



DRSEA INFORMER

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Béisbol Continúa Asunto Global (Baseball Continues Global Affair) – Major League Baseball continues to reflect an international flavor as 27.7 percent of the 833 players on 2010 Opening Day rosters and disabled lists were born outside the United States.

The foreign-born players represent 14 countries and territories, with the Dominican Republic leading the way with a contribution of 86 players on the active rosters, and 83 on the DL or restrictive lists. Next on the foreign country list is Venezuela with 58 players. The rest of the list: Puerto Rico (21), Japan (14), Canada (13), Mexico (12), Cuba (seven), Panama (five), Australia (four), Taiwan (three), and Colombia, Curacao, Korea and Nicaragua (two each).



As a team, the New York Mets have the most foreign-born players with 18 from seven countries and territories; five other teams – the Chicago Cubs, the Colorado Rockies, the Anaheim Angels, the Los Angeles Dodgers and the Texas Rangers – have 10 foreign-born players each.

The number of foreign-born players continues to reflect the globalization of baseball, though the 2010 figures are down slightly from last year when 28 percent of the players at the start of the season were born outside the United States. The all-time record for foreign-born players was 29.2 percent in 2005.

In addition to the majors, 48 percent of players in the minors – 3,370 of 7,026 – were born outside the U.S., virtually assuring that foreign countries will continue to be well represented in Major League Baseball for years to come.

In related news, Major League Baseball has revamped its operations, expanding its Scouting Bureau to cover Latin America. The announcement was made by Sandy Alderson, the new head honcho in the Dominican Republic, who will oversee baseball reform in the country.

Essentially, the Scouting Bureau is a centralized group of player evaluators, separate from any team, that provides scouting reports on players entering Major League Baseball's annual draft. That bureau will now also provide reports on players throughout Latin America, players who are not currently subject to the draft, leading some to speculate that enhancing the responsibilities of the Scouting Bureau is a prelude to an international draft.

While Alderson has downplayed that interpretation as premature, scouting reports on Latin American players could assist Major League Baseball in addressing some of the fraud that has undermined baseball in the Dominican Republic. As many as 10 team officials in recent months have been accused of inflating scouting reports on Dominican players to increase signing bonuses, then pocketing a portion for themselves; several have been fired. The scouting reports could also provide another layer of security for Major League Baseball in its battle against age and identity fraud among young Dominican players.

Para Todo Hay Una Temporada (To Everything There Is A Season) – When President Barack Obama tossed out the ceremonial first pitch to open the 2010 baseball season, it marked the centennial of a presidential tradition started by President William Howard Taft.

I couldn't help but reflect that when Taft started the tradition, the national pastime had an unwritten rule preventing African Americans from playing in the majors. Poet Walt Whitman was shortsighted when he said "I see great things in baseball. It's our game – the American game," because not all Americans were included.

A hundred years later the world is included in the game – and the man tossing out the first pitch is African American. Now I see great things in baseball; as my Dominican friends would say, "*Es nuestro juego también.*"



Sigo Escribiendo (Write On) – I recently reconnected with Carol Winkel, my favorite teacher in college; she is also the best teacher I ever had.

I think about Mrs. Winkel frequently, particularly when I am writing the **DRSEA INFORMER**. Much of the feedback on the **INFORMER** compliments me on how well people think it is written, and I have to give credit for that to Mrs. Winkel.

She was considered a tough but fair teacher at Lincoln University. Using the vernacular of the day, if you were looking for an easy course, students would advise you to steer clear of Mrs. Winkel, explaining, "You don't want to mess with her; she drives," meaning she would push you to produce your best. She would often give pop quizzes on reading assignments; if you read the assignment, the quiz was easy, if not, you were sunk.



Carol Winkel

I took three courses from Mrs. Winkel and finally, in my senior year, I got an “A”. And an “A” from Mrs. Winkel truly meant something; fellow English majors applauded my success, knowing that it was obtained the old fashioned way – I earned it.

Mrs. Winkel is the person who taught me to really think about writing. Not think about writing, *THINK* about writing. About how important it is to spell correctly, to properly construct sentences and paragraphs, not just to make sure you are understood, but to make what you write more credible. Nothing spoils good writing quicker than poor spelling and grammar; they undermine the integrity of what you are trying to write.

She also taught me about the creative side of writing, to start not just with what you want to write, but also with what you hope the reader will gain. If you can’t achieve that clarity, then all you are doing is putting a bunch of words on paper.

The decision to write and publish the **DRSEA INFORMER** was based on a number of things. Of course I wanted a vehicle to promote the Dominican Republic Sports & Education Academy, to let people know about the DRSEA as it develops, as it becomes a reality. I also wanted it to be educational, a source of information about baseball in the Dominican Republic, about sports in society, about my amazing adventure in this country.

But I also want the reader to get to know me, to gain some understanding of what drives me, what pushes me, the influences and motivations, the people, places and things that have happened to me in this journey called life that have led me to today. I leave that up to you to decide if that is the case.

Mrs. Winkel was also a favorite of my father, who was chair of the English Department at Lincoln. He knew he not only had an exceptional teacher in Mrs. Winkel, but also a good person who was interested in making sure her students not only read *The Scarlet Letter*, but understood it, knew why it was an important piece of literature and could explain exactly why – in words that were clear and precise – and spelled right. And I have remembered those lessons.

Over the years, my dad would frequently comment when he thought I wrote something particularly noteworthy or memorable and tell me, “You have Mrs. Winkel to thank for that.”

Thank you, Mrs. Winkel.

Momentos Luminosos (Shining Moments) – I have always believed that the true beauty of sports lies in their unpredictability. From a journalistic perspective, sports provide pure, unscripted news, complete with a wide range of human emotions and pathos. Joy. Pain. Sorrow. The thrill of victory; the agony of defeat.

The Butler University basketball team provided one of those shining moments recently

when it defied the odds and the prognosticators to come within an eyelash of winning the NCAA men's basketball title, and proving that you can reach the sky if you are willing to try.



Tiger Woods' return to golf also proved to be more than a contest and while he didn't win the Masters, he played an amazing tournament given that he hadn't been in competition for five months, and in spite of all the controversy that swelled around him. And he proved the only thing he needed to prove; that he can still play golf.



And to see Phil Mickelson win the Masters despite all the turmoil in his life was uplifting and inspirational. The picture of him hugging his wife, a tear dripping down his face, was a moment in time, one of those magical portraits only sports can provide.



Sports transcends and touches all levels of society; here in the Dominican Republic baseball rules the hearts and minds of the populace, producing national heroes whose every move is documented. If you read a Dominican newspaper, you might get the idea that only Dominicans play the game.

But the reality is that Dominicans excel at the game and provide so much pride and inspiration to youth in this country. Unfortunately, many of them aspire to little else and with a statistical inevitability that they will not have a career in baseball, they need to put sports in perspective.

Life goes on for the basketball team at Butler; I have no doubt that those young men will be successful beyond the basketball court. And I have to believe that Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson both understand – now more than ever – that there are more important things in life than golf.

DRSEA En Las Noticias (DRSEA In The News) – Increasing the visibility and credibility of the mission of the Dominican Republic Sports & Education Academy are primary goals in our quest to build the DRSEA. Recently we received some media exposure we think you will find interesting.

One Island, Two Worlds

http://www.boston.com/sports/baseball/articles/2010/03/14/one_island_two_worlds/

La Buena Mentira: The Good Lie

http://wamu.org/news/specials/la_buena_mentira/

Where A Good Arm Is A Golden Ticket

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125580034>

Baseball Emissary to Review Troubled Dominican Pipeline

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/11/sports/baseball/11dominican.html?scp=4&sq=Dominican%20Republic&st=cse>

You can keep up to date with the latest DRSEA developments at <http://drsea.org/blog/>.

Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today – Malcolm X

Charles S. Farrell

DRSEA Contact Information in the Dominican Republic

Address: Calle 19 de Marzo, #103, Suite 305, Zona Colonial, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic

Phone: 829-505-2991

Website: www.drsea.org

Myspace: Myspace.com/drseaorg

Twitter: Twitter.com/drseaorg

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