass all the other riders. The crowds loved him because he made the races exciting.

1. What is the main idea of this paragraph?

2. What do you think the word “sprinter” means?

3. What sport do you think is the most exciting to watch? Be sure to tell why you think it's exciting.

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the paragraph and answer the questions.

The Worcester Whirlwind

Marshall W. “Major” Taylor was born in rural Indiana on Nov. 26, 1878. His family moved to Indianapolis and he was raised and educated in the home of a wealthy white family. They gave him a bicycle. He rode his bike every day. He was so talented he was hired to perform cycling stunts outside an Indianapolis bike shop. His costume was a soldier's uniform. People started calling him “Major.”

He won his first race that year, in 1892. In the fall of 1895 he moved to Worcester, Mass. He trained by riding up and down the many hills in Worcester and worked out at the YMCA. He became known as the “Worcester Whirlwind.” He set a 1-mile world record in 1898, clocking 1 minute, 41.4 seconds. The next year he won the world championship at a 1-mile race in Montreal.

How many years ago was Major Taylor born?	How old was Major Taylor when he won his first race?
How old was Major Taylor when he moved to Worcester?	What year did he win the world championship?

Name _____ Date _____

The Velodrome

The type of racing that was most popular when Major Taylor was racing was track racing. Track racing is done in a stadium-like arena called a velodrome. The racers usually ride in single file to reduce wind resistance. A modern velodrome is an oval track with steeply banked corners that make it easier to go very fast. Velodromes can be enclosed or open-air. The tracks are made of wood or concrete. Track racing is a main type of Olympic cycling competition. Riders can compete in a variety of races, both team and individual. The races can also be sprints or longer distances.

Use the information in the paragraph to draw a picture of what you think a velodrome looks like.

Name _____ Date _____

Directions: Read the paragraph and answer the questions with a complete sentence.

Words From a Champion

Major Taylor wrote a book about his life, an autobiography, called The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World. In his book he offered advice to young athletes. He talked about the importance of clean living and fair play. He believed to be successful in sports you need to be physically fit, you should strictly observe the rules of the game, you need to practice sportsmanship and fair play, and also to be able to handle an unfavorable decision with the same grace you accept a victory. Major Taylor wrote these words in 1928. In sixteen years of competition he was never charged with unsportsmanlike conduct.

If a classmate doesn't practice good sportsmanship in gym class or at recess, do you think that student should be allowed to continue to play the game? Explain your answer.

Name _____ Date _____

MAJOR TAYLOR WORD SEARCH

C	H	A	M	P	I	O	N	A	W	H	E	E	B	C	D	E	F	G	W
S	E	A	L	A	W	I	N	B	X	H	H	I	J	K	L	M	E	N	H
S	A	B	C	C	D	E	R	E	N	N	I	W	K	L	M	N	O	L	E
P	F	G	H	E	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	R	P	Q	R	S	T	K	E
O	A	F	A	S	T	E	S	T	R	E	T	A	L	J	O	Y	X	K	L
R	R	G	E	E	S	E	N	I	F	A	N	S	P	W	O	R	L	G	M
T	E	T	E	T	G	R	A	T	A	R	G	E	T	Y	I	A	R	F	E
S	T	T	E	T	S	C	O	R	C	H	E	R	S	S	R	N	E	A	N
M	N	S	S	E	U	C	C	L	E	V	E	R	K	A	I	D	D	D	S
A	I	S	T	R	O	R	Y	E	S	I	R	O	T	N	E	Z	A	S	W
N	W	F	U	S	P	R	I	N	T	E	R	S	H	A	S	B	E	P	O
M	N	P	O	K	N	A	L	S	E	M	N	O	L	T	C	I	L	R	R
E	T	E	T	I	A	C	S	L	A	T	H	L	E	T	E	C	U	I	C
U	N	D	E	V	E	I	G	U	M	D	F	I	E	E	A	Y	E	N	E
T	E	A	M	O	M	N	E	F	M	I	L	M	S	W	G	C	A	T	S
A	S	L	A	T	I	G	R	M	A	J	O	R	T	A	Y	L	O	R	T
T	O	E	S	A	W	T	E	P	T	T	A	J	U	I	W	E	P	U	E
S	T	R	I	S	W	U	A	V	E	L	O	D	R	O	M	E	H	E	R
G	S	S	Z	K	L	P	I	U	S	H	S	Y	W	Y	I	S	U	H	J
B	J	G	N	B	I	K	E	R	U	O	P	C	Y	C	L	I	S	T	O

ATHLETE BICYCLE BIKER CHAMPION CYCLIST
FANS FASTEST LEADER MAJOR TAYLOR
PACESETTERS PEDALERS RACING SCORCHER
SPORTSMAN SPRINT SPRINTERS STATUE STAR
TEAM TEAMMATES VELODROME WHEELMEN
WHIRLWINDS WINNER WORCESTER

MAJOR TAYLOR READ-A-THON

INTRODUCTION

The sign-up sheet for the Major Taylor Read-a-thon that was used as a community project by third- and fourth-graders in Worcester, Mass., is included in this curriculum as a model for others who are interested in raising money for the Major Taylor statue planned by the Major Taylor Association, Inc. In Worcester, the week of February vacation, during Black History Month, was named Major Taylor Reading Week. Students were asked to sign up friends and relatives to pledge to donate money for each page the students read, or a fixed amount. Students tried to read as much as possible during the vacation week. The money collected was contributed to the Major Taylor Association.

A certificate of participation depicting the planned Major Taylor monument, as drawn by the selected sculptor, Antonio Tobias Mendez, may be downloaded at no charge from www.majortaylorassociation.org/curriccertif.pdf and may be reproduced.

Donations to the tax-exempt Major Taylor Association are tax-deductible and can be sent to:

Major Taylor Association, Inc.

PO Box 20131

Worcester, MA 01602

For more information about the statue effort, visit www.majortaylorassociation.org.

Major Taylor Read-a-thon

Name _____ Date _____

Sponsor Name	Per-Page Pledge	Fixed Pledge	Total Due
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

(Parent Signature)

Please make checks payable to Major Taylor Association, Inc. Donations are tax-deductible.

Name _____ Date _____

SUPERSTAR

Many qualities contribute to the designation of a Superstar. Think about some famous people today in terms of these attributes:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|
| A. Natural talent | training | practice |
| B. Character | personality | philosophy |
| C. Fame | popularity | publicity |

Write three paragraphs describing what you would expect the world cycling champion to be like as an athlete and a person.

Compare your description to the biographical sketch of Major Taylor. How did they match? Were there any surprising differences?

Name _____ Date _____

STRATEGY

When planning for a race a competitor must know the locale, the weather, and the other participants. Major Taylor at different times employed three different strategies in his races.

1. Come From Behind
2. Make the Most of an Opening
3. Take the Lead and Hold It

Choose one of these strategies and describe the advantages and problems you might encounter with it in a bicycle race.

Name _____ Date _____

INVESTIGATIONS

In 1898 Major Taylor pedaled one mile in 1 minute, 41.4 seconds to set a world record.

Have an adult help you measure some distances so that you have a good mental picture of Major Taylor's accomplishments. Use a car and its odometer to see how far one mile actually is. (You could also walk using a pedometer, or bike using a cycle computer, to cover one mile in a safe area.)

Mark out a measured distance in a park or schoolyard. Ride your bike over this distance while someone times you. Try it from a cold, standing start; then try it where you can get a "flying" or running start before the measured distance. Which method gave you the best time?

Try your time on a track, or other long-distance area, and use only one gear. (Remember that Major Taylor's bike did not have any changeable gears.) How did this affect your time and energy required?

Select a reasonable distance that you know you can safely travel more than once. Ride this distance three times and record your time for each ride. (Be sure to take a rest and drink liquids between each ride.) How did the third ride compare to the first two? How do you think this might have influenced a racer's chances to win?

Extra Challenge: What was Major Taylor's speed in miles per hour for the record-setting ride described above (1 mile in 1 minute, 41.4 seconds)? For the distance you measured and biked, convert your best time to miles per hour.

COMPARING MONEY, THEN AND NOW

Several Internet resources can help you compare the relative value of prices and prizes in Major Taylor's lifetime and ours. Check these sites:

www.factmonster.com/math/money

See articles and charts on "The Shrinking Value of the Dollar" and "Retail Prices of Selected Foods in U.S. Cities, 1890-1970."

www.gti.net/mocolib1/prices

Suggestions for researching prices and dollar comparisons are provided, along with recommended sites for historic studies.

www.eh.net/hmit/ppowerusd/

"How Much Is That Worth Today?" provides a conversion worksheet.

Dollar amounts from Major Taylor's time:

- Between 1889 and 1895, bicycles cost \$50 to \$100.
- A house lot worth \$300 was Major Taylor's first prize at age 16.
- In 1898 Taylor's salary was \$100 per week.
- Expenses for trainers, practice teams, mechanics, etc., were \$3,000 to \$5,000 for the 1898 races in Philadelphia.
- In 1900 Taylor paid \$2,850 for his house on Hobson Avenue in Worcester. Can you find out from the city Assessor's Office how much a house on Hobson Avenue is worth today?
- In 1899 Taylor was offered a \$10,000 contract to race in Europe. (He refused it because he would have had to race on Sundays.)
- In 1901 he accepted a contract for \$7,200 with no Sunday races.
- By the time of his retirement in 1910, Major Taylor was the richest black man in Worcester (and one of the richest in America), with an estimated fortune of \$35,000 to \$75,000.

Extra Challenge: The Iver Johnson bicycle manufacturing company in Fitchburg, Mass., sponsored Major Taylor in 1900 and 1901, and his fame helped promote Iver Johnson bikes through newspaper ads and promotional buttons. If Major Taylor had been able to sign an advertising contract for product ads on television, how much might he have made for his endorsements?

NEWS AND PUBLIC OPINION

Try to give yourself viewpoint of someone living in 1897. Read the following account from pages 78 and 79 of the biography Major Taylor: The Extraordinary Career of a Champion Bicycle Racer by Andrew Ritchie and consider the circumstances. Then do the three separate writing tasks presented.

The hostility directed at Taylor came to a climax on the second day of a two-day meeting in Taunton, Massachusetts, on September 23. He was physically attacked and choked into unconsciousness by William Becker, a white rider from Minneapolis, after an extremely close finish in the final of the 1-mile race. The winner, Tom Butler, was the Boston rider who had been Taylor's teammate in the inter-city pursuit race against Philadelphia earlier in the year. Taylor was second. Becker, the third-place finisher, came up behind him, grabbed him around the neck, pulled him off his bicycle, and threw him on the ground while maintaining a stranglehold around his neck. The police had to interfere to restrain Becker, and it was a full fifteen minutes before Taylor recovered consciousness. The crowd, agitated and angry at Becker's attack, threatened him, and only the police prevented the already ugly incident from getting out of hand.

Becker claimed that Taylor had forced him into the fence during the race, but the source of the hostility much deeper than this alleged foul. Becker had been on the circuit the whole season and had seen Taylor's popularity with the crowds. There was professional jealousy as well as racial hatred behind the disgraceful behavior.

Becker was not arrested, but the incident was a sharp reminder of the aggressive feelings that were aroused by Taylor's challenge to white superiority in a sport previously dominated by whites, as well as society in general. The two could not be easily separated. Becker's behavior was one of the first public demonstrations of the racial feelings directed against Taylor. What most people only thought, Becker had acted out.

There was widespread comment in the press and unanimous condemnation of Becker for his unjustified attack. ... When the notorious case arrived before the chairman of the LAW Racing Board, Albert Mott, who was expected at the very least, to impose a long suspension on Becker, he handed out instead a mere \$50 fine. Mott was afraid of the backlash from the other riders if he was too hard on Becker, but also took into account Taylor's alleged fouling of Becker. But the practical effect of the small fine was to exonerate Becker.

A newspaper can print different types of stories:

- A factual reporting of who, what, when, where, how, and why;
- An editorial stating the official viewpoint of the newspaper on the matter;
- A commentary expressing a writer's personal interpretation of the causes and effects of an event or personal action.

On three different days this week (so that you can change your mood and viewpoint), write three newspaper stories of your own about the Sept. 23, 1897, bike race in Taunton and Becker's actions at the finish.

- Be a reporter telling about the race and the attack.
- Be an editorial writer stressing proper sportsmanship.
- Be a social advocate rejecting prejudice.

Name _____ Date _____

ADVERSE CONDITIONS

Research the Jim Crow segregation laws in Indiana, where Major Taylor grew up, or Massachusetts, where he lived during his professional bike racing career, or in your state. A good starting point is the maps “Jim Crow Outside the South” and “Jim Crow Inside the South” in the Geography section of the web site “The History of Jim Crow,” www.jimcrowhistory.org.

Also read about Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott.

Consider the hardships for a black athlete in Major Taylor’s lifetime in finding suitable transportation, hotels, restaurants, and training and medical facilities, and the corresponding effects these hardships would inflict on an athlete’s preparations and ability to perform. Use a graphic organizer of your choice to display the differences in the relevant laws and practices of 1899 and 2005.

Extra thinking: Do you think that any of these hardships still occur in spite of the changed laws? Are there times and places where subtle (or not so subtle) discrimination still takes place? Give some examples to support your views.

More extra thinking: Why would trips to Paris, to other places in Europe, and to Australia bring more Superstar treatment to Major Taylor compared to his treatment in parts of America?

Name _____ Date _____

CREATIVE RECOGNITION PROJECT

In 1901 Major Taylor boarded a trans-Atlantic luxury liner for his trip to Europe and found that a large floral arrangement in the shape of a racing bicycle had been delivered to his cabin. What would you design as a “Bon Voyage / Good Luck” symbol? Would it be edible? Humorous? A memento of home? Draw and/or describe in words your tribute. Would you compose a song or jingle to go with it?

Name _____ Date _____

MAJOR TAYLOR

The following is based on articles written by Lynne Tolman for the Worcester (Mass.) Telegram & Gazette

Bicyclists in Louisville, Ky., have righted a wrong committed there more than 100 years ago. It was in Louisville in 1894 that the League of American Wheelmen, which then governed bicycle racing, voted to ban blacks. The color line, and subsequent maneuvering over the governance of the sport, had a particular effect on the career of an up-and-coming rider from Indianapolis named Marshall W. “Major” Taylor.

Racial segregation relegated young Taylor to blacks-only racing clubs. By the end of 1896, a year after moving with his coach and employer to Worcester, Mass., 18-year-old Taylor was the undisputed black champion of America. But he aimed to be the fastest bicycle rider in the world, period.

In the Northeast, where the color line had been opposed, Taylor encountered more open-mindedness, and the League allowed him to enter the pro ranks. Still, racial intolerance was an obstacle on and off the racetrack.

Because he was black, Taylor was refused entry to key races in the South and was sometimes denied lodging while on the road. White riders conspired against him, and the hostility sometimes turned violent. One opponent hauled him off his bike and choked him into unconsciousness. When Taylor bought a house in the well-to-do Columbus Park neighborhood in Worcester, some white neighbors were alarmed and tried to buy it back.

Nonetheless, Taylor kept his eyes on the prize, and his perseverance paid off. At the end of 1898, the 20-year-old “Worcester Whirlwind” held seven world records. In 1899, in Montreal, he won the world championship in the one-mile sprint. He was the second black world champion in any sport, after bantamweight boxer George Dixon, and the first black sports superstar, earning more money than any other athlete at the time.

The modern-day League of American Bicyclists, led in the late 1990s by president Earl Jones, formally revoked the ban on black members in 1999, although it had not been enforced for decades.

In 16 years of competition, Major Taylor was never accused of unsportsmanlike conduct. He was a religious man. He was a gentleman. In his autobiography, The Fastest Bicycle Rider in the World, Taylor offered advice to young athletes. He talked about the importance of clean living and fair play. He believed to be successful in sports you need to be physically fit, you should strictly observe the rules of the game, you need to practice good sportsmanship and fair play, and you also must be able to handle an unfavorable decision with the same grace with which you accept victory.

Discussion Questions

1. Minorities are no longer banned from the L.A.W. and bike racing. Do you think it was important, or necessary, for Earl Jones to request a formal repeal of the color line?
2. Tiger Woods and Venus and Serena Williams are dominant in their sports. They have gained international fame because of their skills and abilities. Yet they are also recognized because they are the first blacks to reach these pinnacles in their chosen sports. Do you think they should get special recognition because of their race?
3. Some people say that there are subtle social prejudices that play a role in determining participation in sports by minorities. Do you agree or disagree? What would those social issues be?
4. Major Taylor was faced with discrimination in many areas. He was denied entry into races, he was denied entrance into hotels, and he was subjected to verbal and physical assaults, on and off the track. Groups of riders would conspire to block him during races so he couldn't win. If a race ended in a tie, the win would go to the white rider. Yet for his 16-year career he was never accused of unsportsmanlike conduct. On and off the track he lived his life according to the Golden Rule. Do you think there are athletes today who would conduct themselves in this manner? Do you think they should?
5. Major Taylor's bike had one speed. Lance Armstrong's bike has 20 speeds. Although the type of racing they did is very different, how do you think their accomplishments compare?
6. Have you ever been a victim of prejudice? Are there people that you are prejudiced against?
7. The attack on the World Trade Center was motivated by hatred. The terrorists believe that their motives are just. What would you say to someone who wanted to harm someone, or discriminate against someone, because of race, religion or sexual preference?