Baseball in Freeport
Jumbo Brown

Walter “Jumbo” Brown was born in Rhode Island on April 30, 1907, and began his major league career in 1925 as a pitcher for the Chicago Cubs. He played for the Yankees for four seasons including the World Series winning teams of 1932 and 1936. He ended his career with the New York Giants in 1941. He lived in Freeport and ran a sporting goods store located at 15 W. Sunrise Highway. He died on October 20, 1966.
Roy Campanella

Roy Campanella played baseball at the Freeport Municipal Stadium in 1937 with the Elite Giants. In 1946, he was the fourth African American to be signed to a professional contract. Campanella is considered by many to be the greatest catcher in the history of baseball, and one of the game's best all-around players.
Lou Gehrig

Lou Gehrig married Eleanor Grace Twitchell on September 29, 1933, at his home at 5 Circuit Road, New Rochelle, NY. Witnesses included Frederick M. Linder of Mount Vernon and Blanche C. Austin of Freeport, L.I., the bride's aunt. The day after the wedding, Gene and Blanche Austin hosted a reception for the couple in their Freeport home. Research continues to locate the exact address of the Austin's house. Photographs of the reception in Freeport can be viewed at www.corbisimages.com.
Eskine Kelley

Erskine Kelley graduated Freeport High School in 1989. He was selected by the New York Mets in the 47th round of the 1989 amateur draft but he did not sign. After attending the University of Richmond, Kelley was signed by the Pittsburgh Pirates in the 36th round in 1992. He played several seasons in their organization and part of one year in the Chicago Cubs chain before ending his career with three summers in the independent leagues.
Jay Loviglio, born in Freeport in 1956, was a pinch hitter for the Philadelphia Phillies and the Chicago White Sox between 1980 and 1983. He managed several minor league teams and served as the hitting coach for the LI Ducks.
John Morris played baseball at Seton Hall University and was drafted by the Kansas City Royals as the 10th pick in the first round. After spending time in the minors, Morris's Major League debut was in 1986 with the St. Louis Cardinals. He also played with the Phillies and Angels. According to one of his baseball cards, Morris's birthplace was Freeport (February 23, 1961) and his hometown was North Bellmore.
Branch Rickey Jr., known as “Twig” was the son of Branch Rickey the baseball executive who broke the color barrier by signing Jackie Robinson. Branch Rickey Jr. worked as the Vice President of the Pittsburgh Pirates and director of the team’s farm system. He lived on Beverly Parkway in Freeport and taught Sunday School at the Freeport Methodist Church.
Babe Ruth visited the Village of Freeport in 1920. He attended the L.I.G.H.T.S Club Circus and had dinner at the Lexington Avenue home of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Bulger. About 1940, Ruth came to Freeport to fish.
Jesse Ryerson, born about 1889, began playing organized baseball at the age of 14 in Freeport. He played for a semi-pro team in Rockville Centre as a catcher. According to a 1909 article in the *Nassau County Review*, Ryerson was signed by Brooklyn. The article compared him to Buck Ewing, one of the best catchers of his era (1880-1897). A 1912 *Nassau County Review* stated that he played for an International League team in Newark. However, no documentation has been found confirming that Ryerson ever played for a major league team.
Dick Schaap graduated Freeport High School in 1951. At the age of 14, he began writing sports columns for the Leader. A year later, began writing for the Nassau Daily Review Star where he worked with Jimmy Breslin. He attended Cornell University and received a fellowship to Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. Schaap was the sports editor for Newsweek and worked with the Long Island Press and the New York Herald Tribune.
Ray Searage

Ray Searage was born in Freeport in 1955 and graduated from Deer Park High School in 1973. After attending West Liberty State College in WV, he became a left-handed relief pitcher for the New York Mets in 1981. During his one year career with the Mets, he had only one hit at bat thus leaving the organization with a batting average of 1,000. Searage played with the Milwaukee Brewers, Chicago White Sox, and finished his career with the Los Angeles Dodgers in 1990. In 2009, he became a pitching coach for the Pittsburgh Pirates.
Bob Sheppard

Bob Sheppard, the “Voice of Yankee Stadium” was discovered while serving as PA announcer for a football game at Freeport’s Municipal Stadium. For many years Sheppard served as a lector at St. Christopher’s Roman Catholic Church in Baldwin. He died in 2010.
Al Von Tilzer, composer of *Take Me Out to the Ball Game* lived on Southside Avenue in Freeport.
Fresco Thompson

Fresco Thompson, born in Alabama in 1902, played 2nd base for several major league teams including the Brooklyn Dodgers, Philadelphia Phillies, and the New York Giants in the 1920s and 30s. In the 1950s, Thompson became a VP for the Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1952, he bought a house at 26 Delaware Avenue in Freeport.
Kay Sutton Topping was the fourth wife of Daniel Reid Topping who was the owner and president of the New York Yankees from 1945 to 1964. The couple married in 1946 and divorced in 1951. Her parents lived at 309 Lena Avenue.
Fred “Dixie” Walker was born Fred Walker on September 24, 1910, in Villa Rica, Georgia. Dixie began his professional baseball career in 1931 with the New York Yankees. While playing with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1941, Dixie bought a house at 160 Swezey Avenue, Freeport, NY.
Jean Yawkey, owner of the Boston Red Sox, lived at 16 Rosedale Avenue, Freeport, NY in the 1920s and 30s. She married Thomas Yawkey in 1944 and became an avid Red Sox fan. Mrs. Yawkey meticulously kept score in a custom-bound set of scorecards. In 1984, she became director of the National Baseball Museum and Hall of Fame – the first woman elected to the Hall of Fame’s board. She was also a major benefactor to the museum, donating two wings and commissioning a basswood statue of Ted Williams. In 1992, Jean Yawkey died at the age of 83 after suffering a severe stroke.
Freeport Municipal Stadium hosted many important baseball teams including:

- Black Yankees
- Cuban Giants
- Bushwicks
- Penn Red Caps
- Black Eagles
- House of David

In 1944, the Brooklyn Dodgers played a Freeport semi-pro team before a crowd of 5,369. Despite being shutout for the first six innings, Freeport rallied with a homerun in the 11th inning. The final score was 8-7.
South Shore Champions, 1888

In 1888, Freeport's baseball team won the championship! Years later, many of the players on this team took a very active roll in the political life in the Village of Freeport and Nassau County. These players included:

**Hiram R. Smith** (left field) – Village of Freeport Trustee (1904-1906), Village Mayor (1906), and Presiding Supervisor of the Town of Hempstead

**Sidney S. Smith** (center field) – Worked for the newspaper *South Side Observer* (later the *Nassau Daily Review-Star*)

**Samuel R. Smith** (right field) – President of the Bank of Manhattan, and President of the Freeport Board of Education

**Henry Rider** (shortstop) – School Tax Collector

**Elmer Raynor** (third base) – Lieutenant of the Freeport Police Department

**Charles S. Powell** (catcher) – Freeport Postmaster

**John H.B. Denton** (second base) – Distinguished Freeport Doctor

**George Weyant** (pitcher) – Well-known bayman