

HISTORY OF PROFESSIONAL BASEBALL

Professional baseball originated in the United States approximately in the year 1865, and the first major league the National League was founded in 1876, it quickly produced famous players such as Honus Wagner, Several other major leagues formed and failed, In 1901 the American League was born, it originated from the minor Western League (1893), While the two leagues were rivals who actively fought for the best players, and often disregard one another's contracts and engaging in bitter legal disputes, a modicum of peace was established in 1903, the two leagues began playing a World Series that year (1903). Baseball has often been a barometer of the fabled American "melting pot", immigrants from different regions they have tried to "make good" in various areas including sports. In the 19th century, baseball was populated with many players of German or Irish extraction. Quite a number of Native Americans in the early 1900 had successful careers in this sport. In the 1920s' and 1930s' the Italians and Poles have appeared in many of the teams rosters. Italians and Poles appeared on many rosters, After the racial barriers has been lifted in the 1940s' the Black Americans came strong and continue to form a significant contingent. By the 1960s, Hispanics had started to make the scene, and had become a dominant force by the 1990s. In the 21st century, East Asians have been appearing in increasing numbers. Although the sport is quite popular, and the salaries are quite high as compared to those of average Americans, it was very difficult to satisfy players, they believe that team owners have too much control. Players on specific teams occasionally attempted strikes, but usually came back when their jobs were sufficiently threatened. One classic example of the players show of force was, The throwing of the 1919 World Series the "Black Sox scandal", it was in some sense a "strike" or at least a rebellion by the ballplayers against a perceived stingy owner. Today however due to the the strict rules of baseball contracts players

tend to keep "in line" however. the players typically always got what they demanded, so the popularity of baseball diminished greatly as a result of the players' actions, and fans return to the stadiums were very minimal. The record-breaking 2131st consecutive game of Cal Ripken in 1995 was a feel-good moment that helped boost interest in the sport. While the great home run race between Mark McGwire and Sammy Sosa in 1998 really turned things around, captivating fans all summer. As with other times when adversity threatened the game, positive on-field events had triggered a renewed surge in baseball's popularity in America.

DRUGS IN BASEBALL

At present, Major League Baseball is again faced with its fair share of controversies and the organization may now be facing its toughest challenge in years. Controversies such as of rampant steroid use by players, a high-profile trial involving a pivotal drug company, and specific allegations that some of the sport's most talented stars, professional baseball once again runs the risk of alienating the general public. Today baseball players, like all professional athletes, are stronger, bigger, and faster, and than the players before them. Improved workout techniques, combined with a healthier and more informed dietary habits, plus a 365-day-a-year commitment to staying in shape has produced sportsmen who at times seem part human, part machine. In these days, the stakes involved in professional sports have exploded; astronomic salaries are sky rocketing thus, that small gains in speed or strength can helps a lot in better on-field results, which inevitably translate into multimillion dollar pay raises. And due to this, athletes have become increasingly willing to experiment with performance-enhancing drugs. In baseball in particular, the fascination of fans (the people who are responsible in putting the money in the pockets of team owners) and owners (the rich guys who is responsible writing

players' paychecks) with the long ball has led hitters to pursue any and all options and means, that can help them smack the ball over the fence. One player in particular slugger Mark McGwire, who famously broke Roger Maris's hallowed single-season home run record in 1998, brought heightened attention to players' new performance-enhancing drug binge through his highly publicized use of androstenedione, a legal supplement. Speculation and accusations regarding the use of steroids in baseball mounted over the last couple of years this is when a number of former players made claims, either in books or through the press, of widespread usage. Some alleged that more than half of all Major League players use steroids, and though those claims have generally dismissed as blatant exaggeration, many baseball insiders have suggested that 10 percent is a more accurate estimate. That number is still far too high, and it places the entire legitimacy and integrity of the sport in question, threatening to drive fans away even at a time when baseball is doing quite well.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING ABOUT IT

Finally baseball takes a serious swing at drugs. in one day, the league that was branded as the league that turned a blind eye to steroids and drugs professional baseball cracked down the hardest on drug abusers and cheaters. The agreement provides that every player will undergo at least one unannounced test on a randomly selected date during the playing season, and creates an additional program of testing randomly selected players. The agreement places no specific limit on the number of additional tests to which any player may randomly be subjected, and further includes random testing during the off-season, irrespective of a player's country of residence.

This action and agreement sends the message that cheating in sports is unacceptable and that once you get caught, you will be punished and ultimately banned from the game. The said

agreement also sets a standard and puts a challenge out to other major team sports, such as the NFL, NBA, and NHL, that it is time to act seriously about cracking down on illegal drugs. Baseball's new agreement is tough. On the first offense a player will receive counseling - no suspension, no fine - no extra testing. A second offense brings a fine of up to \$10,000 or a 15-day suspension - please note the up to in that sentence - the fine and or suspension are not mandatory and could be appealed. A third offense raises the stakes to a potential 25-day suspension or \$25,000 fine. The fourth time - \$50,000 or a 50 day suspension. Suspensions and fines are all well and good, however the issue that needs to be addressed is the education as to the dangers of steroids, long-term health risks, and fixing a zero tolerance policy when it comes to steroids. It must be emphasized that the use of performance enhancing drugs is unacceptable and the issue should be addressed in the rules of the game. It should be made clear to the players' that using any of these performance-enhancing drugs is defined as cheating. The players should know that using this performance enhancing drugs is not fair to owners who pay salaries thinking that they are getting an honest effort. It also is not fair to fans who pay to see the games, its not fair to the kids who idolize and dream of becoming ballplayers, and most of all it is not fair to all of the players in the game that are not steroid users.

CONCLUSION

Although in truth steroids are no different from any other illegal drug. In reality, however, the purity of baseball -- the purity of any sport -- is a fiction. The game of baseball does not exist in an isolated environment or a time capsule that is immune to the rapidly changing society and technologies around it. There was a time, when no ballplayers lifted weights. However when Willie Mays found great success with his weight regimen other players

followed and the practice caught on. There was a time when the game was solely played by the Americans, Now the game is played and dominated by various nationalities, this ups the skill level of the players and the rigors of competition. There was a time when players made a comparative pittance in salaries rather than the hundreds of millions that some players command today. At this time one good season can earn a contract that will provide a player and his extended family for life. However as the technology, competition, and rewards have all increased, it does not come as a surprise that the players' strategies have reacted to these changing conditions. The use of drugs, will never be made legal, this assurance will definitely keep both the fans and the media happy. This however will keep the players in a bind, they are caught between the demand for performance and the restrictions placed upon their preparation. Lastly, and most unfortunately, it will keep the myth of the "pure" athlete and the "pure" sport alive, this however will be a lie that will continue to be told in order to preserve an imaginary field of dreams. Fans deserve to know and to be assured that baseball's greatest feats and records are achieved honestly, earned through hard work and talent. While youngsters who tend to impersonate their idols don't need to be tempted toward dangerous drugs because they know that heroes and idols are using them.

It has been a long time coming, but it is believed that baseball got it right this time. In the bottom of the ninth it came through with a big play to save the game.

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Baseball Needs A Real Drug Policy

By Jonathan Leshanski

Baseball hits a home run

By Jim Bunning | November 21, 2005