29% of MLB Players are Foreign-Born

Opening Day rosters for the 30 Major League Baseball Clubs, which consist of 25-man rosters and disabled lists, included 242 players born outside the 50 United States. These players represent 15 foreign countries, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

In total, 29.2 percent of the 829 players (750 active and 79 disabled) on rosters as of April 4, 2005 were born outside the 50 United States, compared to 23.6 percent in 2000.

The Dominican Republic leads all countries with 91 players, followed by Venezuela (46) and Puerto Rico (34). The Washington Nationals lead all Major League Baseball teams with 16 foreign-born players, hailing from six different countries: Cuba, Dominican Republic, Japan, Mexico, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. The Baltimore Orioles, Los Angeles Dodgers and New York Mets share the second highest total with 13. The Orioles roster includes players from Aruba, Canada, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Panama, Puerto Rico and Venezuela.

Clockwise from upper left: Albert Pujols (Dominican Republic); Justin Morneau (Canada); Mariano Rivera (Panama); Kazuhiro Matsui (Japan).
Venezuela
Gatorade is the Official Sports Drink of MLB in Venezuela

With a new two-year agreement signed, Gatorade is now the official sports drink of MLB in Venezuela. Gatorade will feature official MLB and team logos on their bottles and packages throughout the 2005 season and will be active in grassroots initiatives throughout Venezuela. Gatorade joins current and long-time MLB sponsors Polar, Maltin Polar and Pepsi in Venezuela.

Dream Big! in Japan with MLB

This season, Major League Baseball will launch its new advertising campaign ‘Dream Big!’ in Japan. Designed to appeal to sports fans and non-sports fans alike, the Dream Big! tagline will be incorporated within broadcast, sponsor, special event, retail advertising and marketing campaigns. The campaign was created to bring the Major League Baseball brand to new audiences, while strengthening ties to current fans. The tagline “Dream Big!” represents the aspiration to be the best and recognizes the importance of striving for excellence in both life and sport.

The lead agency for the campaign is Dentsu. Cosmo Communications is providing support with retail and licensed consumer product applications. The launch plan includes roll-outs for both sports and casual/lifestyle-based outlets, including print and in-store advertising. Television, outdoor advertising and additional print will support the 2005 MLB broadcast schedule on network partners NHK, Fuji, TBS and SkyPerfect.

“Our goal is to create more MLB fans in Japan,” said Shawn Lawson Cummings, VP Licensing and Sponsorship, MLB International. “By attracting attention to our sport, we expand recognition of our teams and players. The more familiar people are with MLB, the more likely they are to be a fan. Whether you live in New York or Tokyo, it’s our job to ensure that we communicate this message.”

MLB and Partners Open Season with Watch Parties in Latin America

The excitement of Opening Day 2005 was felt throughout Latin America. MLB worked in conjunction with partners in five countries to host official MLB Watch Parties for the first game of the season between the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox.

In Monterrey, Mexico, MLB teamed up with Majestic Athletic for an Opening Day celebration at the exclusive shopping center, Galerias Monterrey. An open Watch Party was held allowing baseball fans and shoppers to experience the action on big screen TVs. Throughout the day fans had the opportunity to practice their swing, calculate their pitching speed, and take pictures with Wally, the Boston Red Sox mascot. Batting contests were held with winners receiving Majestic Athletic Authentic jerseys and PlayStation 2s.

A retail promotion was held in conjunction with two major retailers for MLB in Mexico – Liverpool and Deportes Martí. Both have emerged as valuable one-stop shopping outlets for replica Majestic Athletic MLB apparel. Both Liverpool and Martí helped drive fan turnout through advertisements on the radio, TV, newspapers and in-store circulars.

In Venezuela, new television partner Meridiano TV hosted lucky fans at Crystal Palace restaurant in downtown Caracas. In the Dominican Republic, TV partner CDN treated over 200 fans to dinner at Outback Steakhouse in Santo Domingo as they watched the game on 15 big screen TVs. Watch Parties were also hosted by TV Max in Panama and UTS in Curacao.

All-Star Fan Balloting Program in Record Number of Countries in 2005

Baseball fans around the world will once again be able to vote for their favorite players and help decide who will start the 76th MLB All-Star Game in Detroit on July 12, 2005. Starting this May, over 6.5 million ballots will be distributed internationally. Countries with balloting include Canada, Curacao, Dominican Republic, Japan, Panama, Puerto Rico and Venezuela. Curacao and Panama will run balloting programs for the first time ever in 2005. Fans in both countries will be able to cast their votes and have a chance to win a trip to this year’s Midsummer Classic at Comerica Park.

In Latin America, the 2005 All-Star balloting sponsors include Presidente (Dominican Republic); Maltin Polar and Pepsi (Venezuela); UTS, Ennia and M&C Bank (Curacao); Grupo EGSA and TV Max (Panama); and DirecTV (Puerto Rico). In Canada, Rogers Digital Cable will sponsor this year’s in-stadium All-Star Balloting program for all Toronto Blue Jays games at Rogers Centre.

This year marks am/pm’s fifth consecutive year as title sponsor of offline All-Star Balloting in Japan. Japanese fans will have the chance to place votes at over 1,300 am/pm convenience stores nationwide. This is also the first year of Yomiuri Shimbun’s involvement as co-sponsor in Japan. Over 2 million ballots will be distributed through their newspaper circulation.

The Major League Baseball All-Star balloting is also available online in Spanish and Japanese at MLB.com. While the fan’s votes will determine the eight starting position players in each league, a separate ballot of managers, coaches, and players (the Player Ballot) will be conducted by Major League Baseball during the final week of balloting to fill out the rosters.
Japan

Five New Sponsors and Nine Renewals

Major League Baseball Japan has signed agreements with five new sponsors and renewed agreements with nine existing sponsors in 2005. All new sponsors for this season represent a new category for MLB in Japan and they include Eneos (service stations), NTT Communications (telecommunications), Starbucks (coffee retailer), Toshiba (electronics) and the Yomiuri Shimbun (newspapers). Renewing sponsors include Aeon (general merchandising retailer), am/pm (convenience stores), Japan Airlines (airline), Kagome (fruit and vegetable juices), Komatsu (heavy equipment), Mass Mutual (Life Insurance), Mejil Yasuda (Life Insurance), Nikko Cordial (Financial Services), and Sato Pharmaceutical (health drinks).

Eneos is Japan’s largest chain of service stations with more than 11,500 outlets nationwide. They will promote a variety of in-store services and identify themselves as an “energy solutions” company via their partnership with MLB. NTT plans to focus on corporate advertising, highlighting its relationship with MLB and Seattle Mariners outfielder Ichiro Suzuki (see right).

Starbucks and MLB will team with Ichiro to sell pre-paid cards. Toshiba will use its relationship with MLB and New York Yankees outfielder Hideki Matsui to promote its new High Definition TV and DVD recorder “Ardia” – under the tagline “For Your No. 1.”

With a daily circulation of 10 million, the Yomiuri Shimbun is the world’s largest newspaper. Its relationship with MLB and the MLB Players Association is longstanding. Yomiuri plans to use the rights received in its new sponsor agreement to increase subscription sales and will make heavy use of MLB and MLBPA premiums.

Starbucks Card Features Ichiro

In conjunction with Opening Day, the Starbucks Coffee Company, Major League Baseball, and the Seattle Mariners launched the first baseball-themed commemorative Starbucks Card featuring All-Star outfielder Ichiro Suzuki. The special card is offered for sale at Starbucks retail locations in Washington and Oregon states, and nationally throughout Japan. In Japan, ¥200 of every ¥1,000 card will be donated by Starbucks and MLB to children’s charities. In the US, $2 of every $10 card will be donated to the Starlight-Starbright Children’s Foundation.

The Ichiro Starbucks card commemorates his single-season hits record set last season. This is the first time Starbucks has featured a professional athlete on their cards. The limited edition cards will be offered for sale through September 30, and will be supported in-store with POP.

“The Ichiro Starbucks Card honors both a respected sports hero and the local community,” said Howard Schultz, Starbucks chairman. “We hope customers will have fun using their commemorative Ichiro Starbucks Card, while feeling good about giving back and supporting children’s charities.”

Starbucks Japan will run special events, in-store promotions and community volunteer programs to support the sale of the cards. Starbucks, a corporate partner of the Seattle Mariners, will sponsor a number of in-stadium activities at Safeco Field, as well as trips to the ballpark for Starlight-Starbright children. All-Star Game and World Series campaigns will also be launched with Starbucks in Japan later this season.

Sponsors Support Grassroots Initiatives

MLB has agreed on three sponsorship and co-promotional deals for its Play Ball! youth program in Germany. Burger King, Fox Kids and Yam! will launch a series of marketing initiatives to attract and retain young players and new fans.

Executed in partnership with the German Baseball Federation, Play Ball! is MLB’s multi-tiered youth development initiative. In 2005, Play Ball! will operate in more than 1,000 schools in 20 cities throughout the country.

Burger King, supporting the program for a fourth consecutive year, will educate its customers on MLB and Play Ball! via two million tray liners (see right) in 500 outlets nationwide, in-store publication King Magazine and their website at www.bk.com.

Fox Kids, renewing its promotional deal with Play Ball! for a second consecutive year, will produce a 30-second television commercial promoting the program on the kids network during June and July. Baseball will also be featured on the network’s website at www.foxkids.de throughout the summer.

Yam!, a popular German youth magazine, is a new sponsor of the program in 2005. Yam! is a weekly publication that reaches over 650,000 readers. Yam! will commit both editorial and advertising space to promote MLB and the Play Ball! program.

Panama

Continued growth for ‘MLB en Panama’

Major League Baseball will once again work in conjunction with Grupo Egsa, El Panama America and La Critica to publish and distribute ‘MLB en Panama’ – Major League Baseball’s official Spanish language publication. This will be the second consecutive year for the magazine in Panama. ‘MLB en Panama’ will be distributed on a monthly basis during the season, for a total of seven issues. The magazine will highlight the feats of local Panamanian heroes such as Mariano Rivera and Carlos Lee, while also providing monthly recaps of the latest MLB news and statistics.
Amada Printing and Plaisir Celebrate Japanese Stars

Two MLB licensees, Amada Printing and Plaisir, have separately collaborated with the Japan Post Office to produce commemorative stamps featuring Seattle Mariners star Ichiro Suzuki and New York Yankees slugger Hideki Matsui, respectively.

Amada Printing’s commemorative stamps celebrate Ichiro Suzuki’s amazing 2004 season – when the all-star outfielder established a new MLB single-season record with 262 hits. Photographs depicting the record-breaking 258th hit through the record-setting 262nd hit are printed on a special collector’s folder.

Plaisir has created a Matsui stamp collection, highlighting his inaugural year in Major League Baseball (2003). Along with the stamps, the collection features a listing of his statistics printed inside a special collector’s folder.

Both the Matsui and Ichiro stamp collections are priced at ¥3,150 and are available for purchase at nationwide post offices. Consumers can also order the collection at nationwide book stores, mail-order catalogs, specialty magazines, and convenience stores.

Nikki’s MLB Socks are a Hit with Fans

Nikki Co., Ltd., swimwear and sock licensee of Major League Baseball in Japan, presented their 2005 MLB sock collection at a recent tradeshow. The 2005 line of socks is available in Yankees, Mets, Mariners, Dodgers and Red Sox designs and come in adult and kids sizes. With 50,000 initial orders, Nikki sold out of its initial inventory on certain designs. The company is actively producing additional quantities to keep up with the demand. Nikki’s socks are primarily distributed at GMS and specialty stores across Japan.

Corinthian Features Tiny Superstars

Corinthian has launched their first series of MLB miniature figurines with an exciting 24-player star-studded lineup. Individual player figurines are available for purchase at ¥300 and a box containing 15 individual figurines are on sale for ¥1500 at nationwide convenience, specialty, sports, and stadium stores.

Corinthian has also produced a limited edition figurine of Ichiro Suzuki wearing his 2004 American League All-Star jersey. A second edition of the MLB miniature figurines will be coming soon for 2005. Corinthian has an established brand name and a loyal fan base within the toys and collectible figurine industry.

The Authentic Corner at F&F

In 2005, MLB apparel licensee F&F is featuring an “Authentic Corner” in select MLB Stores in Korea. The Authentic Corners feature caps and jerseys that match those worn on-field by Major League Baseball players. The caps are produced by New Era and the jerseys by Majestic Athletic. F&F hopes to open Authentic Corners in at least 20 existing MLB Stores this year. F&F also plans on opening new MLB Store locations that will be 30-50% larger in size in 2005.

Concept Sports Agrees with New Era and Majestic

Concept Sports International, a long-time apparel distribution partner of MLB in Australia and New Zealand, has started distribution of New Era and Majestic Athletic product in this territory. The distributor has an exclusive agreement with New Era in place, which runs through June 2006 for the distribution of New Era on-field caps and other fashion headwear. Concept Sports will also distribute an assortment of licensed MLB apparel produced by Majestic Athletic in 2005.
MLB Gets Stylish in Europe

As a top sports fashion brand in Europe, Major League Baseball continues to aggressively develop licensed product offerings in the region. MLB team-branded men's and women's sports underwear is due to launch in Europe in 2005. The collections are being developed by Oceania Ltd., a British company with strong ties to mid-level retailers, and European distribution partners.

Two bag licensees have also signed on in 2005. ABI, an established American bag manufacturer aims to target the European sports retail trade, while Urban Access, a Dutch-based bag manufacturer will produce bags for the luggage retail sector. Both companies bring unique and fashion-forward design features to the program.

Spring Promotions for U.K. Retailer JD Sports

JD Sports, currently the largest European customer for New Era 59fifty caps, is planning a bag giveaway this spring in 50 of its U.K. locations. An MLB drawstring bag will be handed out to the first 500 customers to purchase the new range of 59fifty headwear and the promotion will be supported in stores by dedicated POS materials. JD Sports stores will also carry a promotion on Sportax women’s tracksuits, giving away a New York Yankees branded fashion belt in select stores.
Japanese Advertisers Line Up For Virtual Signage

In Japan, MLB sold out virtual signage inventory for its telecast of Opening Day 2005, featuring the World Champion Boston Red Sox vs. the New York Yankees. Mastercard, Kagome (fruit and vegetable juices), Kirin (teas) and Komatsu (heavy equipment) all signed on to advertise during the broadcast. Their branding was electronically inserted behind the batter.

“The Red Sox-Yankees rivalry has extended across the Pacific, making the Opening Day matchup very attractive to this market,” said MLB Japan Managing Director Jim Small.

This marked the first time that MLB has employed virtual signage for a regular season game in Japan. MLB has sold virtual signage for broadcasts of the All-Star Game and World Series since the fall of 2003. Opening Day 2005 appeared live on NHK broadcast satellite in Japan at 9:00 A.M.

MLB Broadcasts Geared for Maximum Exposure in 2005

Major League Baseball is proud to announce that fans across the world will once again have the opportunity to enjoy their favorite sport on TV and radio in 2005, thanks to several new and renewed broadcast deals.

In Venezuela, broadcasters RCTV and Meridiano signed on for the 2005 season and long-time rightsholder Televen renewed its agreement for yet another year. MLB games are now available to Venezuelan fans seven days a week. Baseball fans in Panama will enjoy more game coverage on broadcast partner Televisora Nacional’s all-sports channel TV Max. In Quebec, Canadian diehards can follow MLB teams and players across the border during the regular season on French-language broadcaster RDS and its new all sports news and information service Le Reseau Info-Sports. In Australia, FOX Sports, a loyal partner to MLB since 1994, has re-signed for another three seasons of Major League Baseball action.

MLB will also continue its valuable partnership with pan-regional broadcasters ESPN International and FOX International, as well as partners in Asia, Europe and Latin America.

2005 TV, Radio Renewals and New Agreements

List does not include existing broadcast agreements.

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Key:
ASG = All-Star Game
DS = Division Series
LCS = League Championship Series
WS = World Series
**MLB Market Development**

**Latin America**

**MLB Unveils New Baseball Festival at La Serie del Caribe**

MLB relaunched its traveling baseball amusement park, the Baseball Festival, in Mazatlan, Mexico during La Serie del Caribe from February 1-6. The new Baseball Festival, which features an updated graphic look, offers visitors more opportunities to participate, with the addition of several new attraction elements. The new-look Baseball Festival was re-branded the “Festival del Béisbol” for use in Latin America.

Thanks to title sponsor Cerveza Pacifico Clara, the Pacifico Clara Festival del Béisbol provided local baseball fans with a genuine MLB experience that included more than 10 different attractions. All Festival participants had the opportunity to hit in batting cages, test their pitching speed and accuracy in the pitching tunnels, and run the bases. Each attraction lets participants challenge their friends and compare their scores to those of actual Major League players. The new Baseball Festival also provides fans with a newly designed mini-field, photo studio, and interactive zone including Sony PlayStation 2 consoles, and an 84-inch plasma TV.

The Baseball Festival received widespread coverage throughout Mexico and the Caribbean, as crews from TV Azteca, Televisa, Telemax and ESPN each included highlights from the Festival in their broadcasts. Overall, the Baseball Festival attracted an average of over 4,000 people daily and was a huge success for MLB sponsors Cerveza Pacifico, Majestic Athletic, New Era, Jugos del Valle and La Serie del Caribe itself.

For more information on sponsorship opportunities for future Baseball Festivals, contact Eric Conrad at +1-212-931-7988.

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**Italy**

**Pitch, Hit & Run Established in Italy**

MLB has expanded its commitment to youth baseball activities in Italy this year with the launch of Pitch, Hit & Run (PHR) – a schools-based initiative for children aged 8-12. The program’s goal is to establish baseball and softball in Italian schools by providing the necessary resources and support. PHR will be announced in Caserta as part of an overall presentation marking the beginning of the Series A Italian Baseball League.

MLB will also support the Festa della Scuola, an event which takes place at the end of the school year to celebrate school baseball and softball. MLB will provide uniforms, equipment and communication materials for the event. Festa della Scuola will take place in 20 cities and include 30 clubs, 40 schools, over 125 instructors and school officials, with an estimated 4,000 students. Developed in collaboration with the Office of Communications and Marketing of F.I.B.S, Festa della Scuola offers a useful opportunity for club representatives to offer specific baseball instruction to the teachers and parents in attendance.

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**China**

**MLB Road Show Tours Five Cities**

MLB International and the China Baseball League (CBL) took the MLB Road Show on a five-city tour throughout The People’s Republic of China from March 11 to April 10. The Road Show is an interactive fan experience that enables participants to learn more about baseball by taking swings in a batting cage, testing their throwing skills in a pitching tunnel and learning about the sport through an interactive media pavilion. Players and coaches from the CBL appeared at Road Show locations to provide instruction to baseball beginners.

More than 100,000 people witnessed the Road Show in the 30 days it was in China, with nearly 10,000 people participating in the activities. Sponsors for the MLB Road Show include Canon, Mizuno, Suntory, Ita Ham and Hitatchi.

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**Jason Bay**

Canadian-born outfielder Jason Bay, a native of Trail, British Columbia, is looking to build on his impressive first Major League season with the Pittsburgh Pirates. Bay hit .280 with 26 home runs and 82 RBI en route to becoming the first Canadian and first Pirate to be named Rookie of the Year in the National League (NL).

Growing up, Bay played both hockey and baseball, as is customary in his hometown, which has a rich tradition in both sports. By the time he was a pre-teen, Bay began to focus exclusively on baseball. “I gave up hockey very early, I look to baseball a lot easier,” said Bay of his decision to hang up his skates at age 12. “I had a lot more fun playing baseball and I was a little better at it.”

In 1999, his Little League team won the B.C. championship and went on to represent Canada at the Little League World Series (LLWS) in Williamsport, Pennsylvania. Bay’s team was 54-0 on the season, before losing to Taiwan 3-1 in the second round of the LLWS.

Bay continued to play ball in Trail through high school before receiving a scholarship to Northern Idaho Community College. He played there for two years, before transferring to Division I Gonzaga University, where he won the West Coast Conference batting title, hitting .388 as a senior.

The Montreal Expos selected Bay in the 22nd round of the 2000 draft. He played in the minor leagues with three different organizations before being acquired by Pittsburgh on August 26, 2003. Bay went on to lead all NL rookies in home runs and RBI, as well as extra-base hits (54), total bases (226), and slugging percentage (.550) in 2004.

**Chin-hui Tsao**

When ‘Baseball America’ ranks a player as an organization’s No. 1 prospect, it is natural that he will feel some pressure to succeed. When the same player is heralded as a national hero for becoming the first pitcher in his native country to reach Major League status, failure is not an option.

Although he began the season on the disabled list, Chin-hui Tsao of the Colorado Rockies will look to overcome the injuries that have plagued his young career and establish himself as a dominant force in the Rockies bullpen. A product of Taiwan, Tsao made history in 1999 when he became the first Taiwanese player to sign with Colorado. When he made his debut in America with the Atlantic League in 2000, Tsao showed scouts and teammates that he was worth the then-club record $2.2 million signing bonus that he had received.

Unfortunately for Tsao, and the Rockies, an injury to his throwing elbow required the right-handed pitcher to undergo surgery in 2001 and miss the majority of the season. After extensive rehabilitation, Tsao fought his way through the minors and made his Major League debut on July 25, 2003 — an event that was covered by more than 900 Asian television stations. Tsao finished the season at 3-3 with a 6.02 ERA and as the pride of baseball in his homeland.

Shoulder injuries prevented Tsao from having a breakout year in 2004, but in the past off-season he went through a rigorous strengthening program and made two appearances for Chinese Taipei in the Olympic Games in Athens. Tsao felt good entering spring training with the Rockies this year and pitched very well in relief during spring training games.

Primed to take on the closer role in the Colorado bullpen, Tsao was again bothered by shoulder pain just before Opening Day. An MRI showed no damage, but he was diagnosed with rotator cuff tendinitis and placed on the 15-day DL to begin the year.

Tsao remains confident that he will be healthy enough to be an effective closer this season. “I will be OK,” he said. “I have to do my exercises everyday. We will take care of it.” The Colorado Rockies, and the entire country of Taiwan, are hoping that he is right.