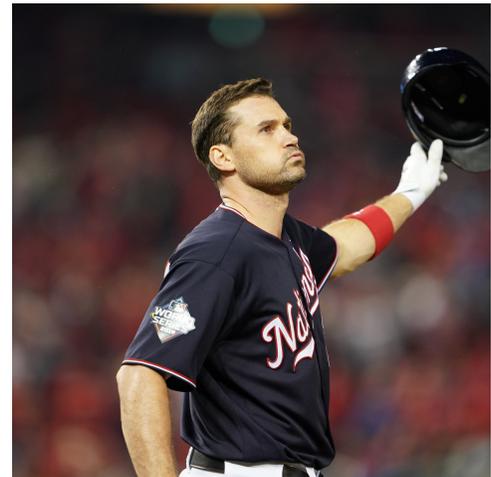


# THE SPORTIER

## Family or Work?: The MLB Dilemma

With 17 MLB teams having players test positive for COVID-19, many players have chosen to opt out of playing a shortened, 60-game season because of safety concerns. The first player to officially decide to not participate in the shortened season, announced on Monday, was Ryan Zimmerman, the Washington Nationals first baseman who just last year won a World Series ring with the team. As he explains, with his young children and at-risk mother, he says, "This is the best decision for me and my family." A handful of players followed suit, including star pitcher for the Los Angeles Dodgers David Price, tweeting a message that read, "I have decided it is in the best interest of my health and my family's health for me to not play this season." While the MLB has strict health protocols in place to prevent the spread of COVID-19, many players are still very wary of the idea of playing in an unusual climate, mostly to protect their families. Mike Trout, the face of the MLB, and possibly the greatest baseball player the league has seen, may not participate in the 2020 MLB season due to the fact that spreading the virus to his pregnant wife could be detrimental to his family as a whole. Players are stuck at a crossroads in this situation, which may offer insight into why anybody would decide to play during this unusual season. For many veteran players, this may be the last time they stand on the field. Additionally, athletes that decide to play will receive service time counted towards them, which means that especially younger players may be able to reach free agency and larger contracts sooner. Finally, many players may not be able to survive without the money they receive from the season, and may have to risk their health to provide for themselves and their families. On the flip side of this, with the season having been slashed to just 60 games, and with prorated contracts in place, many very young and older players may have no use of participating in a season, one in which they would see relatively minuscule contracts. Recently, the MLB announced that 38 out of 3,185 players had tested positive for the virus, 31 of whom were players. Though this rate of positive tests, 1.2%, is 7.5 times lower than the CDC's rate for America, it will take very methodical and careful execution to keep these numbers low, especially when it comes time to start playing again.



Ryan Zimmerman, the first player to announce his opt-out from the shortened MLB season



LeBron James sports a shirt that reads "I Can't Breathe" in 2014 after rising social injustice

## A Changing NBA

The NBA, through all of the madness of planning a season and concerning themselves with safety and health restrictions, have also made time for another area of importance, one that was expressed by a group led by Kyrie Irving and Company: social injustice. The NBA, a league known for its increasingly strict policy on clothing and additional accessories, is making an exception for the shortened season. In the midst of the social injustice that has been witnessed by many in America, the NBA and NBA Players Association has allowed players to replace their last name on the back of their jerseys with a social injustice statement, or to include both their name and a statement. As is prominently showcased in any NBA game, it is clear that African-American athletes dominate the game. In 2017, approximately 73.9% of the league was comprised of African-American athletes. Though African-Americans may feel that they are underrepresented in many fields in America, the NBA is capitalizing on its stronghold of diverse culture to take a stand on the nation's events. In a project that will be, of course, handled by the NBA's jersey provider, Nike, the list of the approved names are as follows: Black Lives Matter; Say Their Names; Vote; I Can't Breathe; Justice; Peace; Equality; Freedom; Enough; Power to the People; Justice Now; Say Her Name; Sí Se Puede (Yes We Can); Liberation; See Us; Hear Us; Respect Us; Love Us; Listen; Listen to Us; Stand Up; Ally; Anti-Racist; I Am A Man; Speak Up; How Many More; Group Economics; Education Reform; Mentor. The league and its players decided against using the names of deceased people out of respect to their families. Though this does seem like a small act by the league, especially considering that pressing health concerns have begun to turn off many players' intentions on returning to the sport later this month, it seems to be a fact that the NBA also has a large focus on player input and wants to use its platform for good.

Sources: