<https://www.si.com/mlb/2020/07/17/preston-wilson-baseball-black-lives-matter>

* This article is written alongside former All-Star Preston Wilson (2nd place Rookie of the Year finish and one 18th place MVP vote)
* After George Floyd was killed and BLM took over the media, MLB was the last major U.S. professional sports organization to speak out about the issue
* According to Wilson, their initial statement could have been stronger compared to other sports
* He was mainly bothered by the fact that the statement said nothing about police brutality
* “When you try to call out something but don’t name it, you’re not really doing anybody any good,” (Wilson)
* Wilson was the only black player on his World Series-winning 2006 Cardinals
* He said he felt like an exchange student when in the minor leagues, no one around him was familiar with his culture nor had lived or been around African-Americans
* Over his 10-year span in the majors he had many teammates come to his defense when fans would yell racist slurs at him. But he also had plenty who called him the n-word.
* Once he saw a white teammate build a noose in the clubhouse, he didn’t think it was directed at him but the teammate paled when he saw Wilson watching, he never wanted any confrontation so he didn’t bring it up
* “[According to](https://sabr.org/bioproj/topic/baseball-demographics-1947-2016/) the Society for American Baseball Research, MLB peaked at 18.7% African American in 1981. Last season, [according to](https://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/mlb/columnist/bob-nightengale/2019/04/14/african-american-mlb-players-baseball-jackie-robinson/3465999002/) *USA Today,* that figure was 7.7%. Despite its attempts at fostering diversity at the youth level, baseball continues to lose Black athletes to sports such as basketball and football. The ones who stick with baseball, like Wilson, often report an oppressive loneliness.”
* “Baseball is an expensive sport: Many play year-round, spending as much as $4,000 to play in the winter. They return to their high school teams more polished—and more likely to get playing time—than the kids who can’t afford the extra coaching. [According to](https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap/) the Brookings Institution, the average net worth of a white family in 2016 was $171,000. The average net worth of a Black family was $17,150. That alone puts young Black players at a disadvantage.”
* Another tough area of baseball is the practice aspect
  + More than any other sport baseball strongly rewards repetition
  + That's hard to do
    - In basketball, you can work on your shot, layup, dribbling, and anything else on your own
  + You can’t practice hitting a curveball on your own unless you have a fancy pitching machine that can throw one
  + Baseball also requires a field, mainly because no one plays stickball anymore
* “So for a Black boy to pursue baseball, he must live in a town where baseball is prominent, often a predominantly white town. Or he must love the game—played more and more by people who don’t look like him—enough to drag a few friends along.”
* “And if he is looking to sports as a way out, baseball is not the best option. The NCAA allows Division I schools to grant 85 football scholarships. Men’s basketball teams get 13. Baseball teams get 11.7 to distribute among their roughly 35 players. Very few players get a full ride. So if you can’t afford to pay your own way to college and you don’t get drafted, you’re out of luck.”
* The New York Times said that in 2018 only 4% of NCAA baseball players were Black
* Even HBCUs have a hard time filling their rosters with Black players
* The ranks thin drastically by the time players enter the minor leagues and then a culture shock hits them
* “There’s a lot of guys that come into MLB and, if they come out of high school, they may have never spent time alone in a room with an African American person,” Wilson says. “If they go to private school, there might not be any Black kids on the team. They’re definitely not gonna have a Black coach. So everything they’ve learned about African Americans, they’re learning from the news."
* Two of the most cerebral positions are pitcher and catcher. Rarely do you see Black pitchers or Catchers, as an obsessed fan I couldn't name an active Black catcher off the top of my head. These positions are the only ones to be proactive instead of reactive like the rest of the field.
  + A lot of coaches look at Black players as just athletes, getting by via talent instead of baseball IQ. Most Black players end up in defensive positions, middle infield, and outfield.
  + In 2019 there were 111 starting pitchers who threw more than 100 innings. Only 4 were African American. Of the 178 relievers who pitched more than 50 innings, only 5 were African American. Of the 66 catchers who had more than 100 plate appearances, 0 were African American. (The Dodgers had an African Canadian catcher)
* On top of this most managers are former pitchers and catchers. 11 of the current 30 in 2020 were pitchers or catchers.
  + This means that because there are fewer black players playing those positions, in turn, there are fewer managing after their careers
* When looking at team executives it's a similar story with a different process.
  + The executive field is much whiter than any other area of the sport
  + Black students make up 13.4% of the U.S. population. In 2017 NYT found that none of the 8 ivy League had a freshman class that was more than 10% black.
  + Of the 29 MLG GMs (The Dodgers just have a President of Baseball Operations: Andrew Friedman) only 6 attended schools that were more than 10% black.
  + MLB has 8 executives listed on their website, all white men
  + Both the current commissioner Rob Manfred and the deputy commissioner attended Cornell.
  + Executive Vice President Chris Marinak went to Virginia, Chief Communications Officer Pat Courtney went to Richmond, Chief Financial Officer Bob Starkey went to Drake, Chief Baseball Officer Joe Torre was drafted out of high school and played 18 seasons in the majors and became a hall of fame manager, Executive Vice President Noah Garden went to Northeastern. None of those schools are more than 8% black.
* Only a handful of white players have probably had to actually think about diversity in baseball, mainly because it doesn’t affect them. The blame for this can fall on everyone and the media.
* As of July 2020, there are only 6 Black reporters that cover baseball primarily.
* “If you're a beneficiary of systemic racism, then you will not be able to dismantle it at no cost to yourself. You will have to put yourself at risk. It might not always result in being physically attacked, but it will require you to make yourself vulnerable.” (Dale Murphy)
* “The league needs to market its players better, to capture children’s attention. It must educate youth coaches about implicit bias and encourage them to offer opportunities to as many kids as possible. It should lobby for the right of college athletes to be paid for their likeness, which would make college baseball a more attractive path. Perhaps most helpful would be increasing the pay of minor leaguers, who are currently treated as seasonal employees exempt from minimum-wage laws and who sometimes make as little as $5,500 in a year.” (Wilson)

<https://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/29756333/mlb-diverse-hiring-practices-quite-match-stated-commitments-social-change>

* On August 28th, 2020 the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at the University of Central Florida released its ‘2020 Major League Baseball Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC).
  + This date is important because it was the day the 1963 March on Washington happened where MLK Jr. gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech and the day that Jackie Robinson met with the Dodgers president and general manager Branch Rickey and was told that day he would be the face of integration, not just in baseball but in American Society.
  + The league actually did show improvement on their report card, they got a B+ for racial hiring efforts, a C for gender hiring, and an overall grade of a B.
  + TIDES analyzes diverse hiring efforts in the league's central office and important positions in all teams every year.
  + The league's statement about its commitment to diversity in the central office is holding true but there is a lot of room for improvement in individual teams.
  + The previous overall grade was a 79.5 (B-) only moving up 1.2 points to a (B)
  + MLB’s central office had 37.5% of employees being people of color and 40.1% being women. These are on par with the NBA, which is considered to be the leading league in diversity.
  + For the first time, TIDES looked at the CEO/President role in individual teams.
    - In all leagues these roles have been primarily held by white men.
    - MLB earned an F for racial and gender hiring for this position. 29/30 CEO/Presidents are white men, the lone exception is Derek Jeter FORMER CEO of the Marlins.
    - Simply put these numbers are unacceptable
  + This data is on par with ownership too. Of the 40 known majority owners, 39 are white men and just one (Arturo “Arte” Moreno of the LA Angels, a Latino man) is a person of color. No female majority owners.
  + The league also got a C- for the general manager/president of baseball operations positions. Only 4 people of color in these roles, 13.3%. The number has actually gone down since 2010 when it was 19.2%.
  + Even though the players are 39.8% people of color, the vast majority are Hispanic or Latino and Black or African American players only make up 7.5% of all players. These numbers are the lowest recorded by TIDES since the first report card was made in 1991 and is way below the peak of 19% in 1995. The consistent decline is very concerning.
  + On the other hand, the MLB has done a great job of making baseball an international sport. 28.1% of players were born outside of the U.S., coming from 20 different countries and territories.
  + In 2020 there was an improvement in people of color in manager positions. There were 6 of 30. 1 African American, 1 of two or more races, and 4 Hispanic or Latino managers. In 2009 33% of MLB managers were people of color.
  + There is also improvement in coaching positions (1B and 3B coaches, hitting, pitching, catching, and bench coaches plus any other coaches). Over 40% of coaches were people of color, 32.8% were Hispanic or Latino and 6.3% were Black or African American.
  + The number of women with on-field coaching or player development positions in 2020 reached 21, going up from 7 in 2018. The Giants made history early in 2020 by hiring Alyssa Nakken to their coaching staff, then she became the first-ever woman to be an on-field coach with an MLB team when coached 1B during an exhibition game with the Oakland Athletics on July 20th, 2020. After the 2020 season, the Marlins hired Kim Ng as MLB’s first female general manager ever.
  + The team vice president level showed a small improvement, 14.1% to 14.9% for racial hiring and 19.2% to 20.0% for gender hiring. 28 of 20 teams have at least one woman in the role of VP or above. The Red Sox have 12!!!
  + Senior management level (directors, managers, general counsel, assistant VPs, and more) People of color at 19% and women at 29%.
  + Professional administration level (specialists, technicians, supervisors, analysts, programmers, and more) 24% for people of color, highest ever recorded by TIDES, women at 25% which is down 1% from 2019.