

2012 Ends with 104 Minor League Baseball Drug Suspensions

Written by Maury Brown
Monday, 31 December 2012 13:57



When it comes to performance-enhancing substances in MLB, 2012 will likely be remembered in the press as the “Year of Elevated Testosterone.” Between the overturned suspensions of [Ryan Braun](#) and [Eliezer Alfonzo](#) or the suspensions of [Bartolo Colon](#), [Yasmani Grandal](#), and certainly [Melky Cabrera](#), “testosterone” was the PED that grabbed the headlines.

But, what about Minor League Baseball? While suspensions there rarely register as anything more than a blip in the media, it is where the overwhelming volume of them occur. Based on data collected over the past year ([see the complete history of drug suspensions in MLB and MiLB](#)), which includes off-season testing, there were 104 suspensions in MiLB due to being in violation of the drug policy, the highest number since testing has taken place. At the same time, according to sources, there were over 10,000 drug tests in 2012, an increase from the year prior. How does 2012 stack up to 2011? By comparison there were a total of 69 suspensions last year.

Not all suspensions in the minors were for PEDs. Of the 104 suspensions, 26 of them—more than a quarter of the total—were for “drug of abuse” such as marijuana, cocaine and hallucinogens. The data also shows an interesting pattern in which those struggling to get into the minors are using drugs to performance enhance. A total of 27 suspensions, or 26 percent of

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the total, were by players designated as free agents. One free agent, [Dustin Richardson](#), had what may be the largest collection of substances that an individual has tested positive for in the history of the game. On Jan 25 of 2012, he tested positive for Amphetamine, Letrozole and metabolite, Methandienone metabolite, Methenolone and metabolite, and Trenbolone and metabolite.

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So, what about steroids? Are they still prevalent within baseball? A total of 41 players, or 39 percent of the total, were suspended for substances such as Boldenone, Stanozolol, and Nandrolone all classified as anabolic steroids.

There was also an oddity in 2012 that created some interest. Four players tested positive for Methamphetamine, something that had not occurred prior. All four players were on the Rays' Single-A Bowling Green Hot Rods of the Midwest League.

In terms of amphetamines, there were a total of 12 suspensions compared to 5 last year. When compared to the large increase of total suspensions in 2012, amphetamines account for 12 percent of the total compared to 7 percent in 2011.

So, which MLB clubs saw the most minor league player drug suspensions? The aforementioned Rays were far and away the "winner" with 8, followed by the Mets at 5, and several clubs at 4 (Cardinals, Cubs, Orioles, Reds, and Twins).

The looming question is, does baseball have an increasing PED problem? That depends on your point of view. A solid argument can be made that with the increases in total testing along with adjustments in the amount of a substance a player can have in their system, the increase in suspensions shows the system is catching more of the "bad guys," and therefore, drug testing in the minors continues to improve.

As to Major League Baseball and that issue of elevated testosterone, both MLB and the MLBPA have said that it is an issue that is being addressed. While it has been reported that we're on

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the cusp of seeing an update to the drug policy that will allow for in-season hGH testing, it should not surprise anyone if some changes come about to address elevated testosterone.

What is certain is the game of cat and mouse will continue. Whether it has been “greenies”, scuffing balls, corked bats, etc., players are always trying to gain competitive advantage. In terms of performance-enhancing substances, there is a chemist out there working to beat the system. With that, MLB is likely not far behind.

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Suspensions by Club

Club	Count
Free Agent	32
Rays	8
Mets	5
Cardinals	4
Cubs	4
Orioles	4
Reds	4
Twins	4
B. Jays	3
Giants	3
Nationals	3
Phillies	3
Angels	2
Braves	2
Dodgers	2
Indians	2
Mariners	2
Marlins	2
R. Sox	2
Royals	2
W. Sox	2
Astros	1

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Athletics	1
Dbacks	1
Pirates	1
Rangers	1
Retired	1
Rockies	1
Tigers	1
Yankees	1
Grand Total	104

Club

Count

Angels

2

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Drug of Abuse

1

Unknown

1

Astros

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol and Boldenone

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1

Athletics

1

Drug of Abuse

1

B. Jays

3

Drug of Abuse

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1

Metabolites of Stanozolol

1

Methylhexanamine

1

Braves

2

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Drug of Abuse

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol, Nandrolone

1

Cardinals

4

Drug of Abuse

1

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Metabolites of Nandrolone

1

Methylhexanamine and Tamoxifen

1

Methylhexanimine

1

Cubs

4

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Metabolites of Stanozolol

3

Stanozolol and Nandrolone

1

Dbacks

1

Unknown

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1

Dodgers

2

Drug of Abuse

1

Unknown

1

Free Agent

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32

Amphetamine

3

Amphetamine, Letrozole and metabolite, Methandienone metabolite, Methenelone and metabolite, and

1

Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)

1

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Drug of Abuse

4

Metabolites of Boldenone

2

Metabolites of Nandrolone

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol

11

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Methylhexanamine

1

Refusal to test

5

Stanozolol

2

Unknown

1

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Giants

3

Amphetamine

1

Metabolites of Nandrolone

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol

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1

Indians

2

Metabolites of Boldenone

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol

1

Mariners

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2

Drug of Abuse

1

Methylhexanamine

1

Marlins

2

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Metabolites of Stanozolol

1

Methylhexeanamine

1

Mets

5

Drug of Abuse

2

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Metabolite of Drostanolone

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol, Nandrolone

1

Nationals

3

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Drug of Abuse

2

Methylhexeanamine

1

Orioles

4

Dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA)

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1

Drug of Abuse

3

Phillies

3

Metabolites of Stanozolol

2

Unknown

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1

Pirates

1

Drug of Abuse

1

R Sox

2

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Amphetamine

1

Drug of Abuse

1

Rangers

1

Amphetamine

1

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Rays

8

Amphetamine

1

Drug of Abuse

2

Methamphetamine, amphetamine

4

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Refusal to test

1

Reds

4

Amphetamine

2

Drug of Abuse

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2

Retired

1

Drug of Abuse

1

Rockies

1

Amphetamine

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1

Royals

2

Amphetamine

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol, Nandrolone

1

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Tigers

1

Metabolite of Drostanolone

1

Twins

4

Drug of Abuse

1

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Metabolites of Nandrolone

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol

1

Methylhexeanamine

1

W. Sox

2

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Metabolites of Stanozolol

2

Yankees

1

Metabolites of Stanozolol

1

Grand Total

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104

[SEE THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF MLB and MINOR LEAGUE DRUG SUSPENSIONS](#)



Maury Brown is the Founder and President of the [Business of Sports Network](#) , which includes The Biz of Baseball, The Biz of Football, The Biz of Basketball and The Biz of Hockey. He [writes for Baseball Prospectus](#)

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