



MLB

MLB MARKET REPORT

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Introduction

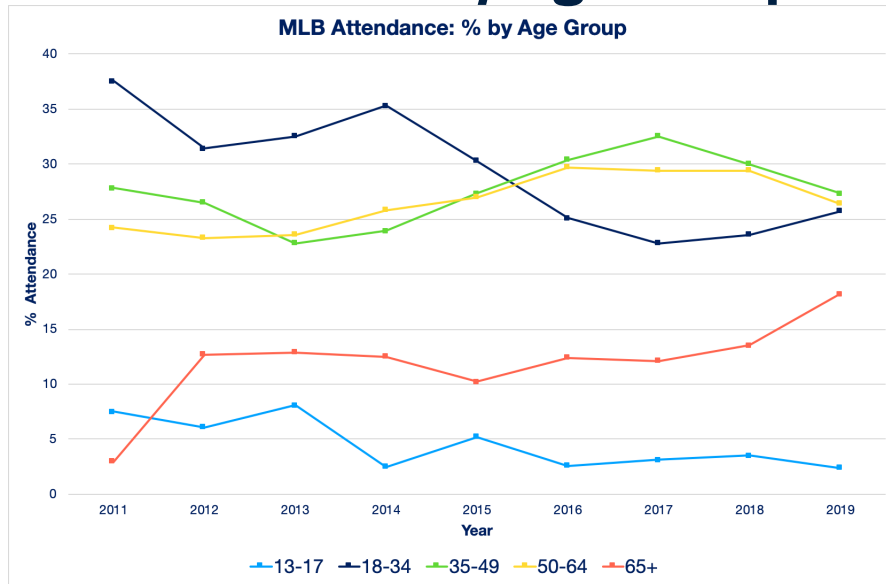
This report will include data on MLB attendance and how fan attendance at games in the past few years have changed. The MLB has been struggling with attendance even before the pandemic hit in 2020. There are many reasons that this could be happening. The first being that the game of baseball itself does not have enough action and takes too long for a game to be finished. In 2020, the average MLB game took a record of 3 hours and 7 minutes to complete (Saunders, 2021). The MLB has already responded to this issue by making some changes in minor league baseball to test out before bringing to the major league. Some of these changes include larger bases, a limit of two pickoff attempts per plate appearance, 15 second pitch clock and an automatic ball-strike system (Castrovince, 2021). These rules are being scattered across the different levels of the minor leagues to see the effects of each one over the course of the season. Another issue that could be attributed to the decrease in fan participation is due to an aging game with aging fans (Kelly, 2021). The youth of America is no longer as interested in baseball as they once were. Those who are highly invested in the sport are getting older and the interest in the sport is aging with them. Little League Baseball participation has decreased by roughly 3% annually since the 1990s (Tracy, 2021). Although the issue of interest in the sport itself is not reliant solely on the MLB, there should be an urgency to understand this problem better and attempt to market baseball in a way that is more appealing to a younger crowd. This report will dive into the data behind the attendance and look into where exactly the MLB is struggling the most with attendance.

Data

The data provided below was found from the Sport Business Research Network. It is a Sport Market Analytics Platform that provides data on the fan market and its behaviors across each major section of the sports market.

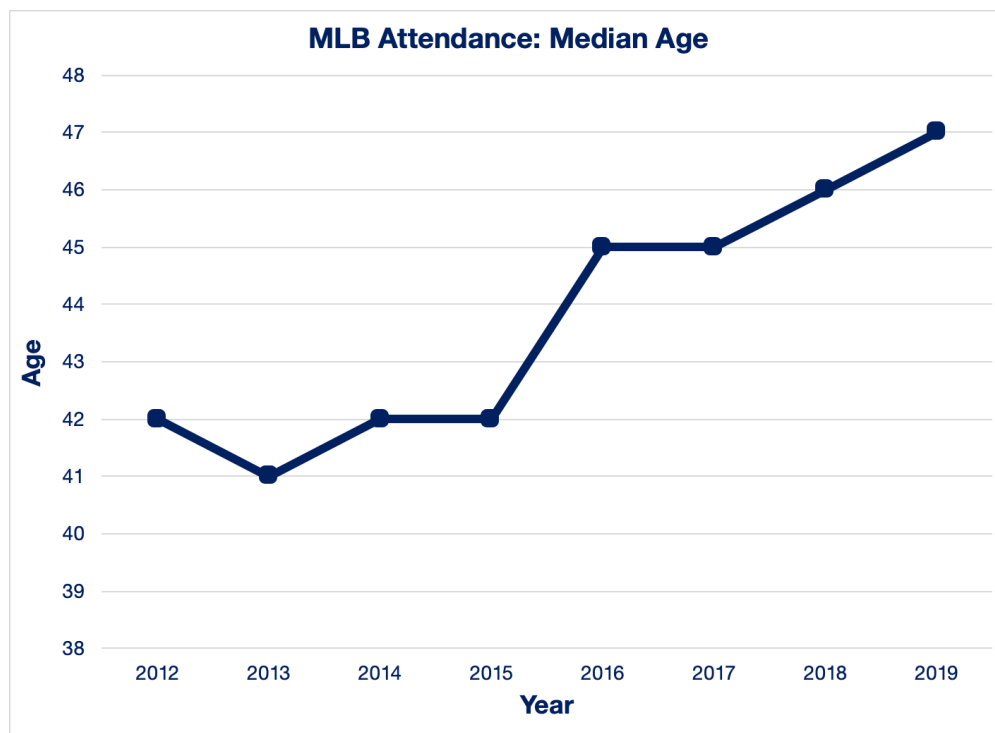


MLB Attendance: Percent by Age Group



It is important to understand the age groups that are attending games. In this graph the data shows that younger age groups are not as interested in attending MLB games. The red line depicts that the fans in the age group of those above the age of 65 are increasing. The other age groups are decreasing since 2017.

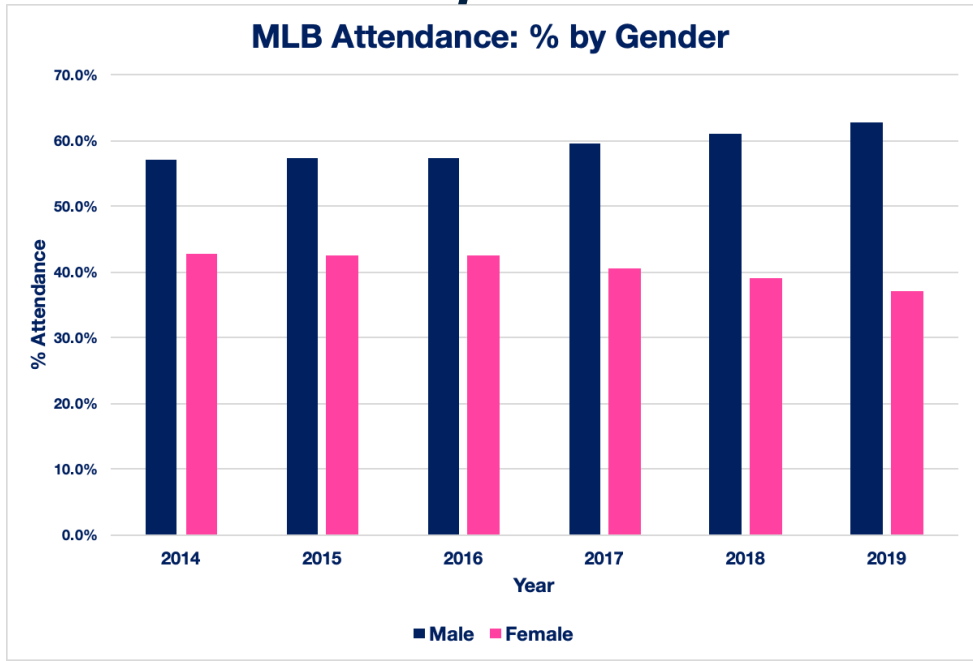
MLB Attendance: Median Age



This graph on MLB attendance for median age shows that the median age of MLB fans is increasing rapidly. Fans that are continually attending games are getting older according to this data. In order to maintain a strong and active fan base, the MLB should focus its marketing efforts on a younger crowd.

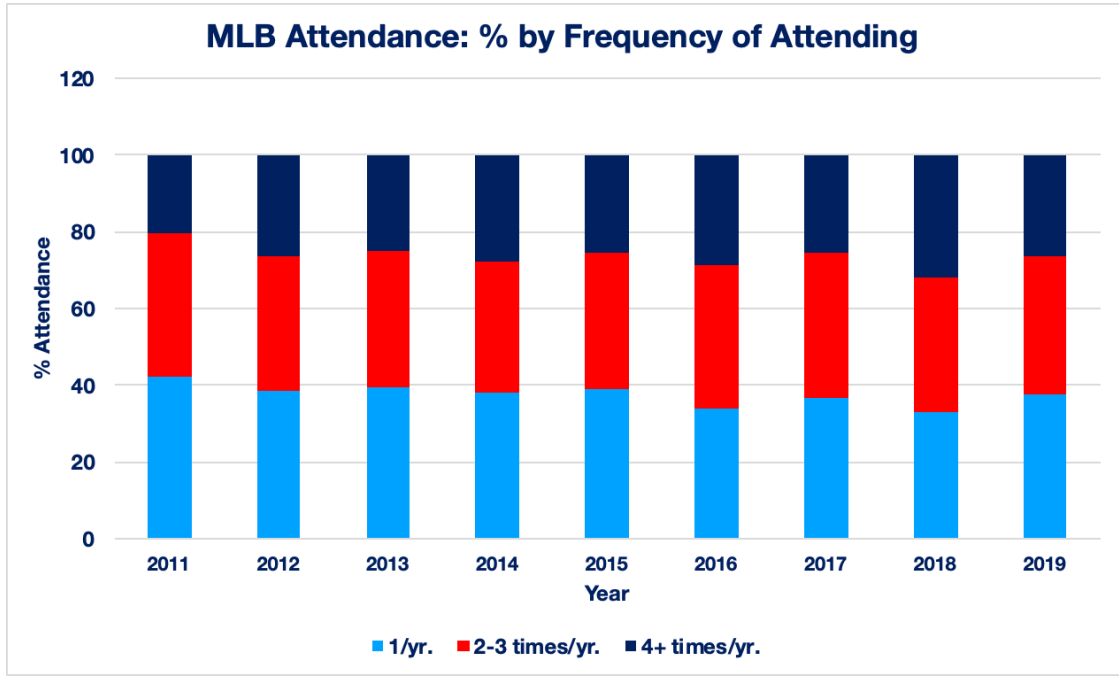


MLB Attendance: Percent by Gender



This graph is showing data regarding the difference in attendance at MLB games between males and females. The data is interesting and important because the percent of attendance between males and females has remained relatively the same from 2014-2019. There is not a drastic change. However, we can notice a slight decrease in female attendance. This is something that the MLB could use to prove that they must improve female attendance.

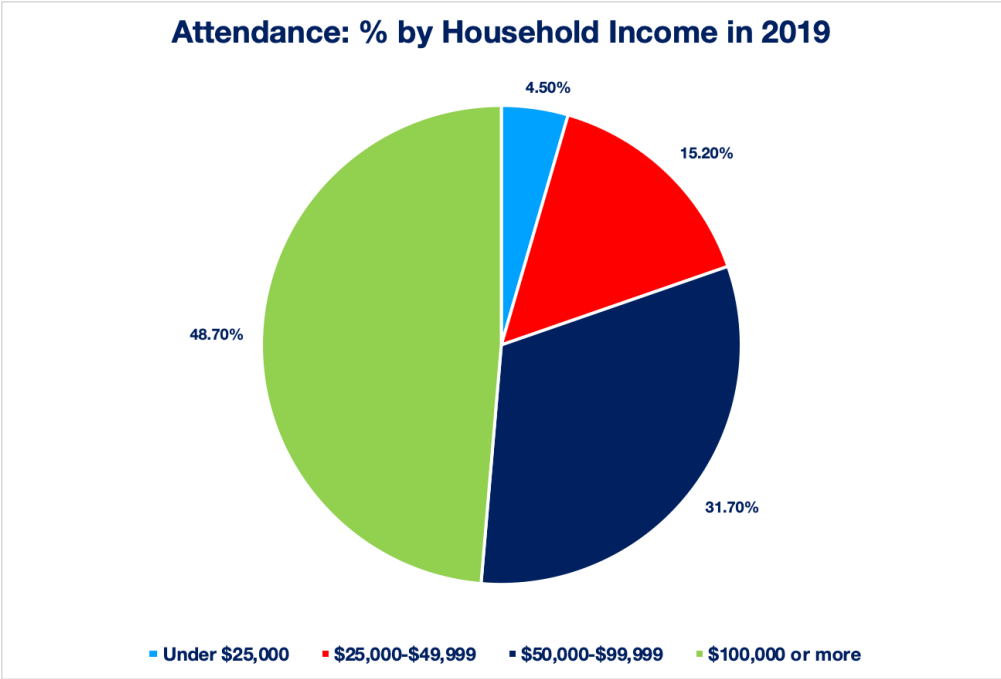
MLB Attendance: Percent by Frequency of Attending



This bar graph is representing the percent frequency that people are attending MLB games. There is an almost even distribution of these groups from 2011 to 2019. The light blue group, or the group of people that attend games only one time per year is alarmingly large. The goal would be for the dark blue section of fans attending 4 or more times per year would be the largest section. This would mean that the MLB has loyal fans and dependable customers.

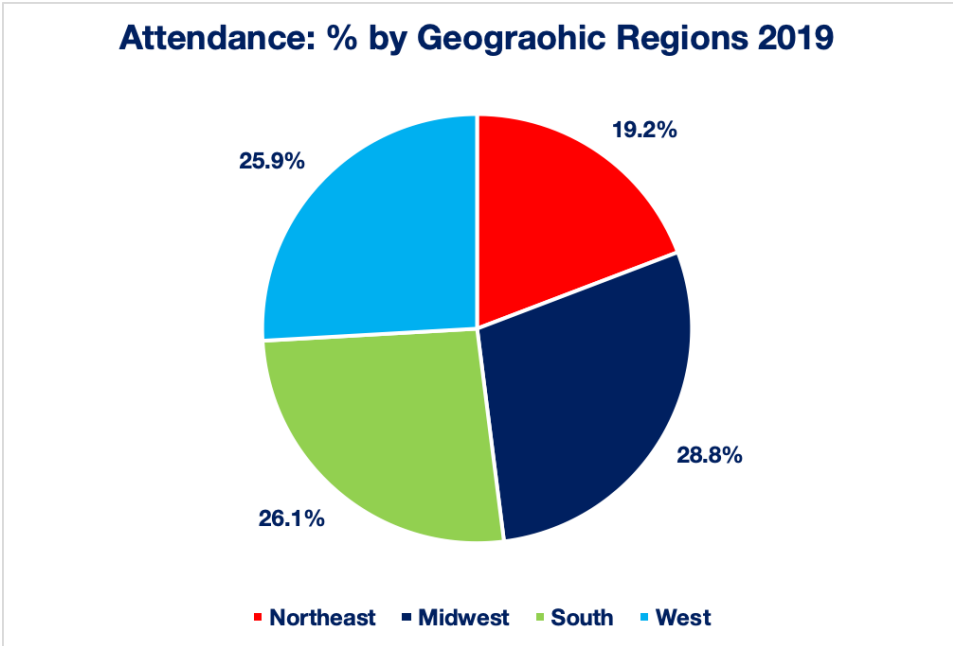


MLB Attendance: Percent by Household Income in 2019



The pie chart above is representing data on the percent attendance by household income in 2019. What is interesting about this data is that almost 50% of those attending have a household income of above \$100,000. The average price for a ticket at an MLB game is \$53 (SeatGeek, 2022). This is not very expensive in comparison to other professional sports.

MLB Attendance: Percent by Geographic Regions in 2019



The pie chart above is representing data on the percent attendance by Geographic Regions in 2019. The geographic regions are almost evenly split between the regions. This is a great sign for the MLB because it means that there are not only specific location across the United States where people are attending baseball games. Fans are attending baseball games everywhere.





Summary

This report has shown the attendance data of the MLB within several different categories. It is proven through the data that the MLB has some areas of attendance that they can focus on expanding. The rising median age of fans is concerning. The older that this number is, the less relevant the sport and league will be. It is important that in the future, the MLB focuses marketing efforts on younger age groups. They also can focus these efforts on women, and those with less household incomes. They can find creative ways to get women out to the park and should be accommodating in ways to those with lesser household incomes. Female attendance at sporting events is not just a problem unique to baseball. There is gender disparities in attendance for sport in general. However, the MLB can take this opportunity to make it a goal to increase female attendance. The issue of the dominance of fans with higher incomes could be due to the price of tickets and the value that a consumer places on attending a game versus watching it on a streaming service. With \$1 beer nights, promotional gifts, and incentives, the MLB could find creative ways to encourage families with lower incomes to be able to afford and enjoy a live Major League Baseball game. The MLB has already began efforts to encourage younger people to find interest in baseball. On opening day in 2021, they relied on a new and relevant partner, Twitch, for unique programming (Shultz, 2021). Twitch is a trendy and newer platform that many young people use to watch gamers play video games. However, by using it to talk about opening day and the MLB, it allowed for these younger consumers to interact with baseball on a platform that they use frequently. Finally, the data found on frequency of attending was also concerning. To have a more consistent and loyal fan base, the MLB should consider promotions for package game tickets. There is value in having consistent fans and people that are attending more than one game a season. The MLB must remain relevant and consistent with their marketing and fan experience.



References

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