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Chairman's Note

Saludos..... It is a great feeling to see the increasing trend of Latin American players in the Major Leagues and their production in 2001. Without any doubt we could name this season "Major League Baseball Goes Latin". For the benefit of the Latin American and Caribbean baseball the year began with a successful Caribbean World Series in Culiacan, Mexico last February and continue with the Opening Day of the Major Leagues in San Juan, Puerto Rico on April 1.

- **MLB Goes Latin**

The 2001 Major League Baseball Season, since its beginning, has been quite productive for the Latin American and Caribbean players. We can assure, this will be the most prolific year, both in quantity and in quality. We must begin highlighting the MLB Inauguration Day on April 1 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The first official Major League baseball game played in a Caribbean country was between the Texas Rangers and the Toronto Blue Jays. It was a successful endeavor thanks to joint efforts from the Major League Baseball, Puerto Rico Government and Angelo Medina, a local sportsman and a producer. They were able to convert, for this event, the old Hiram Bithorn Stadium into a Major-League-caliber ballpark. This initiative represents a contribution to the efforts, already underway, to expand the game of baseball throughout the world.

It was a marvelous sunny afternoon where the Hall-of-Famer Orlando Cepeda and the Clemente Family threw the first pitch. The official game pitch was made by the Mexican Esteban Loaiza (a strike) to the Ranger's lead-off hitter Rusty Greer. A significant number of Latin players were present, including Alex Rodriguez, the best paid player today. Among other stars were Ivan Rodríguez, Carlos Delgado, Rafael Palmeiro, Andrés Galarraga and Raul Mondesi.

The MLB opening day rosters were packed by Latin and Caribbean players this year. A record number of 213 players began as part of the 30 opening-day team rosters. This represents 27% of the total of 789 MLB players. The distribution of these players between the Latin American and Caribbean countries is as follows:

- Dominican Republic	71	- Puerto Rico	46
- Venezuela	32	- Mexico	24
- Cuba	22	- Panama	10
- Colombia	2	- Aruba	2
- Nicaragua	2	- Curacao	1
- Jamaica	1		

In addition, there is no Major League Baseball team this year with less than two Latin American or Caribbean players in their roster. During the first 12 weeks there has been at least one player active from the Dominican Republic in each of the 30 teams.

- **Rafael “Felo” Ramírez-Arias**

For more than five decades Latin American baseball fans has enjoyed Felo’s unique baseball narrations. The way he described a Home Run, “ y la bola se llevó la cerca” meaning, “and the ball, just cleared the fence”, is like a tribute to one of the most excited moment in any baseball game. Ramírez has narrated baseball in almost every

Latin country and US cities where baseball is played. Beginning with his native Cuba, he has been involved in radio and television baseball programs in other countries such as Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Panama and Mexico among others. Most recently he is being the Spanish voice for the Florida Marlins in United States.

Felo was informed last February 1, from the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, that he will be awarded on August 5 with the prestigious Ford C Frick Award. The winners of this award are selected by a special Hall-of-Fame Board. His name will join other two Latin Sportscasters, Buck Canel (Cuba) and Jaime Jarrin (Ecuador) in the Hall of the Press and Microphone Legends in Cooperstown. We feel very proud for this major achievement.

- **Felix (Felle) Delgado**

We have lost in June Felix Delgado, one of the most successful Major League Baseball Scout of Latin America. Felle, as he was known in the baseball world, was responsible for the acquisition of many latin players for the Milwaukee Brewers organization. Milwaukee, Puerto Rico and baseball will miss such a great personality. He was one of a kind.

- **Major League Teams with the most Latin American and Caribbean players in history:**

Team	Players	Position	Pitchers
1. Pittsburgh Pirates	106	67	39
2. Cleveland Indians	103	71	32
3. St. Louis Cardinals	100	65	35
4. Chicago Cubs	96	62	34
5. Kansas City Royals	96	63	33
6. Philadelphia Phillies	90	54	36
7. New York Mets	88	60	28
8. Chicago White Sox	87	52	35
9. Montreal Expos	86	58	28
10. New York Yankees	84	64	20
Cincinnati Reds	84	51	33

- **Caracas 2002 - Caribbean Baseball Series**

Caracas, Venezuela will host the 44th Caribbean Baseball Series, tentatively set to be staged on February 2-7, 2002 at the University Stadium, with the participation of the Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Mexican Pacific Coast and Venezuela champions.

Puerto Rico, who has participated in the 43 series, has won 14, followed by Dominican Republic with 13; Cuba; Venezuela 5; Mexico 3 and Panama one. The

Series have been played in two stages, 1949-1960 and resumed in 1970 up to the present. In the first stage Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Cuba and Panama participated. On the second, Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Dominican Republic and Mexico.

The interest in Latin America and Caribbean baseball as the quantity and quality of players increases as time goes by. And the request for past and present of the leagues in this area.

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