

## 2020 MLB Fan Cost Index<sup>®</sup> (Pre-Pandemic)

07.22.2020

What Could Have Been: 2020 Pre-Pandemic MLB Fan Cost Index<sup>®</sup> Up 3.2% to \$242.02; Average Ticket Climbed 3.3% to \$34.04

### A Look at Game Day Fan Revenue Impact

*\*EDITOR'S NOTE: All costs reflect pricing **prior to the COVID-19 pandemic** shutdown all North American sports in Mar 2020, including MLB Spring Training. These prices do not reflect MLB's shortened (60-game) 2020 season and any changes when, or if, fans are allowed to attend games.*

Let's jump in the TMR Time Machine and take a ride back to a carefree morning from a time long ago: March 12, 2020.

Though it *feels like years ago*, only 132 days have passed since that last day of Spring Training. By that evening, the **National Basketball Association** had **urgently halted its season**, with **Major League Baseball suspending all baseball activity** the next morning.

With our COVID-19 world changing minute-to-minute—along with all the rules—anyone want to hazard a guess what sports will look like 132 days from now: December 1, 2020?

Whoops. There we go again, getting ahead of ourselves.

Let’s refocus on our time travel to March 12 and pretending everything is “normal” for 2020, because that is exactly what we have done with our 2020 Team Marketing Report Fan Cost Index® for MLB.

Since 1991, TMR Fan Cost Index reports have calculated the cost for a family of four to attend a game. TMR staff compile FCIs for all 30 MLB ballparks using the price of four average weighted non-premium tickets combined with four sodas, four hot dogs, two beers and two souvenir hats, plus a parking spot.

We were wrapping up our 2020 MLB FCI calculations to send teams for verification on...March 15. Instead, like everybody else, we paused and were left to ponder...Would we get a full 162-game season? Would we get any baseball at all? Either way, would fans be allowed into games? And if so, how many?

Finally, on June 23—after much public bickering between MLB and the MLB Players Association—MLB instituted a shortened 60-game season, meaning each team went from hosting 81 home games to just 30. (Or, if you’re the Toronto Blue Jays, zero Rogers Centre games.)

Tomorrow marks MLB’s return to play, but so much uncertainty remains around gameday revenues. Worse yet, many clubs are staring down the ugly scenario of not having fans allowed in their ballpark *at any point this season*.

During the break, we completed the work and allowed all 30 teams to react to what becomes our first “What If” FCI.

Why release it? Our thirtieth MLB FCI—“an FCI unlike any other,” to paraphrase Jim Nantz—gives us a better sense of the economic impact of the Great Sport Hiatus on each team.

So let’s dive in...

What if no coronavirus?

Our pre-pandemic MLB FCI tracks a 3.2 percent gain to \$242.02, up \$7.64 from last season. That marks a slightly larger increase than 2019’s 1.8 percent gain, but exactly the same percentage changes calculated for the 2018 and 2017 MLB FCIs.

The average ticket was pegged at a 3.3 percent increase to \$34.04, a change of \$1.05.

Looking team-by-team, the top five most expensive clubs remain in the same order as last year, with all five now topping \$300. For the third straight year, the priciest team is the Chicago Cubs, despite their FCI decline of 0.9 percent to \$366.64. They are followed closely by the Boston Red Sox, up slightly (0.9%) to \$357.62. The entire top five most expensive clubs remain the same, with the Houston Astros up 7.8 percent to \$337.80, the defending World Series Champion Washington Nationals up 6.3 percent to \$315.01 and the New York Yankees up 6.2 percent to \$312.32.

On the flip side, the perennial “most affordable” team continues its reign. The Arizona Diamondbacks with their FCI of \$144.50 (up 1.5%) have now been able to boast of the lowest priced MLB game every season since 2009. Like their counterparts on the expensive end, all of the MLB “Affordable Five” retain the same slot as 2019: the Tampa Bay Rays are next lowest for the fifth straight year at \$169.88 (up 6.1%), with the Miami Marlins (\$175.76, flat), Pittsburgh Pirates (\$176.78, down 3.1%) and Baltimore Orioles (\$189.98, up 1.2%).

Looking at the biggest gains or declines, it’s zero surprise who was set for the biggest year-over-year increase. Just look for the team with a new stadium opening.

The Texas Rangers receive the usual “New Digs Boost” this year, with retractable-roofed Globe Life Field coming online to replace Globe Life Park across the parking lot. Though the Rangers show massive jumps in average ticket price, at 47.7 percent, and FCI, at 23.6 percent, those are right on track with the past five new stadiums.

MLB Fan Cost Index® New Stadium Comps	Avg. Ticket	AT\$ %	Avg. Prem.	Beer	Oz	\$/Oz	Soft Drink	Oz	\$/Oz	Hot Dog	Parking	Hat	FCI	FCI %
Globe Life Field — Rangers (2020)	\$38.04	47.7%	\$203.57	\$7.00	16	\$0.44	\$6.75	22	\$0.31	\$6.00	\$20.00	\$18.00	\$273.16	23.6%
Avg. Previous 5	\$35.86	37.3%	\$218.05	\$6.20	14.4	\$0.44	\$4.10	18.8	\$0.22	\$4.30	\$14.80	\$18.40	\$241.02	22.5%
5 Most Recent New MLB Stadiums [1st Yr.]*														
Yankee Stadium — Yankees (2009)	\$51.64	24.7%	\$510.08	\$6.00	12	\$0.50	\$3.00	12	\$0.25	\$3.00	\$23.00	\$25.00	\$315.56	21.6%
Citi Field — Mets (2009)	\$36.99	8.6%	\$149.54	\$5.00	12	\$0.42	\$3.50	16	\$0.22	\$4.75	\$18.00	\$20.00	\$248.96	3.2%
Target Field — Twins (2010)	\$31.47	45.0%	\$70.74	\$7.00	20	\$0.35	\$4.00	20	\$0.20	\$3.75	\$6.00	\$12.00	\$200.88	21.2%
Marlins Park — Marlins (2012)	\$30.49	60.0%	\$195.81	\$8.00	16	\$0.50	\$4.50	24	\$0.19	\$6.00	\$15.00	\$19.99	\$234.94	50.9%
Sun Trust Park — Braves (2017)	\$28.69	48.0%	\$164.06	\$5.00	12	\$0.42	\$5.50	22	\$0.25	\$4.00	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$204.76	15.7%

\*Original costs listed, NOT adjusted for inflation

Take out the Rangers’ numbers, and the averages across the other 29 teams are up 1.8 percent for tickets and 2.5 percent for FCI.

Back to reality: A Look at Gameday Fan Revenue

MLB teams are obviously taking a big hit. Selling fan cutouts is fun and a great way for some fan engagement right now, but teams are selling a few thousand—typically for their foundation—and definitely not 20-30,000 virtual fans 81 times over to recoup the gameday fan revenues we track in the FCI.

To get a baseline idea of the dollars we are looking at left on the table, we projected out “gross gameday fan revenues” (GGFR) using FCI calculations (tickets, beers, sodas, hot dogs, hats and parking). We applied the percentage of Premium to General seats used for weighted ticket pricing to adjust per person pricing multiplied by each team’s average 2019 attendance.

It is important to note that these projections do not include (or prorate) revenues from sources such as:

- Suites
- Most group/SRO sections
- Sponsorships – local and national (and now some international)
- Media – local team deals as well as national and international
- Concerts, ballpark tours and other stadium events
- Any revenue sharing such as MLB merchandise sales and licensing

Using this methodology to create a “normal” 2020 season, the average MLB club would generate \$2.1 million in GGFR per game or \$173.4 million over the 81-game season. The top revenue generator in this model by far is the Yankees at \$437.9 million, aided by their premium Premium pricing. The Dodgers, Cubs and Red Sox all clock in at over \$4 million per game and between \$337.6 million and \$358 million for a full season.

Projected 2020 Gross Fan Gameday Revenues using Fan Cost Index®	Avg Atten 2019	*Prem FCI®	Wtd Avg General	Wtd Avg Premium	2020 FCI	FCI Rank	PROJECTED FCI Gross/Gm	PROJECTED FCI Gross/Seas
New York Yankees	41,827	16%	\$ 51.81	\$ 368.41	\$ 312.32	5	\$ 5,405,776	\$ 437,867,856
Los Angeles Dodgers	49,065	12%	\$ 46.16	\$ 174.63	\$ 298.62	6	\$ 4,425,008	\$ 358,425,687
Chicago Cubs	38,208	12%	\$ 57.87	\$ 240.34	\$ 366.64	1	\$ 4,372,765	\$ 354,193,986
Boston Red Sox	36,106	20%	\$ 60.09	\$ 190.47	\$ 357.62	2	\$ 4,168,957	\$ 337,685,548
Houston Astros	35,276	13%	\$ 55.58	\$ 151.53	\$ 337.80	3	\$ 3,418,155	\$ 276,870,553
St. Louis Cardinals	42,967	17%	\$ 35.67	\$ 87.94	\$ 256.98	9	\$ 3,140,760	\$ 254,401,547
New York Mets	30,531	59%	\$ 27.60	\$ 91.43	\$ 247.38	12	\$ 3,044,152	\$ 246,576,276
San Francisco Giants	33,429	21%	\$ 37.32	\$ 114.35	\$ 278.11	7	\$ 2,861,732	\$ 231,800,308
Washington Nationals	27,898	8%	\$ 47.46	\$ 246.90	\$ 315.01	4	\$ 2,614,336	\$ 211,761,178
Atlanta Braves	32,776	9%	\$ 30.79	\$ 174.77	\$ 237.14	13	\$ 2,375,312	\$ 192,400,253
Philadelphia Phillies	33,671	9%	\$ 36.04	\$ 92.88	\$ 252.16	11	\$ 2,297,178	\$ 186,071,427
Texas Rangers (GLF)	26,333	9%	\$ 38.04	\$ 203.57	\$ 273.16	8	\$ 2,203,904	\$ 182,924,044
Milwaukee Brewers	36,090	12%	\$ 30.10	\$ 54.04	\$ 232.26	14	\$ 2,202,266	\$ 178,383,573
Colorado Rockies	36,953	12%	\$ 27.17	\$ 54.42	\$ 220.16	18	\$ 2,157,107	\$ 174,725,631
Los Angeles Angels	37,321	4%	\$ 30.92	\$ 162.44	\$ 197.66	25	\$ 2,027,183	\$ 164,201,827
Minnesota Twins	28,322	9%	\$ 32.79	\$ 75.80	\$ 217.14	21	\$ 1,652,132	\$ 133,822,714
San Diego Padres	29,585	6%	\$ 22.11	\$ 91.11	\$ 206.54	24	\$ 1,645,691	\$ 133,300,959
Seattle Mariners	22,122	5%	\$ 36.67	\$ 139.10	\$ 255.66	10	\$ 1,520,882	\$ 123,191,475
Cleveland Indians	22,008	11%	\$ 31.16	\$ 76.26	\$ 227.62	15	\$ 1,366,250	\$ 110,666,248
Cincinnati Reds	22,329	11%	\$ 24.16	\$ 80.99	\$ 219.64	19	\$ 1,364,522	\$ 110,526,266
Toronto Blue Jays (\$)	21,606	8%	\$ 29.99	\$ 73.15	\$ 218.71	20	\$ 1,257,955	\$ 101,894,332
Chicago White Sox	21,442	6%	\$ 28.08	\$ 81.16	\$ 222.30	17	\$ 1,256,646	\$ 101,788,303
Oakland Athletics	20,521	9%	\$ 23.79	\$ 65.56	\$ 213.06	23	\$ 1,168,517	\$ 94,649,855
Kansas City Royals	18,495	4%	\$ 31.75	\$ 134.28	\$ 225.98	16	\$ 1,116,990	\$ 90,476,189
Arizona Diamondbacks (Mex)	26,364	14%	\$ 21.38	\$ 61.24	\$ 144.50	30	\$ 1,098,783	\$ 86,803,854
Detroit Tigers	18,767	6%	\$ 28.31	\$ 80.98	\$ 214.22	22	\$ 1,067,917	\$ 86,501,281
Pittsburgh Pirates	18,412	9%	\$ 20.75	\$ 64.59	\$ 176.68	27	\$ 888,561	\$ 71,973,410
Tampa Bay Rays	14,734	18%	\$ 24.97	\$ 100.16	\$ 169.88	29	\$ 828,940	\$ 67,144,151
Baltimore Orioles (LL)	16,347	10%	\$ 30.00	\$ 52.00	\$ 189.98	26	\$ 813,013	\$ 65,041,011
Miami Marlins (PR)	10,016	2%	\$ 22.57	\$ 178.36	\$ 175.76	28	\$ 477,124	\$ 37,215,683
MLB Average	28,317	12%	\$ 34.04	\$ 125.43	\$ 242.02		\$ 2,141,284	\$ 173,442,847

Key: PROJECTED GAMEDAY FAN REVENUE TOTAL (SEASON ): \$5,203,285,425

Avg Atten 2019 = Team's average home attendance during 2019 season  
\*Prem FCI® = Percentage of team's seats designated "Premium" in FCI calculation -- DOES NOT INCLUDE SUITES  
Wtd Avg General = Average Weighted General Ticket Price  
Wtd Avg Premium = Average Weighted Premium Ticket Price  
FCI Gross/Gm = Projected Gross Revenue Per Game generated from FCI items, adjusted for Premium (Non-Suite)  
FCI Gross/Seas = Projected Gross Revenue Per Season (81 gms.) from FCI items, adjusted for Premium (Non-Suite)

**Team notes:**  
(GLF) = The Rangers new ballpark, Globe Life Field, has ~8,800 less seats than Globe Life Park, so the 2019 attendance (54% of GLP) equates to 65% of GLF. As the team would in all likelihood end up with a significantly higher occupancy rate than they had last season, we continued to run our projections using their 2019 attendance. Also, calculations use 83 games.  
(LL) = Baltimore calculations use 80 games, as 1 "home" game was as host of the Little League Classic.  
(Mex) = Arizona calculations are for 79 games, as they were the "home" team for both Mexico Series games.  
(PR) = Miami calculations are for 78 games, as they were the "home" team for the 3-game Puerto Rico Series.

This is where the disparity of the “Haves” and Have Nots” becomes really evident. By these projections, the Marlins do one-tenth the gameday fan dollars the Yankees haul in. Over 81 home games that’s a \$400 million delta.



It is important to note that all MLB teams are owned by very wealthy folks who will weather this downturn just fine. Player salaries are prorated, many full-time staff are furloughed and execs up and down the front office have been taken pay cuts. Plus, they save by not paying the **roughly 1,500-2,000 gameday staff** they depend on to host games.

Frankly, we are much more concerned about the future of **Minor League Baseball** teams. There were **already upwards of 40 teams at risk of losing their MLB ties before coronavirus hit**, and MiLB owners don't have the deep pockets or the TV dollar cushion their MLB counterparts do.

Biggest of all, is what the long-term impact of not playing games, or playing but without fans in attendance, will be on the neighborhoods around ballparks such as **Yankee Stadium** or **Wrigley Field** and the every day people who work the bars, restaurants and retailers. These folks are often the core fan looking to take a family of four to a game a few times a year.

When will they be allowed to attend a game? When will they be able to afford to go?

Where do we go from here? Remember to stay fan-centric and keep that fan in mind.



*Please note that teams occasionally provide updates and/or TMR staff uncovers new information that impacts numbers post-publication. TMR reserves the right to edit and update the FCI over time.*

COVID-19 Note: All costs represent the pricing in place prior to the COVID-19 pandemic forcing the shutdown of all North American sports in March 2020, including MLB Spring Training. These prices do not reflect any changes for the shortened (60-game) 2020 season, when or if, fans are allowed to attend games.

Research Notes:

The **Team Marketing Report Fan Cost Index®** is comprised of the prices of four adult average-price tickets, parking for one car and the least expensive ballpark-available pricing for: two draft beers, four soft drinks, four hot dogs and two (adult-size) adjustable hats. Costs are determined through calls, emails and online research with teams, venues, concessionaires and season ticket holders. Identical questions are asked of all sources. TMR reserves the right to update FCI numbers when additional information is presented and verified.

“**Average Ticket**” represents a weighted average of season ticket prices for general seating categories. This is determined by factoring the full season ticket cost for each category as a percentage of the total number of seats in each venue. This takes into account variable pricing. “**Premium**” seating (tickets that come with at least one added amenity or classified by team as premium) are not included in the average ticket price. “**Average Premium Ticket**” prices are listed separately. Luxury suites are excluded. Season ticket pricing is used for any team that offers some or all tickets at lower prices for customers who buy season seats. When a seat category is not offered as a season ticket, we use the weighted average price sold by the team. Teams have a say in what seats are considered general or premium.

“**Oz**” denotes size of the lowest-priced **Beer** or **Soft Drink** in ounces and “**\$/Oz**” is the price per ounce of that beverage.

N/A appears if teams did not provide pricing and TMR staff were unable to determine an average with enough certainty to publish.

2020 Specific Notes:

- 1. Prices for **Toronto Blue Jays** are converted to US Dollars using Bank of Canada monthly average exchange rates for the first three months of each year. NOTE: For year-over-year percentage changes, we compare the team's CAD prices, NOT the converted USD prices listed in the FCI. For 2020, we use \$1.3178 USD to CAD, a decrease of 1% from \$1.3313 for 2019.
- 2. **Texas Rangers** moved into their new retractable roof ballpark, Globe Life Field (capacity for 2020: 40,300), from Globe Life Park (Rangers' home from 1994-2019, capacity at close: 49,115). Calculations use 83 games.
- 3. **Baltimore Orioles** calculations use 80 games, as 1 “home” game was as host of the Little League Classic in Williamsport, Pa. (Aug 23 v. Boston).
- 4. **Arizona Diamondbacks** calculations are for 79 games, as they were the “home” team for both Mexico Series games to be played in Monterrey, Mex. (Apr 18-19 v. San Diego).
- 5. **Miami Marlins** calculations are for 78 games, as they were the “home” team for the 3-game Puerto Rico Series to be played in San Juan, P.R. (Apr 28-30 v. N.Y. Mets).

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Team	Avg. Ticket	AT\$ Change	Avg. Premium Ticket	Beer	Oz.	\$/ Oz.	Soft Drink	Oz.	\$/ Oz.	Hot Dog	Parking	Cap	FCI	FCI Change
Chicago Cubs	57.87	-2.7	240.34	10.00	16	0.63	5.50	20	0.28	6.75	26.16	20.00	366.64	-0.9
Boston Red Sox	60.09	1.3	190.47	8.50	12	0.71	5.25	16	0.33	5.25	14.28	21.99	357.62	0.9
Houston Astros	55.58	11.5	151.53	6.75	14	0.48	5.00	21	0.24	5.75	15.00	21.99	337.80	7.8
Washington Nationals	47.44	3.8	246.98	6.50	18.6	0.45	4.29	18.7	0.26	5.19	22.19	19.00	343.07	8.3

Team	Avg. Ticket	AT\$ Change	Avg. Premium Ticket	Beer	Oz.	\$ / Oz.	Soft Drink	Oz.	\$ / Oz.	Hot Dog	Parking	Cap	FCI	FCI Change
New York Yankees	51.81	8.8	368.41	6.00	12	0.50	3.00	12	0.25	3.00	29.10	19.99	312.32	6.2
Los Angeles Dodgers	46.16	8.3	174.63	6.50	16	0.41	6.00	20	0.30	7.00	5.00	21.99	298.62	8.6
San Francisco Giants	37.32	-2.6	114.35	8.50	14	0.61	5.75	16	0.36	6.50	22.83	20.00	278.11	0.0
Texas Rangers	38.04	47.7	203.57	7.00	16	0.44	6.75	22	0.31	6.00	20.00	18.00	273.16	23.6
St. Louis Cardinals	35.67	0.4	87.94	5.00	12	0.42	6.50	21	0.31	5.25	17.30	20.00	256.98	1.0
Seattle Mariners	36.67	-2.9	139.10	5.00	12	0.42	5.50	16	0.34	6.75	10.00	19.99	255.66	-0.9
Philadelphia Phillies	36.04	0.0	92.88	6.00	12	0.50	5.50	20	0.28	4.00	18.00	20.00	252.16	0.8
New York Mets	27.60	0.0	91.43	11.00	20	0.55	5.75	20	0.29	6.75	25.00	19.99	247.38	0.0
Atlanta Braves	30.79	4.6	174.77	5.00	12	0.42	5.50	22	0.25	4.50	16.00	23.99	237.14	6.5
Milwaukee Brewers	30.10	5.8	54.04	7.25	16	0.45	5.25	20	0.26	6.00	12.36	20.00	232.26	10.7
Cleveland Indians	31.16	0.0	76.26	5.00	12	0.42	4.00	12	0.33	4.50	15.00	21.99	227.62	3.6
Kansas City Royals	31.75	-3.3	134.28	4.00	12	0.33	4.00	16	0.25	5.75	12.00	19.99	225.98	-1.9
Chicago White Sox	28.08	-1.1	81.16	7.00	16	0.44	5.50	24	0.23	4.50	20.00	17.99	222.30	-0.5
Colorado Rockies	27.17	-0.4	54.42	3.00	12	0.25	4.75	26	0.18	5.75	19.50	21.99	220.16	2.6
Cincinnati Reds	24.16	14.3	80.99	7.00	14	0.50	6.50	24	0.27	5.75	10.00	25.00	219.64	7.4
Toronto Blue Jays	29.99	0.0	73.15	5.69	16	0.36	3.98	20	0.20	4.17	15.33	19.72	218.71	0.0
Minnesota Twins	32.79	0.3	75.80	5.00	12	0.42	2.00	16	0.13	4.00	6.00	22.99	217.14	3.0
Detroit Tigers	28.31	0.0	80.98	5.00	12	0.42	5.00	16	0.31	5.25	10.00	19.99	214.22	0.9
Oakland Athletics	23.79	-2.1	65.56	6.50	12	0.54	5.50	16	0.34	5.75	20.00	19.95	213.06	0.5
San Diego Padres	22.11	-0.5	91.11	6.25	12	0.52	6.00	20	0.30	6.75	16.60	19.00	206.54	5.4
Los Angeles Angels	30.92	0.0	162.44	5.00	12	0.42	3.50	16	0.22	5.00	10.00	9.99	197.66	0.0
Baltimore Orioles	30.00	0.2	52.00	4.00	12	0.33	1.50	12	0.13	1.50	10.00	19.99	189.98	1.2
Pittsburgh Pirates	20.75	-9.0	64.59	6.25	16	0.39	4.00	16	0.25	3.50	11.20	19.99	176.68	-3.1
Miami Marlins	22.57	0.1	178.36	5.00	12	0.42	3.00	24	0.13	3.00	11.50	19.99	175.76	0.0
Tampa Bay Rays	24.97	10.8	100.16	5.00	12	0.42	5.00	22	0.23	5.00	0	10.00	169.88	6.1
Arizona Diamondbacks	21.38	2.5	61.24	4.00	14	0.29	2.00	12	.17	2.00	15.00	9.99	144.50	1.5
Average	34.04	3.3	125.43	6.19	13.6	0.45	4.79	18.7	0.26	5.10	15.18	19.38	242.02	3.2



## Chris Hartweg

Chris brings deep sports business experience to his role as publisher of TMR. He first put his sales, experiential marketing, PR, sales and valuation skills to work in sporting goods retail in 1986. He has since worked for brands and agencies across all major league sports, plus golf, college athletics, marathons and motorsports. Chris is also the proud founder of Painless Networking.

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