

Can a Clock Save America's Pastime?

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There's a drive, deep to left field, going back, back, back, GONE! That was my favorite saying growing up. I loved baseball and everything to do with baseball. In the article "*A Clock Saved the NBA. Can it now save Baseball*" From CNN, Frederic J. Frommer (2023) argues that the shot clock saved the NBA (National Basketball Association) and by implementing a pitch clock into the MLB (Major League Baseball) will save it too. He points out how an NBA clock made games shorter and more entertaining to watch and that the baseball pitch clock will do the same thing. Overall, he believes that the MLB will be saved by adding a pitch clock. I agree with Frommer (2023) that pitch clock could help the MLB a lot, but he overlooks a major problem it could bring. I agree that adding pitch clocks will speed the games up, make the fan experience better, and bring in more revenue but, Frommer (2023) fails to point out the potential problems it may bring to very important games in the future. Teams may lose crucial games to make the playoffs or lose playoff games due to the clock. Overall, this is a major issue because it may ruin the integrity of baseball.

The pitch clock is a brand-new rule implemented into baseball this year. There are a few things that go into the rule. According to *MLB.com*, "In an effort to create a quicker pace of play, a 30-second timer between batters will be implemented in 2023. Between pitches, a 15-second timer will be in place with the bases empty and a 20-second timer with runners on base." This is the main idea of the rule. A little more minor details go into it, but this is the most important part.

Near the start of the article, Frommer (2023) writes, "Baseball will never be a fast-paced game, but there's no reason it has to be a slow paced one. A clock will suck a lot of dead time from the sport and quicken the game." I strongly agree with this statement. Some games in the past have nearly lasted four hours long. That's way too long of a game. According to Jake Mintz

(2022) from *Fox Sports*, “Technically, the pitch clock has been in use in the minors for a few years, but 2021 was the first season in which it was seriously enforced. As a result, average game length is down a whopping 26 minutes.” When I was younger, I remember going to a Minnesota Twins baseball game. The game didn’t go into extra innings and was still four and a half hours long. That is ridiculous. I still enjoyed the game a lot, but I would have had an even better time had the game been shorter and less stretched out.

After saying how much faster the games will be, Frommer (2023) states, “People don’t come to games to watch guys stand around and do nothing — whether it’s on a basketball court or a baseball diamond. A clock won’t have the same dramatic effect on baseball that it had on the NBA. But for Americans with limitless entertainment options and limited time, it will help attract fans with more exciting (and faster) baseball games than we’ve seen in years.” Many people disengage from the games and become bored and won’t want to come to another one. The pitch clock will help with that. According to Owen Crisafulli (2023), from *Clutchpoints*, “The pitch clock not only implements a timer, but it limits the amount of disengagements pitchers can use for each at-bat. This forces them to take up less time between pitches, while also making them think twice about these other ways they can delay the game. The quicker pitches are being thrown, the less time fans have to become disengaged from the game, and that’s a big positive for the MLB.” This is very important. As a kid, I loved watching players crush the ball and make crazy defensive plays. I didn’t become a baseball player because I saw how much standing around, they did. The MLB will attract even more of the younger generation because games will be filled with more action-packed moments and less standing.

Frommer (2023), also gives an example from another sport on how speeding the game up while make the MLB more money. I agree that a faster game will bring in more money.

Frommer states, “Back in the early ’50s, the owner of the NBA’s Syracuse Nationals, an Italian immigrant and bowling alley proprietor named Danny Biasone, knew the league had to make basketball more exciting for fans.” I’m not an expert on the game,” Biasone told The New York Times in 1984.” I never claimed to be. But I knew fans weren’t paying to see the ball being dribbled around all night.” This statement can apply to baseball as well. Fans aren’t paying to see players waste time and lollygag. There paying to see them play. I always wanted to go and watch the pros play. I sometimes had a tough time convincing my mom though. She didn’t want to waste four to five hours watching the games even though she’s a big fan. These aren’t NBA games were going to see which maybe take two hours. These are baseball games taking up almost a fourth of people’s day. If these games became shorter, more families would be able to go because they require less time. Thus, more tickets are being sold and more things inside the ballpark are being bought making the MLB money and keeping more workers employed.

While, I agree with what Frommer (2023) is saying, He did leave out one major issue I see that could cause controversy. Is a pitch clock going to be the reason a team loses an important game? Picture this: Last inning, two outs, batter down to his last strike in a tie game. The batter or pitcher took too long causing the game to go into overtime or a run being scored and ending the game. This happened in a spring training game recently. It upset me and other fans that a timer had such a large impact on the game. I think the pitch clock is great but maybe should be enforced more loosely. The MLB will lose more fans if they allow this to continue. I don’t want to watch a team lose a game because a player took 23 seconds instead 19 seconds to throw a pitch or step into the batter’s box. There needs to be a work around.

All in all, even though I have a concern for the pitch timer it’s probably for the better. I used to pitch, and I could see this new rule taking some getting used to for all players. This rule

will help the sport out tremendously. It will keep those young kids intrigued and watch more of the action rather than a pitcher wasting time. I loved the sport then as a kid and I bet I would've loved it even more now. Some old people who say it's going to ruin the integrity of the sport don't know what they're talking about. The pitch timer will help baseball in a magnitude of ways. Who knows, maybe this timer could save the MLB after all.

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