



# DRSEA INFORMER

Volume IV, Issue 2: A Publication For Your Reading Enjoyment

***MLB Demuestra Su Clase (MLB Shows Class)*** – Major League Baseball has taken important steps towards providing education for prospects in baseball academies in the Dominican Republic.

The initiative was actually formulated and approved last fall and parts of the plan are expected to be put into effect soon, according to Sandy Alderson, the chief architect of the reform movement in the Dominican Republic, initially launched to address problems in Dominican baseball including age and identify fraud, steroids usage and money skimming. Alderson, now general manager of the New York Mets, said of the program, which will be mandatory for each team, “I think it provides an important starting point for improving educational opportunities for prospects, players and former players in the DR.”



*Classrooms will be standard equipment*

Back in 2000, when I led a delegation to the Dominican Republic at the behest of Major League Baseball to take a look at academy conditions, I concluded in a report to MLB that education needed to be fundamental, so I applaud baseball for taking steps now to introduce mandatory education into its academies. And, while I am not privy to how the plan will be implemented and in what form, I am hopeful it will be broad in scope and include many of the following aspects:

- Communication Skills: Many of the young players in the academies not only don't speak English, they also have poor Spanish language skills. I think a goal needs to be to improve the language competency of those athletes who lack adequate proficiency and to improve interpersonal communications skills. And while developing English language skills is desirable, I think it needs to be "Baseball English" that goes beyond language of the diamond, but also language they can use in everyday life – like how to order in a restaurant, purchase clothes or groceries, ask directions, and the like.
- Critical Thinking: These are young teenagers who suddenly are in positions of tremendous responsibility, often with the hopes and dreams of their families resting on their shoulders. They need to develop skills in conceptualizing, analyzing, evaluating and applying information that they are exposed to, to make them better able to handle a multitude of decisions that will be coming their way as they mature. People who think critically tend to use their intellectual tools to approach life decisions rationally and reasonably. Also, given that baseball is such a cognitive sport, it will improve their chances of success in the game.
- Financial Planning: In a very short period, these young athletes often find themselves with lucrative signing bonuses and professional contracts, totally unprepared to manage their new riches. Lack of guidance, misuse of funds, and poor investment decisions have led many players literally to the poorhouse. They need to learn money management, savings and investment options.
- Computer Skills: If you don't know your way on the information highway you are going to find yourself on an off ramp to nowhere. Computer skills are essential today. Computers can also supplement other factors in any education initiative since many language and other helpful programs are available by computer. Internet familiarity is also important.
- Life Skills: Many young athletes are quickly introduced to the fast-paced lifestyle of professional sports without the proper life skills to deal with the pace and pressures. They may also be unfamiliar with the rules of social comportment. They need to learn to cope with their new standard of living and how to avoid potential pitfalls. They need to learn survival skills such as time management, anger management, health and nutrition, the evils of drugs, alcohol and gambling, anti-exploitation, and maybe even things like basic cooking, and how to do laundry.
- Options After Baseball: The vast majority of prospects in Dominican academies will never play in the major leagues. And even those who do will inevitably be faced with a time when they must hang up their cleats. Players need to learn about options after baseball, both in the sports industry and outside. They also need to be taught about understanding the Major League system, about contracts, legal terms and obligations. They need to learn long-term financial planning, budgeting and personal organization.

The majority of these suggestions were included in the report I made to Major League Baseball more than 10 years ago. Now, an educational initiative is finally on its way.

**En Español**

***MLB Demuestra Su Clase*** – Las Ligas Mayores de Béisbol han tomado medidas para proporcionar estudios a los jugadores prospectos en las academias peloteras de la República Dominicana.

La iniciativa se formuló y se aprobó el otoño pasado. Según Sandy Alderson, el arquitecto principal del movimiento de reforma en la isla, se le espera entrar en vigor pronto de acuerdo con el plan original. La reforma fue lanzada con el fin de hacer frente a los problemas del béisbol dominicano, incluso el fraude de edad y de identidad, la utilización de los esteroides y el desfalco monetario. Alderson, ahora el director general de los *Mets* de Nueva York, comentó sobre el programa de educación que se le exigirá a cada equipo, “Yo pienso que el programa provee un punto de partida importante para mejorar las oportunidades educativas tanto para los prospectos como para los jugadores anteriores y actuales en la República.”



*Salón de clases será equipo estándar*

Cuando encabezé una delegación a la República Dominicana en el 2000 a petición de las Ligas Mayores para examinar las condiciones en las academias, señalé en mi informe destinado a MLB que hacía falta que los estudios fueran algo fundamental, y por ello apoyé las medidas que había realizado en la implementación de la educación obligatoria en sus academias. Y mientras que no se me permite saber cómo y en qué forma se implemente tengo la esperanza de que sea suficientemente amplio en su alcance para que se incluyan muchas de las siguientes cuestiones:

- **Destrezas comunicativas:** Muchos jóvenes que asisten a las academias no hablan inglés; además, muchos tienen pobres habilidades lingüísticas en español. Por estas razones, creo que una meta será mejorarlas en aquellos atletas que carecen de una competencia adecuada y mejorar sus capacidades comunicativas interpersonales. Y mientras que se desea el desarrollo de las habilidades lingüísticas en inglés, creo que ha de ser un “inglés pelotero” que va más allá del lenguaje que se halla en el diamante, es decir, lenguaje que se utiliza en la vida diaria, por ejemplo, cómo pedir en un restaurante, comprar ropa, pedir direcciones, etc.
- **Pensamiento crítico:** Éstos son adolescentes que se encuentran de repente con responsabilidades tremendas, a menudo con las esperanzas y los sueños de sus familias sobre sus hombros. Por tanto necesitan desarrollar habilidades para que conceptualicen, analicen, evalúen, apliquen datos a los que están expuestos, así para mejor manejar una multitud de decisiones que se les vendrá a medida que maduren. Los que se involucran

en el pensamiento crítico suelen utilizar sus herramientas intelectuales para enfrentar las decisiones diarias racional y razonablemente. Dada la naturaleza cognitiva del deporte, también les servirá a tener éxito dentro del juego mismo.

- Planificación financiera: Dentro de un plazo breve, estos jóvenes se encuentran con bonos lucrativos después de firmar y contratos profesionales, pero a la vez no están preparados en lo menor para manejar estas riquezas. A muchos jugadores se les ha llevado a la “casa de caridad” debido a la falta de consejo, la malversación de fondos, y las malas decisiones tomadas referente a la inversión de sus ganancias. Ellos tienen que aprender qué opciones existen en cuanto a ahorros e inversiones, y en qué consiste la gestión de dinero.
- Destrezas informáticas: Si uno no sabe maniobrar la carretera informática del Internet, se va a aterrizar en la vía de salida que no llega a ninguna parte. Las destrezas informáticas son esenciales en la actualidad. Las computadoras son capaces de apoyar otros factores en cualquier iniciativa educativa dado que los varios programas lingüísticos ya son disponibles en ellas. La familiaridad con el Internet también es importante.
- Destrezas vitales para la sobrevivencia: Muchos atletas jóvenes no son dotados con las destrezas vitales adecuadas para poder con el ritmo apresurado y el estrés que el estilo de vida acelerado del deporte profesional les presenta. Puede que tampoco conozcan las reglas del comportamiento social. Así que tendrán que enfrentarse con su nuevo nivel de vida para evitar los escollos potenciales. Además de saber algo sobre la salud y la nutrición, y aun los quehaceres como cocinar y lavarse la ropa, habrán de adquirir destrezas de sobrevivencia. Por ejemplo, les serviría saber cómo manejar el enfado y conocer los males de las drogas, del alcohol, del apostar, y de la anti-explotación.
- Formación para las carreras fuera del campo: La gran mayoría de los prospectos en las academias dominicanas nunca llegarán a jugar en las Ligas Mayores. Incluso para los que sí llegan se les tocará el momento cuando tengan que colgarse los tacos. Los jugadores tienen que aprender de las opciones que haya cuando ya no puedan jugar, dentro de la industria deportiva y fuera. Hace falta que adquieran un entendimiento del sistema MLB, los contratos, los términos legales y sus responsabilidades correspondientes. Les queda también aprender de la planificación financiera a largo plazo, cómo presupuestar y la organización personal.

La mayoría de estas sugerencias las incluí en una propuesta educativa que puse a MLB hace más de diez años. En este momento, una iniciativa educativa por fin está en camino.

Translation by Arthur Calvano

***El Foro Tiene Mucho En Juego (Forum Has Much At Stake)*** - Major League Baseball and FUNGLODE (Fundación Global de Democracia y Desarrollo) are holding a symposium in the near future entitled "Goals and Challenges of MLB in the Dominican Republic," to include people they believe have a vested interest in baseball in the Dominican Republic. And I have been invited!

Issues to be discussed at the event include the long term economic sustainability of Major League Baseball, as well as in the country, falsification of age and identity, consumption and testing of performance enhancing substances, player education, and the role of *buscones*, the scouts who

deliver talent to teams. The issues will be presented by specialists in the fields and commented on by experts from the public, private, and baseball sectors.

The symposium coincides with the 10-year anniversary of the Major League Baseball office in the Dominican Republic and organizers say it will include “significant participation from the Dominican government, MLB, teams, and all important stakeholders related to the baseball industry in the DR.”

***Una Explosión Del Pasado (A Blast From My Past)*** – For the second year in a row, I was recently honored to attend the induction ceremonies at the Latino Baseball Hall of Fame in La Romana. It was also an opportunity to reunite with one of the inductees, Luis Tiant, who I worked with 20 years ago.

Tiant, from Cuba, was inducted along with Fernando Valenzuela, a native of Mexico, Nicaraguan pitcher Dennis Martinez, Panamanian catcher Manny Sanguillen, Puerto Rican designated hitter Edgar Martinez, Dominican outfielder Rico Carty and Venezuelan first baseman Andres Galarraga.

Special honors were also awarded to New York Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez to recognize his 600<sup>th</sup> career home run; the family of Yankees owner George Steinbrenner, who died last year, received the Tommy Lasorda Award given to non-Latinos who advance the cause of Latinos in baseball. And yes, Rodriguez was accompanied by his girlfriend, Cameron Diaz.



*Jennifer Steinbrenner, Cameron Diaz and Alex Rodriguez*

But it was Tiant who made the night special for me. Twenty years ago, we were colleagues at the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University. Luis was very involved in community activities in Boston, where he had pitched for the Red Sox, and it was great to work with him because of the respect he had earned. He also had a great sense of humor that kept everyone in a good mood.



*"El Tiant"*

When I reminded him that we had worked together, he said he remembered, but I have my doubts, it being so long ago, but it was still nice of him to say. And it was just great to see him again.

***Ex Ejecutivo De Béisbol Admite Aceptar Sobornos (Former Baseball Exec Admits Taking Kickbacks)*** - One-time high-ranking Chicago White Sox executive David Wilder recently pleaded guilty to federal fraud charges that he solicited hundreds of thousands of dollars in kickbacks from poor Dominican prospects hoping to make it in the big leagues.

"I understand what I have done," Wilder said as he pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud in federal court in Chicago.



*David Wilder*

No sentencing date was immediately set by U.S. District Judge Charles Norgle. Wilder, who lives in California, was released on bond.

Baseball sources previously told the *Chicago Tribune* that the investigation began in 2008 after Wilder was stopped at an airport leaving the Dominican Republic with \$30,000 to \$40,000 in cash. Wilder told customs officials that the money was gambling winnings from local casinos, according to the sources.

Wilder, who had been a close friend and adviser to White Sox general manager Ken Williams, was indicted last November. He had been fired in 2008 as the White Sox's senior director of player personnel amid the federal probe.

The indictment against Wilder alleged that he and two former Sox scouts, Jorge Oquendo Rivera and Victor Mateo, fraudulently inflated the signing bonuses of Latin American prospects and then had the players kickback the extra money to them. All totaled, they pocketed about \$400,000 intended for 23 prospects, authorities said. Rivera and Mateo still face fraud charges.

They "enriched themselves by taking advantage of vulnerable ballplayers, who were anxious to pursue their dreams of stardom in the major leagues," Robert Grant, head of the Chicago FBI office, said in a statement at the time of the indictment. Federal authorities said the kickback scam was hidden from the White Sox and its "more senior officials."

To get the kickbacks, Wilder, Oquendo and Mateo inflated the amount of money needed to sign the prospects, causing the White Sox to pay signing bonuses and buy the rights to players from other teams at ballooned prices, the indictment charged.

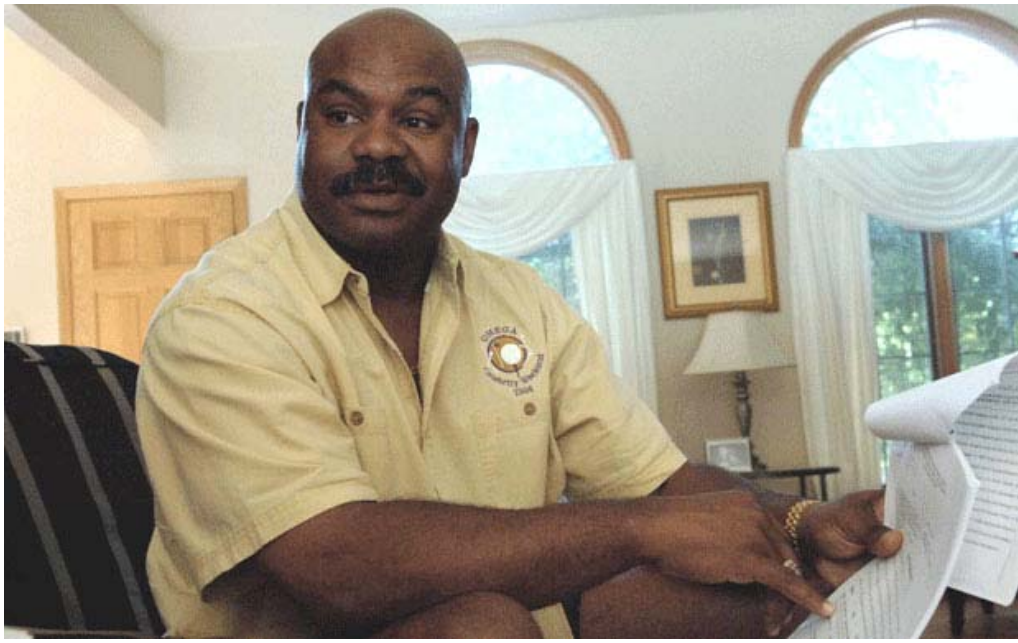
The FBI has been investigating a number of major league clubs, including the New York Yankees, the Boston Red Sox and the Washington Nationals in addition to the White Sox.

***La Vida Es Corta (Life Is Too Short)*** – I was floored when I heard that Dave Duerson was dead – and had taken his own life with a gunshot to the chest. The former Chicago Bear was someone I knew, admired and respected as both a colleague and fraternity brother, a proud member of Omega Psi Phi.

Dave and I worked together 10 years ago on diversity issues in sports. We both pushed for his alma mater, Notre Dame, to hire Tyrone Willingham as head football coach and the first black head coach in the school's history. When Willingham was fired in 2004, Duerson quit his post as a Notre Dame trustee, telling me he was disgusted with how the university dealt with the coach, the only football coach Notre Dame fired before his contract expired.

Duerson, a key player on the 1985 Super Bowl champion Chicago Bears, was only 50 when he died. He was selected by the Bears out of Notre Dame in the third round of the 1983 draft. He became a starter in 1985 and played in the first of four consecutive Pro Bowls that year. In 1987, he was named the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year. He also was the one of the Bears' NFLPA representatives, and was a leader during the 1987 strike.





*Dave Duerson*

The Bears cut Duerson after the 1989 season. He signed with the Giants and won a Super Bowl in his only season with the team. He finished out his career playing three seasons for the Phoenix Cardinals.

After growing up in Muncie, IN, he was a four-year starter at Notre Dame and a two-time All American. In 1982, he was a Fighting Irish captain. He was named first-team All-America pick as a senior by the Football Writers Association of America, Football News and College & Pro Football Newsweekly. As a junior in '81 he earned third-team All-America honors from Football News.

After his career ended, he became owner of Brooks Sausage Company, which later changed its name to Fair Oaks Farms. The company supplied sausage to Burger King and other fast food chains. Under Duerson, Fair Oaks grew in annual sales from \$24 million to \$63.5 million.

He sold his share of the company in 2002, and started Duerson Foods. That company was forced into receivership in 2006, and most of its assets were auctioned off. But he recently stood to receive millions as a result of a federal lawsuit in which he prevailed.

I do not know what demons were haunting Duerson, but his last request to his family was to have his brain studied after his death, presumably because he felt he might have chronic traumatic encephalopathy, a degenerative brain disorder that has been found posthumously in about 20 retired NFL players. In retirement, Duerson often was at odds with the NFL and its players association on disability benefits for former players.

I have always believed that suicide is a selfish act because the victims never take into account how much pain they leave behind. My sister killed herself more than 30 years ago. I had never seen my father cry before; my mother was never the same. I still have occasional troublesome dreams about my sister, and often think of what a waste.



Researchers at the Boston University School of Medicine now hope to determine whether Duerson was exposed to brain damage on the field. Hopefully his sad death will be able to help others.

***Corazón Abierto (Open Heart)*** – In one of the most selfless acts I have ever heard, the coach of the Wake Forest University baseball team donated a kidney to one of his players. Tom Walter, the coach, and Kevin Jordan, a freshman outfielder, are recovering nicely, with Jordan hoping to resume playing for Walter in a year.

Jordan took ill last year and his kidneys started to fail, dropping to an 8 percent functioning. No members of his family were compatible as donors, but Walter was a match. He considered the decision a no-brainer, explaining, "I would do anything to help any one of my players or any of my family members - anything in my power to help them have a better quality of life is something that I want to do.



*Tom Walter*



*Kevin Jordan*

"Maybe it's something as little as helping mentor them in their academic pursuits, or helping them choose a major, or something of a greater magnitude like this. My No. 1 priorities in life are my family and my team and I'll do anything to help any one of those people."

*There is no chance, no destiny, no fate, than can circumvent or hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul. - Ella Wheeler Wilcox*

*Charles S. Farrell*

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