<https://theathletic.com/2750280/2021/08/05/cockroaches-car-camping-poverty-wages-why-are-minor-leaguers-living-in-squalor/>

* Minor league players end up living in cars, and storage facilities, and most often they all pile up into apartments that can barely afford with their combined salaries.
* Players end up sleeping on lawn chairs, pool rafts, and air mattresses.
* Rental costs in midsize U.S. cities have swelled and the pandemic eliminating the option of host families has brought a longtime minor league issue to the surface.
* This isn’t particular to a team or a level, it’s completely covered the sport, it starts at the salary but on top of that, there is no support whatsoever.
* Players only get paid seasonally, they have to find housing for a five-month season, and they end up signing last-minute leases, packing way too many people into hotel rooms or apartments. On top of that if they get moved up or down a level they have to move to a new city and do it all again.
* “Finding a place to put your head at night is the hardest, most stressful thing to do as a minor leaguer,” said catcher [Caleb Joseph](https://theathletic.com/player/mlb/mets/caleb-joseph/),
* Joseph spent his first 6 seasons in the minors with the Orioles and didn’t see a comma in his bi-weekly paycheck until he made the majors in 2014. At one point he decided he didn’t want to pay 80% of his paycheck towards housing so he lived in his team's clubhouse.
* Players literally cannot afford housing or food.
* “It’s not about me, it’s about a few thousand other people who have to live this way and the people coming into this sport. That’s what I really care about. Having baseball care about how we treat players with respect to housing and mental health.” (Kieran Lovegrove)
* In February of 2021, the league decided to cut 40 minor league affiliates and promised that would raise player salaries and improve conditions.
* “We are less than six months into a significant change that aims to address long standing issues that have impacted minor-league players,” (MLB)
* “Improving the working conditions and pay for minor leaguers is among the chief goals of the modernization of our player development system.” (MLB)
* The salary bumps in percentage forms are impressive but the real numbers are still laughable.
* In High and Low-A the weekly minimum is $500 (up from $290), $600 in Double-A (from $350), and $700 in Triple-A (from $502) These are before taxes and don't include the cost of getting short term housing. Some teams offer hotel rooms at a discounted rate but that still isn’t nearly enough. (As a 17-18-year-old last summer I made more than a Triple-A player does each week.)
* Some members of the Oakland A’s class-A team in Stockton had paid more for their hotel (where they shared rooms) than they made in their bi-weekly paycheck.
* “I’m a little nervous speaking to anyone, but it isn’t right,” said one Stockton Ports player. “It shouldn’t be legal what they are doing. And the worst part is (A’s ownership) doesn’t say anything. They could come out and say, ‘We don’t give a shit about the players,’ and I’d prefer that. They act like we aren’t a part of the organization.”
* On top of all this, the players are too scared to speak up for fear that their careers will be affected. They have been put into a position where they learn to be quiet and follow rules to a point where they have no freedom of expression.
* El Paso which has had one of the biggest year-to-year rental increases in the country has Padres Triple-A players in their top 30 prospects list living on air mattresses on the floor in apartments with double to triple the number of people that should live in one.
* “It’s just brutal,” said one player in San Antonio, adding that the nightly hotel fee of $70 plus taxes means that the lodging cost of an eight-day homestand amounts to a week’s worth of wages. “One of the guys we traded (recently) had been sleeping in a living room with four other dudes. We are literally being used to help the MLB team. Why does he have to deal with that if he was an asset to helping the Padres?”
* “The game is in a spot where it’s catering only to the wealthy, the people who have enough money in their family or in their draft pick (bonus),” said one Mets Double-A player. “That’s extremely disappointing for a game that’s America’s pastime. It shouldn’t be (a) rich, White person’s pastime. Most of the guys I know have parental support and the guys who don’t either have a big signing bonus or have left the game.”
* MLB did do some geographic restructuring, reducing travel and making it so players don't stay overnight. The teams save money by not having to pay for hotels but the player's arent.
* “This wasn’t poor planning by MLB; it was deliberate indifference. It wasn’t that they were unaware. Guys have talked about (being unable to afford housing) for years and years,” said Shane Kelso, who retired from the Angels’ Class A affiliate earlier this season, largely due to the housing issues. “They made the decision to do Low-A in Southern California, which is one of the most saturated housing markets in the country. It was obviously made to save clubs and teams money, but not the players.”
* Players spend more time worrying about where they are going to sleep than playing baseball.
* “A current Triple-A player said he was so stressed out about housing during his first two years in the Orioles organization, he was prescribed medication for stomach ulcers. A [Diamondbacks](https://theathletic.com/team/diamondbacks/) minor leaguer said this winter he failed a stress test.”
* “When I got called up,” said a minor leaguer in the Cardinals system, “Instead of being happy, I was stressed about who I was going to illegally sublet my other place too.”
* Sleep, stress reduction, and nutrition have all been proven to improve performance. In today's game where every team is looking for an edge or an advantage, you would think they would put effort into supporting their minor league players.
* In May of 2021, the Astros started providing fully furnished apartments for their minor league players, this should be great news to shout from the rooftops but it has its catches.
* If every team agrees to not support their players then they all have an equal stand and can keep that going.
* The Red Sox and Mets started giving out $300 monthly stipends for housing, it's something but it’s not really all that helpful.
* Some teams are stepping up, mainly owning up to their faults on occasion but no one has really changed the situation drastically.
* The Mets are one of the better teams at this, the new owner Steve Cohen owned up to the team's faults on Twitter and they since have increased minimum salaries and taken over leases for players when they move up a level.
* The Cardinals had been charging players $10 a day for food, similar to the clubhouse dues that the league outright got rid of. The Cardinals didn’t stop doing this until it was publicly exposed. If no one knows they will do it.
* Players basically have to pay to play at this point, they aren’t being rewarded for making as far as they have anymore, Teams look that them as being given an opportunity instead of treating them as the assets that we know they are.
* Major league players have similar issues but because they are covered by the union, considered to be the toughest in major league sports they have much better salaries and support.
* Major league players make a minimum of $570,500 a year in 2021, minor league players make $10,000-$15,000 annually, and the federal poverty line is at around $13,000.
* Because baseball has antitrust exemptions it's almost impossible to force the league to make meaningful changes.
* In 2018 the Save Americas Pastime Act ruled that minor leaguers are exempt from the federal minimum wage and rules around overtime pay.
* Joseph: “I can’t imagine what it would have been like not worrying about where I was sleeping (in the minor leagues). If you alleviate that issue, it just makes it a little more dignified to chase a dream. I get the grind. I don’t think every minor leaguer needs to make $100,000, but they shouldn’t have to stress about where they’re resting their heads.”
* One of the biggest things the players can do is form a union, they need people to speak for them as a whole to get things done. Without one the league and teams can do whatever they want.
* The only thing that can get teams to change is the goodness in their hearts, there is literally no incentive to make any change.
* “There are some organizations that value guys and are doing the right thing; I just think it should be mandated across baseball,” Snyder said. “That’s the problem, there’s this stigma of what this minor-league grind is. What is it called really? Professional baseball. Look at every Division I program in the country, where guys are housed and fed and compare it. It’s embarrassing. We are playing professional baseball. How do you consider these guys elite athletes yet you don’t take care of the basic necessities?”
* “At the end of the day, minor leaguers are your investment. When you invest in your system traditionally you are going to reap rewards,” said a Nationals Triple-A player. “I know we traded some guys away but there’s a reason why we are in last place in our (minor league) system. Maybe teams need to rethink how they treat us long-term.”

<https://theathletic.com/news/mlb-to-require-teams-to-provide-housing-for-minor-league-players-in-22-source/IMdYa9V7r7BU/>

* The league decided that starting in 2022 teams need to provide housing for all of its minor league players
* “This is a historic victory for Minor League baseball players,” said Advocates for Minor Leaguers executive director Harry Marino [in a statement Sunday evening.](https://twitter.com/MiLBAdvocates/status/1449869249762275330) “When we started talking to players this season about the difficulties they face, finding and paying for in-season housing was at the top of almost every player’s list.”
* “Most Minor Leaguers make less than $15,000 per year and won’t receive their next paycheck until April,” Marino said. “For the next six months, they will spend hours each day training — as required by contract — while trying to balance out second and third jobs to make ends meet. Like housing six players in a two-bedroom apartment, this is a broken model from a bygone era. Minor Leaguers will not rest until they receive the livable annual salary they deserve.”
* This is a major step forward but it's still not enough, not in the sense that it's not in good faith but on top of fair pay there is so much more to do.

<https://theathletic.com/3095638/2022/01/27/mlbs-minor-league-housing-policy-has-potential-problems-advocacy-group-says/>

* The provided housing policy seems to have some problems/loopholes
* “After looking at the policy a little closer, it was determined we saw some loopholes and some potential issues that were going to arise,“ said [Joe Hudson](https://theathletic.com/player/mlb/pirates/joe-hudson/), a catcher who’s been up and down between the majors and minors, and a member of Advocates for Minor Leaguers’ steering committee. “I talked to countless guys for months.”
* There are three main loopholes
  1. Teams can out two players to a bedroom
  2. No specified accommodations for players with spouses and children
  3. Teams can use hotel rooms instead of providing homes or apartments
* One proposed fix is that players are given the choice of having provided housing or an equal stipend to find their own.
* MLB has been known to not operate in good faith, take advantage of any loopholes in and outside of the game, and save as much money as possible.

<https://theathletic.com/3130271/2022/02/15/we-are-making-pennies-for-many-minor-leaguers-unpaid-offseasons-prove-more-grueling-than-the-actual-seasons/>

* Most players have to work during the offseason because teams only pay them when they are playing. On top of that, they need to stay in peak shape and work on their game during that time. Players end up working 7 days a week and working out after each day.
* Even when guys are working three jobs while trying to stay in shape and get better they are still below the poverty line.
* If players were not only paid more but year-round it would be a much lesser issue with more realistic solutions.
* Even guys that are high draft picks see their bonuses fizzle out over the oddly long time it takes players to make it to the majors if they even do. (4-5 for college players and 5-6 for high school players)
* Most jobs are hard to come by when you tell them you have to leave after a few months, they end up stuck with the physically demanding and dangerous jobs that could jeopardize their career.
* “The things happening to the minor leaguers are disgusting, and it’s not just the teams I played for. It’s every team,” said [Bryce Hutchinson](https://theathletic.com/player/mlb/whitesox/bryce-hutchinson/), now a full-time online streamer who played for the [Mets](https://theathletic.com/team/mets/) and White Sox as recently as last year. “If (baseball) wasn’t an old sport that puts ‘America’s Game’ next to their marketing, when in reality it’s the most un-American thing I’ve ever seen in my life when it comes to taking care of their own, people would lose their shit over this treatment.”
* It can be even tougher for foreign players, they have to make the decision of staying in the U.S. and working illegally away from their families.
* The NHLs minors the AHL pays their players $51,000 a year and the NBAs G-league pays their players $37,000 a year, both more than double the annual salary at Triple-A.
* During the offseason, it's also incredibly expensive to get access to the high technology involved in their training making it even harder to show up as an improved player in spring training or to not get replaced by the next younger guy.
* Spring training isn’t about getting better it's fighting for a job.
* If the league paid all 6,500 MiLB players (including Dominican summer league and short season) a $2000 stipend for spring training it would cost the league $13 million or $433,333 for each team, which is less than the league minimum for a major league player by almost $100k.
* “What job do you know that asks you to work (from) 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. and doesn’t pay you? Those are the spring hours,” Hutchinson said. “It really does bother me because a lot of guys who get out (of the game) don’t have the voice or the opportunity to speak on what happens to them. The fact that MLB thought they could say (players are being paid by opportunity) is absolutely fucking ridiculous.”
* Overall the situation is terrible but it's way worse for Latin or foreign-born players in general.
* Teams can draft a high school player and give them $120k or get 25 players from the DR for $2000 each with just as much talent, there's almost no incentive anywhere to get teams to dish out more money.
* When guys go to the DR to play winter ball the teams pay them $10,000 a month and provide them with a rental car, housing, and meals. But for some reason, MLB teams can't pay their players more than $14,000 a year.
* “Education time – Baseball draft picks are worth up to 5x their slot value to clubs. I never shy away from investments that can make me that type of return.” -Mets owner Steven Cohen on Twitter, August 1, 2021
* “Minor leaguers who have to work a second job in the offseason are really behind the eight-ball when it comes to competition,” said Hildenberger, who is currently with the [San Francisco Giants](https://theathletic.com/team/sf-giants/). “(Professional baseball) shouldn’t be a test of how much shit you are willing to put up with. It’s a real career. Anybody who plays at Double A or higher is a really good player, a high-level player.”
* “I don’t understand,” Hutchinson said, “How MLB and (its) owners can hear about a guy driving Uber during spring training for money and then makes it to the big leagues and tells his story and they are like, ‘Yeah, we are OK with that.’ It’s embarrassing. It’s absolute bullshit.”
* “There’s plenty of stories where guys finally make it to the big leagues and see a huge performance year after an offseason where they don’t have to go do flooring work or be an Amazon delivery guy,” Barker said. “They can finally just be a baseball player because they have the money. That’s a very real thing.”
* Organizations do not care about the well-being of their players in any fashion, they look at them as objects that have a small chance of paying off or something they can kick to the curb when they get too old and become obsolete.