

Are Suspensions in Minor League Baseball Finally Slowing PED Use?

Written by Maury Brown
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One of the more complex questions surrounding drug testing policies in sports is whether suspension numbers being up or down are good or bad. Fans often point to the increase in drug suspensions and say the sport is full of cheaters, while the leagues often say that it shows the testing has gotten better, and therefore, more players are being caught.

In Minor League Baseball, it's not nearly as sophisticated as in the Majors. While MLB players have lucrative contracts and therefore have increased opportunity to find a high-priced chemist that can provide designer PED cocktails designed to get around the tests, MiLB players aren't afforded the salaries that MLB players are and with it, players often suspended for steroids or drug of abuse.

Because of the clear differences between the two levels of baseball, when the number of suspensions in Minor League Baseball go up or down it's likely due to players taking tainted supplements, or those willfully looking to increase player performance artificially. The league has taken lengthy steps to inform players on the dangers involved in both, and provides a list of NFS Certified supplements that have—to date—never been found to be tainted with a performance-enhancing substance.

As of today (Thurs, May 23, 2013) there have been no positive tests in the Majors and [20 positive tests in the Minors](#) for a total of 1,050 games.

[At this point last season](#), there were two players that had been suspended as part of the MLB drug testing policy (Guillermo Mota of the Giants and Eliezer Alfonzo, although he had his 100 game suspension

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rescinded based on chain of custody that was in the last CBA). In the Minors, suspensions were more than twice as many by this date as we're seeing this year. As of May 18, there had been 42 drug suspensions in the Minors for a total of 2,100 games.

So, is the system working? Are the suspensions acting as a deterrent? There is nothing truly definitive to say as much, but the dramatic drop may point to a decline in PED use in the Minors. Whatever the reason—short of players figuring out how to beat the system—the numbers should be seen as good news to those that want to see less performance-enhancing substances being used in baseball.



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