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Long-term Impact of MiLB Season Cancellation

The Appalachian League has now become the first league to lose its title as a professional Minor League Baseball league. It has been a part of MiLB for over 100 years and was an Advanced Rookie League, meaning it was for newly drafted players that were further along in their development than the other newly drafted players. It has been home to MLB Hall of Famers like Greg Maddux and Cal Ripken Jr. as well current stars like Vladimir Guerrero Jr. and Blake Snell. The league is now being transformed into a summer wood bat league for college players. Instead of bringing young prospects into this league, it will be rising college freshman and sophomores. This will leave the league still providing good opportunities for young players to get experience, but also means less players will be drafted by MLB teams in the future and those recently drafted may find themselves released from their contracts. The league will still be good competition that will likely draw some fans and will provide some work around the ballpark, but it will be taking chances away from young professional players, and will certainly draw less fans than the professional games.

The loss of the Appalachian League came just a few months after the cancellation of the entire 2020 MiLB season. This is the first time since Minor League Baseball was created in 1901 that the whole season was cancelled. MiLB is made up of 17 leagues and over 200 teams, and for the first time since its inception, not one of those teams played a game.

Lehigh Valley IronPigs fans are usually some of the most excited for the arrival of opening day. The Triple-A affiliate of the Philadelphia Phillies has a sizable fanbase that is

passionate about the team and that fills the stadium to capacity for almost every game. Opening day gives these fans the opportunity to put on their Alec Bohm or JD Hammer jersey, two Phillies prospects, and their favorite hat and head to the ballpark after a long winter without baseball. They get butterflies as they walk up to the gates at Coca Cola Park. Smelling the fresh cut grass, hotdogs, and popcorn fills them with joy. As they find their seat, they mingle with other fans as they pass and the ones around their seat. They talk about their excitement in the season being back, whether prospects like Bohm or Hammer will be called up this year, and if the IronPigs will make the playoffs this year. This is the best part for a baseball fan, every baseball fan loves talking about baseball with someone that is just passionate about it as they are. As game time approaches there is a buzz in the crowd as the fans wait anxiously for the first pitch of the new season.

For employees around the ballpark opening day is full of not only excitement, but new challenges and opportunities as well. With a mix of returning staff and new workers, opening day means some are getting back into the swing of things and others are learning how to do their job for the first time. While most workers have a shot to ease back into things others must perform right away. Concession workers have the chance to burn a hot dog, or drop a fresh bucket of popcorn, and have the ability to just make another one. For members of the grounds crew things are different, they need to have the field looking perfect and ready to be played on and don't have the opportunity to make mistakes. Broadcasters, such as radio broadcaster Pat McCarthy, as well as all others involved with the presentation of the game are in the same position, they need to be prepared and at their best from the jump, or fans both in the ballpark and watching or listening at home will be let down.

The players embody both the excitement of fans and feeling of responsibility and being challenged that employees feel. They have finally made it to the day where they get to compete again, but also need to go out there and perform well for not only the team, but for their own chance to be called up. Some players have been at this level for years, and are familiar with playing in front of this crowd and the pressures that come with it, for others it is their first game at this level and they feel extra pressure to play well in their first appearance for their new team. Both those that have been with the team for a while and the new call-ups arrive at the ballpark hours before game time, stretch, workout, get treatment from team trainers, take batting practice, and complete most of their other warmup activities prior to most fans even arriving. When players head out to the field just before game time for their final warmup the crowd has filled out, and their excitement and anticipation for the first pitch can be felt throughout the stadium. They have been preparing not just the entire day, but an entire offseason for this game.

The players take the field and the whole ballpark perks up, ready for the first game of the season to start. Upon the pop of the catcher's glove from the opening pitch things in the ballpark feel right. The players, back in action after a long offseason begin to settle in out on the field. Employees work all around the stadium to make sure the game and other ballpark operations go smoothly, pushing through all of the issues bound to pop up during the first game of the season. The fans are in pure bliss because this is the moment they had been waiting for, looking forward to this exact moment, baseball is finally back.

To the disappointment of IronPigs fans and fans across Minor League Baseball, this opening day scenario never happened due to the cancellation of the MiLB season at all levels. With no season occurring there has been a negative impact for people from all parts of Minor League Baseball. Almost all part-time employees and a number of full-time employees found

themselves without jobs. Players found themselves without the chance to work on their craft and lost the ability to make the climb up the minors to get themselves closer to finally achieving their dreams of reaching the majors. Fans lost their ability to go out and get some autographs from up and coming prospects or to catch a foul ball, or to just enjoy a nice summer night sitting outside watching some baseball.

Still there is one even bigger problem looming, the loss of teams. The way the MiLB system works is that either the MLB team can own its MiLB affiliates or the MLB team signs a Player Development Contract with the minor league team, which makes them the official affiliate of that team for the length of the contract, which can be either two or four years. After that contract is up the team can choose to sign another contract with that MiLB team or sign a different team to become the affiliate at that level, meaning affiliations among minor league teams can switch. This also means that teams can choose to just not sign a Player Development Contract with a team at a certain level of the minors, meaning that team loses all affiliation with Major League Baseball. MLB and MiLB had an agreement to keep all teams within MiLB affiliated with an MLB team through 2020, meaning that teams could lose affiliation with one team, but they would then sign a contract with another team, so no teams would be lost.

Major League Baseball has been looking to cut its ties with some MiLB teams for a few years now, mainly since a lot of them make very small profits or even lose money. The pandemic has given them the final push they needed to act as many of these teams that were struggling have been forced to file for bankruptcy or are on the brink of bankruptcy. The idea of MiLB teams losing their affiliation is one that has never come up much in the recent past due to the Professional Baseball Agreement between MLB and MiLB. This agreement basically guarantees

that Major League Baseball will provide the players for Minor League Baseball teams, which is what makes them affiliates.

This meant that for players there was never any concern of their team being lost. If the MiLB team they were playing for became affiliated with another MLB team, the players were just sent to the new affiliate of their MLB team. Although this left players switching cities and teams at the minor league level, they were still within the same MLB organization and still had their contracts. For example, when the Phillies switched their Triple-A affiliate from the Scranton-Wilkes Barre Red Barons to the Lehigh Valley IronPigs, all of the players just switched from the Red Barons onto the IronPigs roster. All of the players were still under contract with the Phillies and in the same organization the team name and location just changed.

This system allows major league teams to have a place to develop their players without having to pay for all of the facilities and allows the minor league teams to field a team that they do not need to pay. The Professional Baseball Agreement has been quietly renewed every few years since 1990, but this year things are different. The two sides have not come to an agreement on terms of a new contract, meaning that as of right now MLB teams are completely responsible for finding teams for all of the players in their organization. There isn't much doubt that the higher levels of MiLB will maintain affiliation with MLB teams, but levels below Single-A could be in jeopardy. With no contract guaranteeing affiliation there are currently about 40 teams in the minors that may lose their affiliation with a major league team within the next year.

If Major League Baseball decides to continue with the cutting of leagues and teams, which seems likely, that means that the impacts from the cancellation of this season will be felt for a long time. Many people will lose their jobs, players will be displaced, having no team to play for and the fans will lose their local team which may provide them with their only chance to

see professional baseball in person. This would be extremely detrimental to not only all of the people directly impacted, but for the game of baseball as a whole.

Impact on Players

The most obvious impact that the cancellation of the season has had is likely the disappointment of minor league players. Many of these players have worked their entire lives to make it to the point they are at and have a passion for baseball that had them looking forward to being around their teammates and finally being able to play. There is also all of the unpaid time that players put in during the offseason in order to stay in shape and keep on the top of their game for when the season comes back around. This year players put in all that work and there was no pay off for it, no chance to light it up, impress people, and possibly get called up to a higher level of the minors or maybe even the majors.

Through impressive performances players would have climbed the ranks of Minor League Baseball and earned themselves pay raises along with the promotion, working towards getting the biggest raise and promotion possible, a call up to the big-league club. Instead of the hope and opportunity of climbing up the ladder and earning a raise, many minor league players felt an impact similar to that of the employees of the teams, they lost all of or a significant portion of their income. Many people might think that this is a not a big deal since they are professional athletes and must make a lot of money, but that is not the case. The minimum for Class A levels and below is \$290 a week, Double-A is \$350, and Triple-A is \$502, and the players are only paid during the season. This is of course only the minimum, but most players

only make the minimum or very close to it. The average yearly salary in 2018 was \$6,000 for a Single-A player, \$9,350 for a Double-A player and \$15,000 for a Triple-A player.

In the first quarter of 2020, the median weekly earnings were \$957 per week and the median annual earnings were about \$50,000 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Minor League Baseball players are therefore bringing in far below the median in both weekly and annual earnings. This means that many minor leaguers work second or even third jobs or rely on support from friends and family to chase their dreams of becoming a big leaguer.

There is even currently a class action lawsuit with MiLB players from Arizona, Florida, and California alleging that they are being paid less than minimum wage during spring training. Former MLB player Anthony Recker explained spring training pay saying, “The way spring training works you didn’t get a paycheck, you got what they call per diem, you literally just got meal money. That’s all you got to come to spring training. Even when you’re in the big leagues you only get meal money, you just got a lot more in the big leagues.” According to Recker major league players would get about \$150 a day, while minor leaguers would get only \$20. He estimated that during both spring training and the regular season players were working eight to ten hours a day, putting the hourly pay for a minor leaguer during spring training between two and three dollars. This is far below minimum wage and Recker believes rulings will go in favor of the players. MLB has tried to appeal against the case, but the Supreme Court has denied its request and it will return to trial court. This lawsuit could be a big first step in raising awareness for how underpaid MiLB players are and could lead to an increase in wages.

Not only do minor league players make less than the median for workers in the U.S but they make significantly less than a major league player. In MLB, the minimum salary for a player is \$563,000. This means that if a player signs a contract in the big leagues and stays on the

roster for the whole season, that is the least they could make. If the player is sent down to the minors during the season this number changes, but even if an MLB player is sent down, they will still make significantly more than other minor league players that have never made it to the majors. Essentially making it to the top of the pyramid, Major League Baseball, is the only way for a baseball player to make a decent salary.

Anthony Recker also spoke on some of his experiences playing in the minors and some of the struggles that he went through. Recker said that he only got a \$2,500 signing bonus, and the team had no commitment to him. Meaning he could be cut from the team at any time and he would not be owed the rest of his contract, which is very different from MLB contracts which are fully guaranteed. Recker explained that he was only able to make it through the minors with such low pay due to support from his family, his girlfriend, and her family. He found himself with little free time not only during the season, when he would be spending eight to ten hours at the ballpark, but during the offseason as well. With the offseason being spent training vigorously to stay in shape and to improve his baseball skills, Recker had no time to find other jobs during the offseason.

In addition to these low salaries and large amounts of time spent working, minor league players also have to deal with a lot of traveling. Traveling for minor leaguers is far different than it is for Major League Baseball players. In the majors, teams fly everywhere and stay at some of the nicest hotels in the cities they play in, but in the minors, teams travel almost exclusively by bus and stay in average to low level hotels.

When asked about the travel Pat McCarthy, who travels with the team, said, “The only time we flew, we flew from Rochester down to Gwinnet, other than that we bus everywhere” He

also went on explaining the difficulty of the travel stating, “Those guys are on buses for 12, 13, 14 hours overnight at a time and then have to play the next day.”

McCarthy had one story that truly showed the crazy travel of these minor league teams. During that one trip where the team flew from Rochester to Gwinnet, the team then had to travel to Norfolk for their next series. McCarthy explained this trip saying, “We had a 1 o’clock game on a Sunday in Gwinnet, we bussed 11 hours to Norfolk, got in at 2 am and then played a seven o’clock game that night.”

This means that the players were up early to get to the ballpark and prepare for their game on Sunday, then hopped on the bus almost immediately after that game ended to start their journey to the next location. They then would’ve had to be at the ballpark by early afternoon at the latest for the game on Monday, leaving them with little to no time outside of baseball and travel.

Recker, along with many other minor leaguers, relied on host families during his time in the lower levels of MiLB. He had a range of experiences with host families but had one experience that really stood out to him. Recker and some teammates had moved into an apartment with a woman who had a child that was never around when he or his teammates were there. Speaking about that experience Recker stated, “Literally there was two of us in a bunk bed, the other one in a car bed, like the red car. We were there for a couple weeks, it wasn’t a very good situation.”

Tom Housenick told of another strange and uncomfortable living situation. In an interview with former Phillies outfielder Cam Perkins, Housenick learned that Perkins was sleeping in a closet during some of his time in the minors. This was not a massive walk-in closet,

but just a regular old closet. While this would certainly be a rough situation for most people, and many would struggle to fit into a closet, Perkins stands at 6 feet 5 inches, making this an even tougher place to sleep. Sleeping in the closet paired with long bus rides during travel lead to Perkins developing back problems. These situations are not rare as many minor leaguers have experiences sharing small two-bedroom apartments with three or more teammates.

One minor leaguer has come up with an interesting and creative living space to save money. A story written by Vicki Dean of the Sarasota Herald-Tribune told of Jack Labosky, a pitching prospect in the Tampa Bay Rays organization who took his signing bonus and used it to buy an old bus that he then converted into a tiny house. With Labosky being in Single-A he is not pulling in much in terms of a salary and so he decided turning the bus into a tiny house would be a great way to save on rent. He did the conversion himself and drives the bus to spring training prior to the season and then back to Port Charlotte, where his team plays, for the regular season.

Many minor league players could go out and find a job that would pay them better, but they choose to struggle and grind in the minors hoping to achieve their dreams. One such player is Jeremy Randolph, whose story was told by Tom Huddleston Jr. of CNBC. Randolph was just drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals in 2019 and found himself released due to the pandemic in May. He says he only made \$400 a week from the team and made only \$13,000 last year, including his other jobs and his signing bonus. Randolph talks about some of his other jobs saying, “So I played from late June to September in 2019, and then I worked other jobs in the offseason, which lasts from September through February. I did stuff like driving an Uber and delivering for PostMates, and I worked at U.P.S. during the holiday season to make some extra cash. I’ve told customers who ask me why I’m driving an Uber, ‘It’s not like you think. I’m not

making a bunch of money in sports, so I've got to find some other way to supplement that.” Randolph has a master's degree in sports management administration and an undergraduate degree in finance and acknowledges that he could make more money if he were to walk away from baseball saying, “I have my master's degree and I could be making significantly more money not playing baseball, but I still want to chase my dream and give it as much time as I can.”

Randolph's story is one that is not uncommon. A lot of players are in similar situations, working odd jobs and doing what they can to make ends meet and save money.

This opportunity to chase their dreams may be one that Randolph along with hundreds of other players could lose if Major League Baseball decides to cut ties with a significant amount of minor league teams. It will leave these players having their dreams crushed instantly due to the greed of the big-league teams. These players that have been sacrificing seeing their families, financial stability and so much more will have done it all for nothing as their shot at moving up the minors and maybe making it to the majors will be killed as soon as their team is lost.

Impact on Employees

One employee that was left without work due to the cancellation of the season was Pat McCarthy, a radio announcer for the Lehigh Valley IronPigs. When asked about his work prior to the cancellation of the season McCarthy said, “For me as a seasonal employee, I'm paid per game, no game no pay, so for me I never really started.” He went on to say, “I kind of just ran with this summer as it is what it is. I just decided I'm going to enjoy as much of this as I can,

I've never had a summer before." McCarthy also acknowledged that he was lucky to have support from his family and that he would be in a different situation without that support.

Many people rely on minor league teams for work, whether it is in management, customer service, sales, or any other department within the team. All the service workers around a minor league ballpark were left without work this season, meaning people who scan tickets, ushers, and those working in concession stands were all left without paychecks this summer. With a fair majority of workers involved in management, the grounds crew, and other full-time jobs within the team being either furloughed or completely let go. These people will be hoping to return to their jobs next season if the team is still around to bring them back.

People with jobs outside of Minor League Baseball organizations have found their work being impacted by the cancellation of the season as well. Tom Housenick, a writer for the Morning Call in Allentown, PA had to take off one week each month during the summer and also had to scramble for new things to cover. Housenick would typically cover the IronPigs throughout the whole season, but with no games being played he had to look for other stories in sports, at a time when there was still little going on in terms of professional sports being played.

The cancellation has also caused college students relying on internships with minor league teams to find new ways to earn the credits and experience that they were expecting to earn. Noah Blasko, a student at Kutztown University was set to have an internship with the Scranton Wilkes-Barre RailRiders over the summer. The internship was supposed to provide Blasko with experience in sales in sports and would have allowed him to gain experience in a number of jobs throughout the ballpark such as getting tickets ready for season ticket holders, calling to confirm if people would be coming to pick up their tickets, and more. He had worked the internship during the summer of 2019 and was looking forward to another summer spent

working around PNC Field. But around mid-March Blasko was informed by the team that it was likely the season would not happen and a few weeks later the season was officially cancelled along with the internship. This forced Blasko into taking a six-credit internship class at Kutztown instead of getting the actual experience of his internship. He had to do mock sales pitches and listen to guest speakers and missed out on the opportunity to get the real sales experience and the opportunity to talk to those within the RailRiders organization that he was hoping for.

Jobs unrelated to baseball were impacted with the cancellation of the season as well. Many businesses in towns with MiLB teams rely on the teams to draw people in. In some of these towns the team is the biggest draw in the area and brings in a lot of people. That means that businesses count on players, coaches, staff, and fans being brought into the town. In many places with MiLB teams the loss of the team will seriously hurt these businesses and their employees as they will see far less traffic without the team drawing people in from other places.

Impact on Fans and Growth of Baseball

While the cancellation of this season has caused most people within Minor League Baseball to lose their income for this year and it could cause the loss of future income as well, there could be a heavy hit on the fans and the growth of baseball too. A lot of people only have access to live baseball in the minor leagues. Whether they can't afford tickets to a major league game or no major league team plays nearby, a lot of fans can only watch professional baseball in person in the minor leagues. Many people will simply be left with no way to watch baseball in person, at a professional level, if their local MiLB team is cut, which will be unfortunate because there are a lot of people who love baseball and look forward to attending a baseball game for the

chance to escape from their lives for a while. These people will lose not only the chance to watch a sport they love but may also lose friendships with either staff at the stadium or players that they have become close too through years of attending games.

This is important not only because a lot of people love to attend baseball games and would lose that opportunity if their local team were to be cut, but also because getting younger fans interested in baseball is key in growing baseball. The average age of an MLB fan in 2020 is 57, which is up from 50 in 2000. This means that over the past 20 years baseball has failed to attract young fans and those that regularly watch baseball are just continuing to get older. This is a big problem for baseball as a whole, as an aging fan base means that they will begin losing fans over time which will eventually lead to less ticket and merchandise sales, revenue dropping and there will be a possibility for losing teams and players at the major league level in the future.

MLB has even attempted implementing new rules in order to speed up the game, hoping that it would attract younger fans. This year they added a rule that a relief pitcher must face a minimum of three batters or finish an inning. The hope of this rule being that teams not being able to bring in three different pitchers to face three different batters would make the game go faster. It also seems that MLB is headed towards the use of a pitch clock, which is currently used in the minors, as another way to speed the game up. Despite the huge focus that is put on speeding up games the average time of a major league game has not really gone down at all. In fact, from 2001 to 2011 the average time of a game was under three hours, with the average time being under two hours and 55 minutes in eight of those seasons. Even though Major League Baseball has been focused on speeding up games, the average time of a game has been over three hours in every season since 2012. This proves that their attempt at speeding up the game through

new rules has not worked and that there is some other issue, as the average time of a game has increased.

These rules likely will not draw in any new fans as they are not effective in the goal of speeding up the game. But what they may do is drive away so called “baseball purists” that hate to see the game changed and just want to see old-school, classic baseball.

Something that can bring in new fans though is Minor League Baseball. Minor League Baseball is a great place to grow the game of baseball for several reasons. First, it allows a number of young fans the chance to experience a professional baseball game, with all the extra excitement that you can only get while attending a game in person. Things like the mascot races, t-shirt tosses, giveaways, and promos such as theme nights, like a Star Wars night or The Office night that add extra excitement and can bring people with other interests to the ballpark, where they may just find themselves becoming a baseball fan as well. These are also things that aren’t seen on tv and can help keep younger fans interested in the game beyond the first few innings.

Pat McCarthy had a lot to say about this situation stating, “You lose these small market teams, you lose an opportunity to have a young fan fall in love with the game. You don’t even go for the baseball, that’s what’s amazing about it. People go for the fan experience, the entertainment. That’s what Minor League Baseball is, it’s an entertainment experience that happens to have baseball.” McCarthy like many others working in and around Minor League Baseball recognizes both the entertainment factor as well as the importance that entertainment has in attracting people to baseball.

He also has a unique experience with MiLB as his father was a play-by-play announcer for the Trenton Thunder, who were the Double-A affiliates of the Boston Red Sox, when he was

a child. Growing up around MiLB and the Thunder greatly influenced McCarthy and his passion for baseball.

While talking about the importance of MiLB in getting young fans interested in baseball McCarthy said, “I fell in love with the game of baseball from the Trenton Thunder,” he continued saying, “For the first five years of my life I grew up with the Trenton Thunder. That’s how I fell in love with the game and it’s shaped who I am now at 25 because of those experiences I had going to Waterfront Park.” While most people likely do not have the same access that McCarthy did with his father working for the team, many fans find their love for baseball and learn the game through their experiences with Minor League Baseball.

Tom Housenick saw the impact of the entertainment that comes along with the baseball during minor league games when he took his son to his first game. Housenick said his son liked watching the game a little bit, but that the Phillie Phanatic being at the game was what really kept him entertained. His son had only made it an inning or two through the baseball before he was getting bored, but that big fluffy green creature kept him entertained. His son asked to go to another game shortly after that first one, making it through four or five innings before becoming bored this time. Finally, by the end of the summer he was so interested in baseball that he wanted to go to a doubleheader. Housenick’s son built up such a passion for baseball over just one summer that he went from not making it more than a few innings, to wanting to watch two games in one day and all it took was that extra bit of entertainment around the ballpark to get him hooked on baseball.

On top of the entertainment around the stadium, there is also the interaction with players, coaches, and other fans. A young fan getting the opportunity to meet their favorite player and get an autograph or picture prior to the game could get that fan excited about that player and baseball

and keep them interested in the game for years to come or even for the rest of their life. There is also the sense of togetherness that comes from experiencing a game with other fans, it creates an added element that could get people feeling an excitement for the game that they may have never felt at home. Finally, there is the excitement of getting a foul ball or having a player throw you a ball. All these things add more to baseball than just watching the game itself and can provide interest and passion for the game in younger people.

MLB can and should keep these MiLB teams around, even if they are running at a loss, because it can afford to. Major League Baseball brought in just under \$10 billion in 2018. Even if each minor league team ran at a loss of \$10 million dollars and assuming the major league club ate all of that loss, the big-league clubs would still be fine. Of course, some MiLB teams are actually profitable so this would likely never occur. On top of this, the major league team is not responsible for paying for all parts of a minor league teams' operations, unless the MLB team happens to own said MiLB team. The MLB team is paying mostly for its players and coaches in the minors, which are both essential to developing future talent for the major league team. This makes the idea of MLB cutting teams to save some money look silly, as the teams already bring in big revenue and need the minors to develop the stars of the future that will bring in more fans and revenue for them in the future.

The sport of baseball is at a crucial point right now in terms of what baseball will look like in the next few years as well as what it could look like 20 years or more in the future, Minor League Baseball is a key part to not only the growth of the sport of baseball, but the growth and development of players and also a big part of the communities around each team. MiLB teams are needed to continue creating jobs and opportunities for people just looking for a job or looking to begin a career in the sports world. They are also needed to provide the chance for young

players to work on their skills and possibly work their way up the ladder to one day play in the majors. It is also necessary to grow the game and to continue bringing in new fans to the game of baseball. If Minor League Baseball is unable to fully recover from the cancellation of the season due to the pandemic and Major League Baseball decides to go through with cutting almost 40 MiLB teams the negative impact will be felt by the players, the fans, those in the communities of the teams, and baseball as a whole for years to come.

If these teams are lost minor league stadiums that were once packed with loud, enthusiastic fans, decked out in the team's colors, will now be empty. There will now only be silence inside these stadiums, instead of fans cheering and vendors yelling, "Hot dogs, peanuts, ice cold beer!" The celebratory fireworks set off after every home run will never be seen or heard again. The beautifully cut grass on the field will grow out and become a jungle. These stadiums that were once a place for people to come together, have fun, and be entertained will become a memory of what Minor League Baseball once was.

Author's Note

I worked a lot on my organization here. I flipped my section on players to the top since that was the most important and what I focused on the most. I also started the piece with the loss of the Appalachian League and then moved onto the opening day scenario to try to get some bigger stakes earlier on in the piece. I took the opening day scene and turned it into opening day at the Lehigh Valley IronPigs to help make it a bit more specific. I had gotten feedback that it was too general every time so I hope that by choosing a team and using some details about that team it helped to make that section more focused and interesting. I think that with the changes I've made the piece is more cohesive and that it should read better now and I feel like the changes I've made throughout the semester have gotten the piece into a much better place than it was at in September.

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