

# A New Breed of Baseball Players

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In a rapidly changing America social reality undergoes continuing reconstructions. In a sport like major league baseball this means that almost each passing decade presents “a new breed of players” whose distinctive lifestyles contributed to the changing drama of American baseball.

Even so fans seemed hardly prepared for the new breed that appeared during the Expansion Era of 1961-1979. Compared with past generations these differed in personalities, social background, language, looks, dress, affluence, playing style and prowess, to name but few.

The paper probes the social etiology of this new breed. Broad based social movements like civil rights, rampant individualism, and unionism are considered. To an extent these account for the dominance of black and Latin American players. Equally significant was a media revolution by which TV enhanced profits and wrought changes in the staging of games. That same revolution, along with unionization, produced unprecedented affluence and power for the players.

In cursory fashion other changes are sketched, including night ball, changing technology and sports medicine. What these did to foster this new breed is assayed. It is argued that this new breed revitalized the game, yielded to no previous generation in splendid performances, and delighted fans. The latter claim is borne out by live attendance figures and the measured rise of a vast TV constituency.



A bit out of his element, Dave Voigt was captured at the Rafter 6 Ranch and unfortunately released.