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Major League Baseball Wagering-Part 1.

By FR Penn

Major League Baseball is somewhat of an enigma. Especially when attempting to use statistics to

predict a game's outcome. Even so, there is a lot of data and trends to consider before throwing one's hands up in utter frustration in baseball's defiance of probability. With patience and due diligence, a pattern may emerge. But then a gut feeling comes on and the urge to take the long shot is strong, especially when the pay out is big! The mountain of data, trends and statistics are enough to drive the sanest of us away from the bookmakers, relegating us to the sidelines. However, no one wants to live a life that boring. You can play the game—wager some cash—and make your life a whole lot more exciting.

First off, here are a few ideas to keep your sanity. These are my "top 10 baseball wagering tips for the hopelessly clueless," of which, when it comes to wagering, I am a charter member. If you consider yourself a knowledgeable bettor, these tips will still help you keep your perspective.

- 1) Don't bet any more than you can afford to lose.
- 2) Don't ever bet more to recoup a loss.
- 3) Ignore your gut feelings and/or hunches.
- 4) If a bet looks too good to be true, it probably is.
- 5) Once you've made your bet, remember that no amount of stress will change the outcome of a game.
- 6) Never risk more than 5% of your bankroll on any given game.
- 7) Don't bet long shots. They are long shots for a reason.
- 8) If you are on a losing streak, take a break from wagering.
- 9) Don't hold grudges over losses— your favorite team won't be much fun to watch if you do.
- 10) Target long–term goals instead of random or short–term gains.

If you follow these 10 tips then you will be head and shoulders above the average Joe who is placing bets. Of course, you must first understand what you are doing when you wager. Here are some betting basics.

A straight bet is merely betting to win or lose. Sometimes you may not be able to get such a wager

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without giving or taking points. This is known as the point spread. To win you must "beat the spread", or win by more than a particular team is favored by doing so. This is also known as a form of handicapping. Money lines are pretty simple; it is the amount you need to risk to win \$100. So if you see a number in a column marked ML, perhaps -110, you know you need to put up \$110 to win \$100 and get your \$110 back. So if you win, your total payout is \$210. The minus sign indicates that team is the favorite. A plus sign in front of the money line indicates the underdog. With over/unders, you are wagering on the total runs that will be scored in the game. You either bet on the number being under or over that total. Action Points refer to that fact that you are betting one team against another. With action points you ignore the starting pitchers, but if there is a change in one or both of the starters, the wager or the payout could be adjusted. Side bets are just what they sound like. You can put side bets on top of your bets. With head to head propositions or match bets you are wagering on one sports figure/team beating another sports figure/team. You can also Buy Points on a handicapped or point spread contest. Usually a straight buy of ½ point will cost you \$10 on an 11/10 (risk \$110 to win \$100) standard bet. A straight buy of 1 point would cost \$20. If you win, you'll get back what you wagered

plus \$100. Sports books generally make 10% vigorish, or juice on a typical head to head straight wager. They only make it if you lose your bet.

Sports books will provide information in a compact format. The listing includes the MLB teams and pitchers with the away or visiting team and pitcher listed first and then the home team and pitcher listed underneath. The MLB money line tells you which team is the favorite (- sign) and what you must wager to win a particular amount. The MLB run line is the run differential that the sports book predicts. To win your wager, you have to beat the run line spread. The amount you wager is determined by the money line odds, located right next to the run line spread. Primarily the starting pitchers determine the money line odds. If a run line handicap is +1.5, the bet can still be won if your team loses the game, but only if they lose by one run. If they lose by two runs, you lose your wager. Run lines are always based on the listed pitchers. If the starting pitchers are changed before the game begins, these numbers may also change. The over/under will be a number in the O/U column. If the number were 7, then you would win the wager if the total number of combined runs were 8 or more. A winning under wager would result if 6 runs or less were scored.

All of this may seem rudimentary, but it's the important foundation for MLB betting. Wagering can be as simple or as complicated as you make it. There are some more complex forms of wagering that are beyond the scope of this article. In Major League Baseball Wagering-Part II, we will discuss explanations and strategies of wagering on MLB futures, parlays, multiples, round robins and teasers. We will also discuss the advantages, bonuses, safety and security of choosing a good online sports book site for wagering on MLB.

This article was written by FR Penn for

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Minor League Baseball Is A Great Family Value

By Kadence Buchanan

More families are opting out of the great American pastime of attending major league baseball games than ever before. Some are staying home and watching the games on television, but growing numbers of families are flocking to minor league ballparks. Minor league baseball attendance has grown every year, reaching a record high 39 million during the 2005 season. Major league attendance has continued to decline in many markets.

Although many explanations have been offered by Major League Baseball including changing demographics and competition from other sports and entertainment venues, cost is an undeniable factor in lagging attendance. The average cost for a family of four to attend a major league baseball game in 2005 topped \$170.00 for tickets, refreshments and souvenirs but not including parking. The cost for that same family to attend a minor league baseball game in 2005 was \$80.00, less than half the cost of attending a major league game.

For that price, minor league fans are treated to performances by up-and-coming young stars who may be tomorrow's Barry Bonds or Alex Rodriguez. Minor league baseball follows the same rules as major league, and most minor league teams are associated with a major league team. Because of this association, minor league fans may occasionally be treated to an appearance by a major league star rehabbing from an injury in the minor leagues. Additionally, in some parts of the country, minor league stadiums play host to major league teams during spring training. Thomas J. White stadium in Port St. Lucie, Florida is the home of the Single A St. Lucie Mets during the regular season, but in the spring it's the New York Mets training facility.

Fans often sit right along the baselines with nothing separating them from players but a railing. Players frequently sign autographs before and after the games. Because of the growing popularity of minor league baseball, teams have been able to build increasingly attractive stadiums with amenities that rival their major league counterparts. Roger Dean Stadium in Jupiter, Florida was built with the same architecture and amenities as larger stadiums like Baltimore's Camden Yards and Turner Field in Atlanta but offers fans an intimate experience that is not available at the larger parks.

For more casual fans, minor league teams offer entertainment like performances by local music artists, fireworks and special promotions like disco night or Christian night. Some parks, like Hammons Field in Springfield, Missouri, have children's play areas near the bullpens and on-field activities for children including running the bases, games and contests.

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