

EMPLOYER LAW BLOG

Play Ball: Legal Updates in Major League Baseball

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Under the new deal, minimum salaries will increase over time (up to \$780,000 during its term), the National League will include a full-time designated hitter for the first time, and baseball fans will get more playoff baseball. The expanded playoff field will consist of 12 teams - six from each league - and will include 4 best-of-three wildcard matchups in the first round. Seasons will still include 162 games and the 6 divisions will remain the same for now.

In other news, on March 16, 2022, an Arizona federal court recently entered judgment finding minor league players to be “employees” of the MLB (as a “joint employer”) under the Fair Labor Standards Act (“FLSA”) and relevant state laws, entitling them to - among other things - its minimum wage protections year-round, including during training in the off-season.

The case started in 2014, when a group of minor league baseball players, led by Aaron Senne - a former Miami Marlins minor league player and graduate of the University of Missouri - filed a collective and class action for unpaid wages under the FLSA and other state laws.

This recent court decision is a huge victory for minor league players who have been litigating this suit for years, but the case is not yet over. The court’s 181-page summary judgment decision is filled with nuance and details and does not resolve all issues prior to trial. Time will tell what happens, but given the court’s rulings, it would not be surprising if the parties reached a settlement prior to trial.

Whatever happens with this case, it’s good to know baseball will be back in 2022.