

To the Editor June 8, 2020

## The Corruption of America's Pastime

I write this as pitchers and catchers are due to report to spring training in Arizona and Florida to prepare for the historical 151st season of professional baseball in this country.

And here we go again, with the news of another cheating scandal. Now it is stealing signs using modern technology to get an unfair advantage. Sign stealing has always been part of the game, but has always been more hype and attempted intimidation than real.

Money has been corrupting baseball for some time and especially now with proposed bizarre extra inning rule changes, and the threat of the absolute abomination of introducing timers or clocks in to the game.

Ghost runners, right field out, and everlasting pitchers, are from the pickup baseball games of our youth, not for the professional entertainment that we pay for.

So here we are in 2020:

- They complain that the game takes too long, but they keep increasing the amount of commercials on the TV broadcasts, which also halts the pace of play on the field for “Commercial Time-outs”.
- They complain that there is not enough action on the field, but they keep increasing the use of Instant Replay, down to nitpicky details.
- They complain the game is too long, but they keep reducing foul ball territory (and foul ball outs) and shrinking the field by adding more seats to make more money.
- They complain about attendance but keep increasing ticket and concession prices.
- They complain about people losing interest in the outdoor game of baseball, but then they build stadiums with no view of the outside world, and they play foul balls as fair off the roof structures. They have turned ballparks into shopping malls, exhibiting a phony game that resembles baseball, but is not.

The game has changed from the pitcher putting the ball in play, to pitcher domination and has led to either home runs, from a juiced baseball, or an unprecedented number of strikeouts. Gone are the singles, doubles and triples and a strategy of base running, steals and making runs with Get'em On, Get'em Over, and Get'em In.

Change has always been part of the game, moving outfield walls, the height, and distance of the pitcher's mound, adding screen protections for the fans, but always in the best interest of the game itself. Now the changes are being made in the best interest of making more money. How many ballplayers can we put on a team? More now than can sit in the dugouts, or more pitchers than will fit in the bullpens.

Enough is never enough. Maximizing shareholder value has no end. Which is why we should again consider banning corporations from this country, especially, in public funded sports, schools, hospitals, eldercare, and the penal system. Maximizing shareholder value from public funding or from the pain and suffering of others are just not compatible, ethical, or just. It should bring shame to us all.

Regional sports fee increases on your cable bill are simply corporate welfare. A million dollar per game salary is paid for by you, through ticket prices, concession prices, local taxes, and your cable bill.

Football has become a gladiator sport of cheaters, criminals, and brain injuries, pro basketball is a joke, and the Olympics are forever tarnished. Cheating and doping in all sports, football, baseball and even bicycling, but I digress..

Even the Home Run Derby is not immune from a cheating of the rules to allow the “Hometown Boy” to win regardless of cheating. To get the storybook ending that the corporate media wants to sell to an unsuspecting public. Baseball players wearing microphones in an All Star game (or exhibition), like some reality TV show. And everyone stays quiet about it. No one wants to speak up, and tell it like it is. The corporate voice prevails, as the ballplayers, sportscasters and reporters, have also all sold out.

Thinking about just skipping MLB and catching a minor league game to get back to the basics? The minor leagues have been purchased by MLB and now they are proposing to close 25% or 42 ball parks. They are killing the grassroots of the game, for fans and ballplayers alike. Why? Money!

In 2018, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf [approved a grant that included \\$12 million in upgrades to UPMC Park in Erie.](#)

So not even more corporate welfare and the continuation of baseball's anti-trust exemption is enough.

Baseball has been fully corrupted now by corporate money, and it is ALL of our fault for letting this happen. If we continue to pay \$9.50 for a beer and \$6.50 for a hot dog, and \$30 for a seat, and \$60 per month for a MLB cable package, it will never change. We will never get the game we all grew up to love, back.

<https://www.halosheaven.com/2019/12/17/20990896/the-real-cost-of-closing-minor-league-baseball>

<https://www.sbnation.com/mlb/2019/11/21/20973264/mlb-minor-league-realignment-proposal-teams-near-me>