Sports, in their very essence, are games slavishly devoted to numbers. Thus to honor the six great pioneers and innovators of modern sports, we have dug up some important numbers to put their accomplishments in perspective.

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That's the number of years between the hiring in 1921 of Fritz Pollard, the first black head coach in the NFL, and the hiring of Art Shell, the second black to lead a team in league history. By the time of his death in 1986, Pollard had yet to see another black man follow in his footsteps, as Shell was not hired until 1989. It was not until 2006, when Tony Dungy and Lovie Smith became the first black coaches to coach in a Super Bowl, that a black man could lead a team to a championship, with Dungy coming out victorious.
The amount of inches that Bob Beamon added to the world record for the long jump one fateful day in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City. With the help of the high altitude and the maximum allowable tailwind, Beamon jumped a record-shattering 29 feet and $2 \frac{1}{2}$ inches. Beamon became the first man to clear the 28- and 29-foot barriers, creating a record that would stand 23 years.
The record of Carolyn Peck's 1999 Purdue Lady Boilermakers women's basketball team, en route to their first and only NCAA championship. Despite being openly criticized by her players for accepting a coaching job in the WNBA just a year into her tenure at Purdue, Peck built on the previous year's Elite Eight appearance to become the first black woman to lead a team to a Women's NCAA championship. She later became the first head coach-general manager in WNBA history, for the expansion Orlando Miracle franchise.
The amount of Olympic Sports that do not have a female equivalent, thanks to the efforts of Anita DeFrantz, a member of the International Olympic Committee. Says Anita, "Yes – if you accept baseball and softball as equivalent. The IOC has adopted a principle of equality of women and men; it’s been in the IOC Charter since 1994. You can go through history and see women taking part in every sport. The only two Olympic sports that are designed for women, in which men would have a significant disadvantage, are rhythmic gymnastics and synchronized swimming."
The amount of games in a row the Montreal Canadiens hockey team went unbeaten upon the return of star goalie Jacques Plante with the help of his new secret weapon. In 1959, Plante broke his nose in an attempt to stop an errant shot, and upon returning from the locker room later in the game, insisted upon wearing his crude but protective mask. Coach Toe Blake was incensed, but left with no choice, he agreed to let Plante wear the mask temporarily. However, the Canadians ran off an 18-game unbeaten streak, and the coach’s opposition to the mask lessened with each consecutive game without a loss. Plante’s newfound fearlessness allowed him to lead the Canadiens to win their fifth consecutive Stanley Cup that year, and his record sixth Vezina Trophy in the following season.
It’s never easy being No. 2. Everyone remembers the first man to step on the moon, but who was the second? (Buzz Aldrin) And everyone knows the first stanza of the “Star-Spangled Banner,” but did you know there was a second one as well? As you can see, it is no surprise that Larry Doby somehow got lost in the history books as being the second black player in the majors, although through no fault of his own. Jackie Robinson, the man who preceded him, simply set the world ablaze upon entering the National League with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, winning Rookie of the Year honors that year, and an MVP trophy two seasons later. Doby, who joined the Cleveland Indians that same year, however was no slouch in his own right. While Robinson was an eclectic speed demon of an infielder, Doby was a power-hitting outfielder who became the first black man to lead the league in home runs in 1952. He also became the first black to appear in a World Series, as well as the first one to hit a home run and win a championship. Doby retired as seven-time All-Star and is now inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame.