



LEFT STRANDED

How Major League Baseball
Leaves Minor Leaguers Behind



more *than*
baseball

MiLB Player Issue Report



more *than* baseball

Founded by players, for players.

More Than Baseball is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the future of our game by allowing every ballplayer to live a better life during and after their careers.



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WHO WE ARE

More Than Baseball is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to supporting minor league baseball players both on and off the field. We have provided nearly 3,000 players a network of support through our player programs which include:

- Professional Development
- Career Transitioning
- Education
- Mental Health
- Financial Guidance
- Player Grant Program
- Immigration Assistance

INTRODUCTION

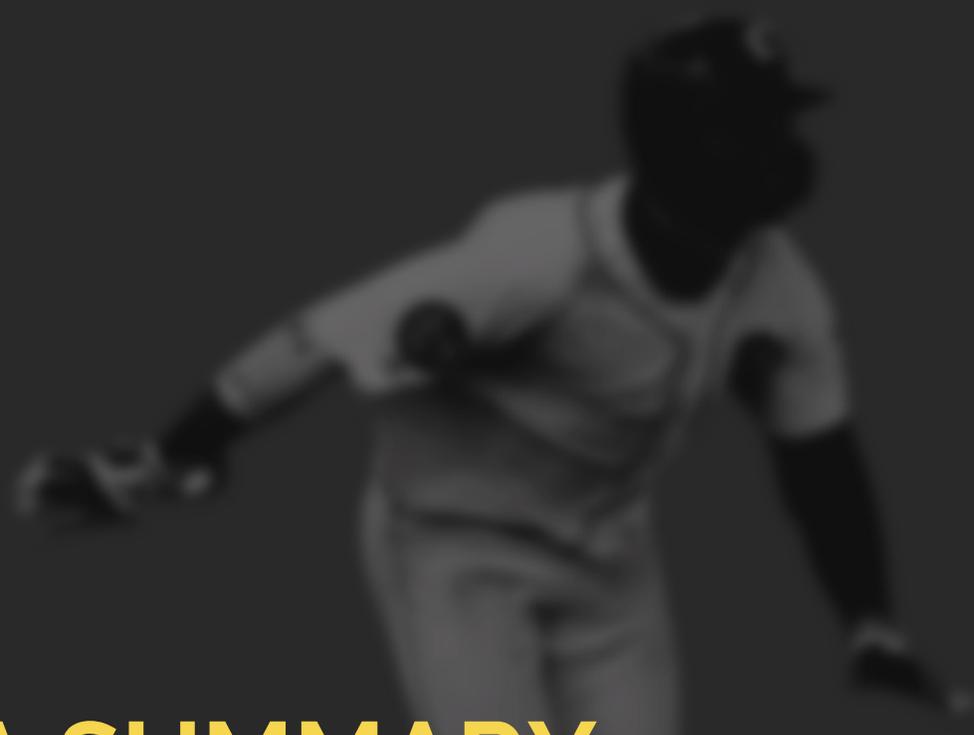
For the first time in the history of the sport, we are publishing the views of current minor league baseball players on the abysmal working conditions they face.

Between 2019-2022, **More Than Baseball** surveyed over 800 minor league players about their working conditions. This groundbreaking report presents findings showing that players are grossly under-paid, poorly-fed, under-supported, disrespected, and unfairly treated.

Some of our findings include:

- **83%** of players said salary was the change they'd most like to see in MiLB
- **Less than half** of players think their team had their best interests in mind
- **Over 50%** of players have second jobs in the offseason

As more attention is paid to the issues in the sport, this report is intended to set the agenda and define the goals of the burgeoning movement to improve working conditions in minor league baseball.



DATA SUMMARY

The data presented in this report was collected from a series of minor league player surveys conducted between 2019 and 2021. These surveys were developed in conjunction with Chris McLeod, Professor of Sports Management at the University of Florida, and Nola Agha, Professor of Sport Management at the University of San Francisco.

Findings from these surveys were used in the recent paper: Effects of Organizational Support on Minor League Baseball Players (McLeod et. al., 2022).

Other sources of data include player interviews and player responses to other More Than Baseball program forms.

WHERE TEAMS FAIL

Players developmental needs were met at the **lowest rate** in the following six categories:

- Wages/Salary
- In-Season Housing
- Communication between Front Office and Players
- Offseason Training
- Nutritious Food
- Equipment

72%

of minor leaguers said their developmental **needs were not met** by the current wages/salary.

55%

of minor leaguers felt their organization **did not have their best interests in mind.**

60%

said their organization **did not assist** them in finding opportunities to build prospects for life after their careers.

SALARY

83%

of minor leaguers said **salary** was the change they'd most like to see in minor league baseball

70%

of minor leaguers said **wages/salary** was most important area for their development as a baseball player

\$41,218

Is the mean amount players say would allow them not to work during the offseason.

~\$35,000

Is the annual salary needed to comply with federal living wage standards and ensure all players are above the poverty line.

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

\$35,000 minimum salary for all minor league players

THE CONTRACT

The MiLB Uniform Player Contract (UPC) is a **non-negotiable 7-year** contract. The contract denies players their image and likeness rights as well as a fair grievance process as all grievances are ruled upon by the Commissioner of Baseball.

"You are trapped for 7 years under your original minor league contract."

"7 years is an absurd length of an initial contract. I think players should have the opportunity to test free agency earlier."

"I would shorten the length of the initial contract in order to get to Free Agency earlier."

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Tiered 3-, 4-, and 5-year contracts based on age at signing
- Player image and likeness rights
- Independent arbitration

HOUSING

The 2022 Minor League Housing Policy mandates that all MLB teams provide players with housing. The policy sets a minimum standard of:

Two (2) players per bedroom

No requirement for a kitchen

Hotel rooms if no other housing is available

44% of minor league players would prefer to receive a stipend than have their team find housing.

45% of all players surveyed said they had issues with the policy's treatment of players with families.

“Players with wives/kids shouldn’t be left out of housing”

“Treat us like humans. Give us a stipend so we can live with our wives and families. Sharing [rooms] is unrealistic.”

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Ensure all players have their own room
- Offer stipends for players choosing not to live in team housing
- Provide players with families adequate housing to live with their spouses and children

OFF-SEASON SUPPORT

\$0

the total salary players make during the offseason where they train an average of 15 hours per week. **Lack of off-season support is the 3rd most significant issue** in minor league baseball according to players.

\$287

the average amount spent monthly on training expenses during the off-season.

Over Half

of all minor league players work in the off-season.

The most common jobs are:

1. Baseball coaching
2. Delivery driver
3. Construction/manual labor

POTENTIAL SOLUTION

- Reimburse all off-season training costs or provide facility access free of charge to all players

POST-CAREER SUPPORT

Only **10%** of minor league players will ever make it to the MLB. One player discussed the challenges players face after their careers:

"[I wish] that they would allow us to have an education alongside the [baseball] practice since many of us left school to achieve a dream and then that doesn't work out and we're left without the tools to face a working life or to continue our studies. We are left with a very low level of education because everything is baseball as a future and we're stuck without a future with no idea where to start."*

*Translated from Spanish

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Free job-training classes
- College scholarship fund extended to ALL player and establish career transitioning fund
- Contract with organizations to provide job coaching and educational counseling support

OTHER MATERIAL ISSUES

Equipment

Players are required to provide their own equipment including bats, gloves, cleats, batting gloves, and more.

Communication

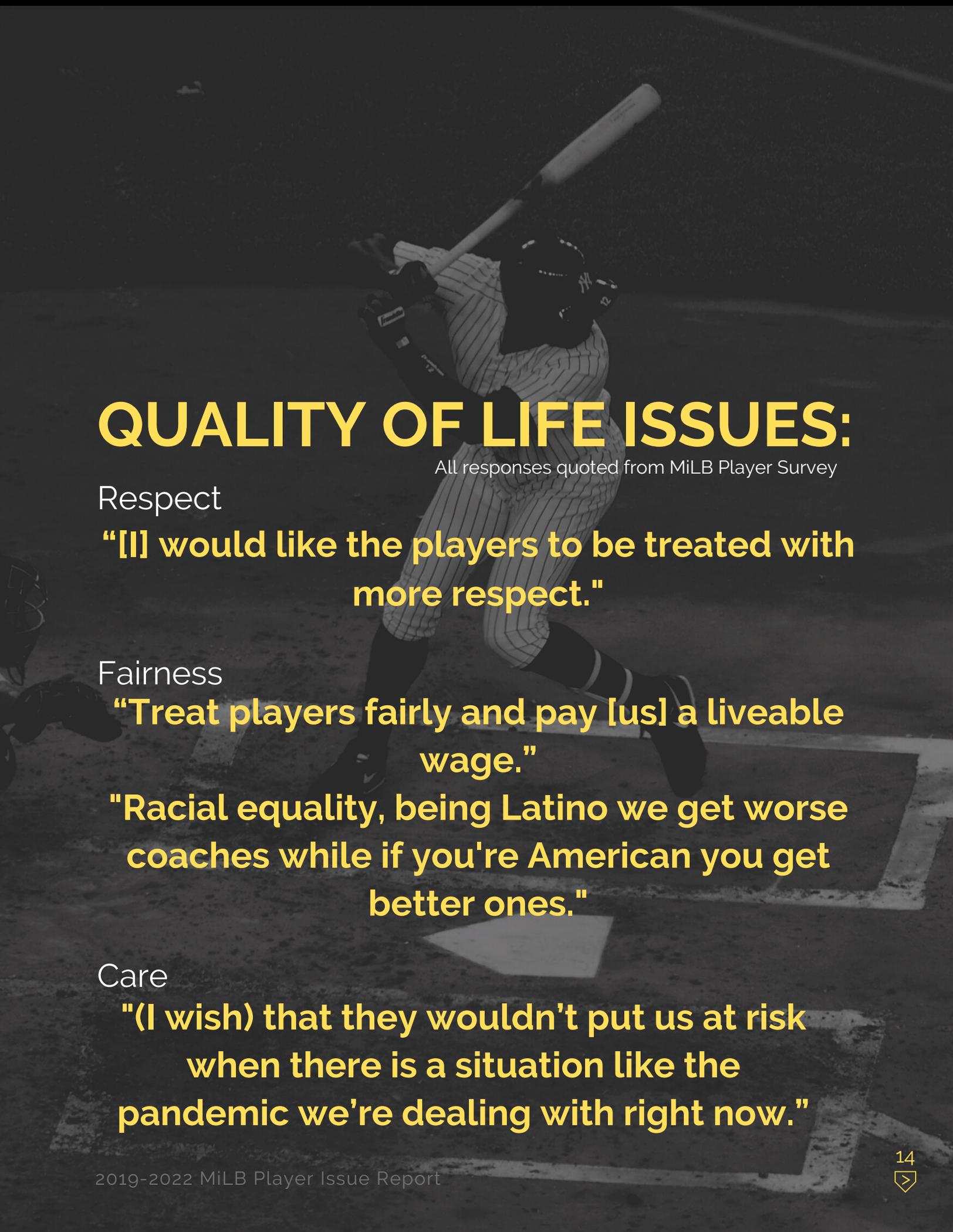
Players feel their teams do not communicate effectively, with less than half of players reporting their developmental needs met by current communication between front office and players.

"I found out I was put on the Injured Reserve via social media."

"Lack of communication from the org and between coaches and staff."

Nutrition

The **4th-most** significant issue to players in MiLB. Players said they couldn't afford healthy food and the quality of food provided by teams was subpar.



QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES:

All responses quoted from MiLB Player Survey

Respect

"[I] would like the players to be treated with more respect."

Fairness

"Treat players fairly and pay [us] a liveable wage."

"Racial equality, being Latino we get worse coaches while if you're American you get better ones."

Care

"(I wish) that they wouldn't put us at risk when there is a situation like the pandemic we're dealing with right now."

SOLUTIONS SUMMARY

Salary

Immediately raise the minor league minimum salary to **\$35,000 a year**, putting players in line with national living wage standards.

Contract

Minor League Universal Player Contract length tiered based on age when signed.

- 18 or younger: **Five-year contract**
- 18-21: **Four-year contract**
- 21 or older: **Three-year contract**

Full commercial authorization and an **independent arbitration process**.

Offseason

Reimburse **all offseason training expenses** incurred by players.

Housing

Maximum **one player** per bedroom, offering a **housing stipend** alternative to team-provided housing, and supporting players with families.

Post-Career Support

Extend **college scholarship** program to all players, **cover costs** for career transitioning and job training.



CONCLUSION

For years, minor league players have toiled in silence. This report is the first time players voices are being widely shared on the issues they face on a day-to-day basis.

As players continue to speak out and the sport begins to listen, the issues identified in this report offer clear priorities for the future of the minor leagues.

The time has come for change.

An aerial, high-angle photograph of a baseball stadium during a game. The stadium is packed with spectators, and the field is visible with its characteristic diamond shape and bases. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows cast across the field. The text is overlaid in a bright yellow color, making it stand out against the dark background of the stadium.

**“Treat us like human beings,
not just assets to frugal owners.”**

