Reading Comprehension Worksheet for Chapters 5-6, pp.49-60

Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton: Arkansas's "Jackie Robinson of the NBA"

RL.7.1: Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI.7.3: Analyze the interactions between individuals, events, and ideas in a text (e.g., how ideas influence individuals or events, how individuals influence ideas or events).

W.7.1: Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

 Take a Vocabulary Shot!

Working with your partner, write definitions in everyday language to explain the meanings of the following words as used in the context of the reading.

- affinity (p.50) _____

- innovative (p.50)_____

- taunts (p. 53)_____

- vile (p. 53)_____

- stoic (p. 53) _____

- luminaries (p.55)_____

- obscure (p.55) _____

- tribute (p.55) _____

- moniker (p.57) _____

- exploitation (p.59)_____

Show Me What You Got!

Determine which of the following statements are false. Then make each one true by crossing out the wrong part and writing the correction above. Circle any statements that are already true. The first one is done for you.

                                          he loved soft drinks so much.
1. Sweetwater got his nickname because ~~of his sweet nature~~.

2. When they travelled, the NBA players' lodging was sometimes segregated.

3. Sweetwater was paid by the Globetrotters only slightly less than the white college team players they played.

4. He was the first African American to sign a contract and play for the NBA.

5. He was even better at baseball than he was at basketball.

6. His family moved to Chicago right before the Great Depression.

7. His sisters dressed Sweetwater up in clown suits when he was little.

8. The Globetrotters sold Sweetwater to the New York Knicks for $100,000.

9. Sweetwater had a sharp tongue according to those who knew him.

10. Sweetwater got a good pension when he retired from the NBA.

- **Bill Russell said "Sweetwater was a man at a time when that was not fully accepted" (56). Which of the following statements is not implied or stated by Russell on p. 56?**

a. Sweetwater was both professional and defended himself against racist assaults.
b. It was more acceptable for adult black men to be passive when threatened.
c. Sweetwater would have been less of a man had he not played basketball.
d. Sweetwater was an inspiration for young male African American athletes.

Take It Down the Court!

In this section, you will compose answers to questions using supporting evidence from the text and providing logical explanations.

1. Jackie Robinson and Sweetwater both faced hateful racist behavior. They didn't always deal with the abuse in the same way, however. Explain how their different responses, as public figures, sent different messages to the nation about how African American athletes should be treated. (Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.)

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 2. Which of the following best explains why the New York Knicks would sign the talented Sweetwater in 1950 only to clip his wings on the court, instructing him to stay in the background, limiting him to shooting no more that "six or seven times a game" (51)?

    a. The team was uncomfortable showcasing a black man's talent too much.
    b. They were legally constrained by the terms of his contract.

c. Sweetwater's sensational Globetrotter style was not to the taste of the crowd.

d. The coaches were concerned their star player would injure himself.

3. Which of the following is <u>not</u> the result of Sweetwater's legacy?

a. The NBA has become a more diverse organization.

b. More women's professional leagues were formed.

c. Basketball became a more interesting sport, infused with style and flair.

d. African Americans are now welcome to perform to their potential on the court.

4. The author concludes two things about Sweetwater's life: that he both "didn't get his due" (49) and that he "had what he wanted" (54). Do you agree? Weigh Sweetwater's fortune against his misfortune to formulate your own opinion. Cite several examples from the text and at least one quote from Sweetwater himself to support your conclusion. (A notes section is provided on the next page for you to organize your thoughts.)

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NOTES about Sweetwater's life:

Fortune and Fulfillment:

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Injustices and Struggles:

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