



****EL BÉISBOL Y LOS DOMINICANOS****

~ 15%-20% of Major League Baseball players are from the Dominican Republic. (1 in 5 of the players in the MLB are from the Dominican Republic but the population of the Dominican Republic is only 2% of the United States.)

~ 42% of Minor League Baseball players are Hispanic

~ Many Dominican families choose to send their sons to baseball academies, where their sons live and play baseball in the hopes of being scouted for a baseball team in the United States.

~ There are an estimated 100,000 young players that train full-time in the many programs in the Dominican Republic. These players share the same dream - to sign a baseball contract on July 2nd.

~ Most boys at baseball academies do not attend school.

The Dominican Republic only spends 2.3% of its gross domestic product on education. (It ranks as the 121st in the world.) It is estimated that 100,000 young players train full-time in thousands of programs throughout the Dominican Republic.

~ Baseball trainers do not get paid for coaching. They get paid on commission. Trainers get as much as 35% of the player's signing bonus. The trainers say they take so much money because they provide the players with meals and a place to live.

~ American baseball agents only receive 5%.

~ In 1962, the San Francisco Giants featured four of the first Dominican baseball players in the Major Leagues. At that time, the Giants were paying \$60,000 for new prospects but they only paid \$5,000 in total for the four Dominican players.

~ In the 1980's, the Major Leagues started pouring millions of dollars into the baseball training programs in the Dominican Republic. They built training facilities and hired talent scouts to find players for the Major Leagues. Currently, there are 29 Major League Baseball teams with academies in the Dominican Republic. These are called "baseball factories" by the locals. At these facilities, the players learn about baseball as well as about the culture of the United States and Canada.

~ The Boston Red Sox are one of four teams that require their players to attend a private high school.

~ Dominican players must be 16 to be eligible for a Major League Baseball deal. After the age of 16, a player's market value drops

precipitously. This has led to problems like increased steroid use to make the players' bodies mature faster so they get signed at age 16.

- ~ The Dominican Republic has produced 542 Major League Baseball players since 1956, twice as many as any other nation or territory (excluding the United States).
- ~ Out of 100 Dominican players, only two will make it in the Big Leagues.
- ~ Major League players enter the United States on a P1 Visa. This Visa is generally reserved for athletes, singers, and actors. This Visa is good for up to five years with extensions, not to exceed 10 years.
- ~ Minor League players enter the US on an all-purpose H-2B Visa for "temporary" employees. Baseball is generally allotted 1,400 Visas each year (the number of available Visas has been declining since September 11th, 2001).
- ~ Many Dominicans do not return to the Dominican Republic when they are cut from their teams. Says Ron Plaza, instructor for the Oakland A's, "Out of ten (Dominican players) who are released, I'd say nine stay here illegally."
- ~ There is also much controversy concerning the wages that Dominican players are paid versus their US counterparts. Dick Balderson, the Colorado Rockies' Vice-President of Player Personnel, comments, "Instead of signing four (American) guys at \$25,000 each, you sign 20 Dominican guys for \$5,000 each." Miguel Tejada, now a player with a multi-million dollar contract, remembers that his first contract with the Oakland A's was for \$2,000. American sports agent Joe Kehoskie says, "Traditionally in the Latin Market, I would say players sign for about 5 to 10 cents on the dollar compared to their US counterparts."

SOURCES:

<http://sports.espn.go.com/espnmag/story?id=3974952>
<http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Bu-Dr/Dominican-Americans.html>
<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2009/apr2009/suga-a16.shtml>
http://www.vdare.com/guzzardi/050618_baseball.htm
<http://mlnsports.com/features/articles2005/02/20.html>