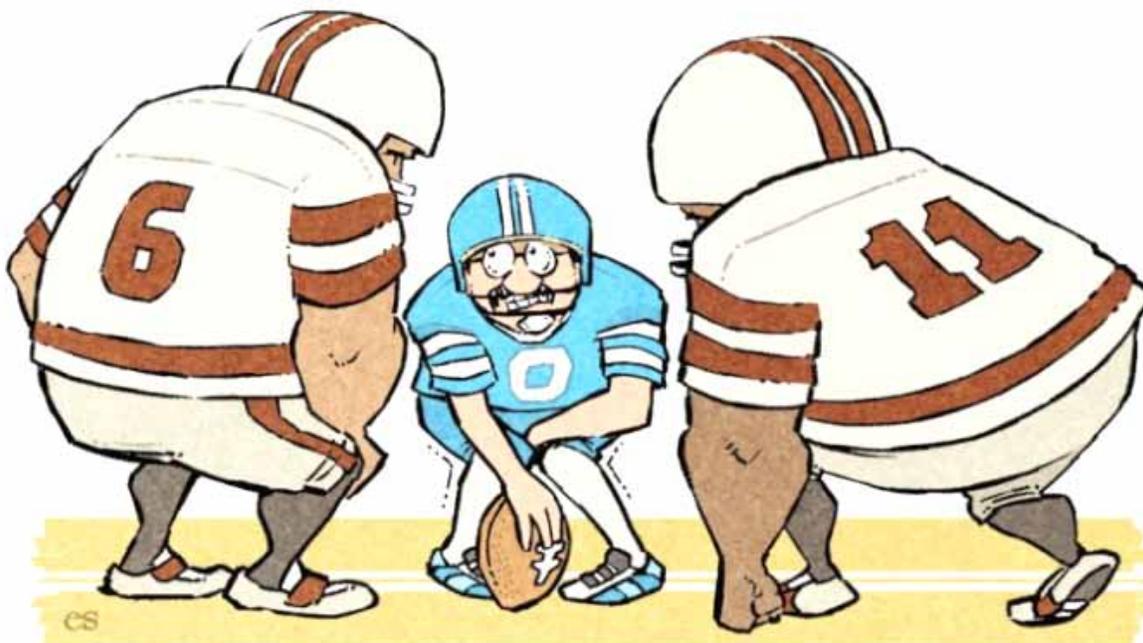


An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

Who's a Columnist?



- Student Activity: More Than an Opinion
- Post Reprint: “Baseball needs fixing, and it starts with the courage to think radically”
- Student Activity: Respond to a Columnist
- WashPost PR Blog Reprints: “Monica Hesse becomes gender columnist” and “Theresa Vargas transitions to Metro columnist”
- e-Replica: Establish an Alert: Know When Your Columnist Publishes

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This resource guide helps teachers to answer the question and to distinguish columnists from reporters. A distinct layout, often with a photograph and byline, gives a visual clue. In addition, readers discover that these writers are expected to express their opinions.

Meet *Post* columnists and read their work. Select one that captures your interest. Follow their work through e-Replica alerts or the scheduled day of publication.

Some readers do not remain silent. They interact



with columnists and respond to ideas presented. “Baseball needs fixing, and it starts with the courage to think radically” by Barry Svrluga illustrates the high reader response he received to his suggestions for change of America’s pastime.

More Than an Opinion

Their job is to have an opinion.

We know who they are because they have bylines and many have a photograph at the top of their columns.

We get to know these columnists through their topics and their points of view. They have been selected to express their informed opinion because of their knowledge and experience after years of reporting on varied subjects and beats, at home, across the country and abroad. They have been selected because of their style and attitude.

Many columnists are found in the **A section**, especially in the op-ed section. Review the list of columnists to be found in the main news section. On what do they focus?

Max Boot	Covers national security; historian, foreign-policy analyst and author of <i>The Corrosion of Conservatism: Why I Left the Right</i>
E.J. Dionne Jr.	Covers national politics in twice weekly column and on the PostPartisan blog; government professor at GWU and visiting professor at Harvard University
Michael Gerson	Nationally syndicated columnist who appears twice weekly in <i>The Post</i>
David Ignatius	Twice-a-week foreign affairs column; author of eight spy novels
Dana Milbank	Op-ed columnist covering national politics
Catherine Rampell	Economics, public policy, politics, culture with a special emphasis on data-driven journalism
Eugene Robinson	Twice-a-week column on politics and culture and hosts a weekly online chat with readers
Josh Rogin	Covers foreign policy and national security; Global Opinions section
Marc A. Thiessen	Twice-a-week column on foreign affairs and domestic policy; contributor to the PostPartisan blog
Molly Roberts	Editor, writer and producer for <i>The Post's</i> Opinions section
Karen Tumulty	National politics
George F. Will	Twice-weekly column on politics and domestic and foreign affairs; written column for <i>The Post</i> since 1974; Pulitzer Prize-winner for commentary in 1977

Sunday through Saturday columnists can be found in every section and supplement of *The Washington Post*. What do their topics and focus reveal about the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area and the readers of *The Washington Post*?

B — METRO

- John Kelly** John Kelly’s Washington, a daily look at D.C.’s less famous side; founder of KidsPost
- Petula Dvorak** Local team columnist who covers all topics D.C.
- Courtland Milloy** Began writing for newspapers as a high school student in 1967. He learned the craft from his father, who taught journalism and graphic arts, and his mother, who taught typing and shorthand, both at Booker T. Washington High School in Shreveport, La. In 1983 began his *Post* column that appears most Wednesdays.
- Retropolis** Writers vary for this column; they include Michael Ruane, DeNeen Brown, Steve Hendrix, and Diane Bernard
- Theresa Vargas** Became a local columnist in 2018 after working on the local enterprise team
- Weather** Text and informational graphics (charts, graphs, maps)

C — STYLE

- Fred Bowen** KidsPost, sports column; author of 22 sports books for kids
- Michael Cavna** Comic Riffs column creator, from cartoons to comic culture
- Carolyn Hax** Advice column
- Monica Hesse** Gender-related topics, *The Post*’s first gender columnist
- Margaret Sullivan** Media columnist; led ASNE First Amendment committee; began her career as a summer intern at the *Buffalo News*

D — SPORTS

- Thomas Boswell** A D.C. native, he has been a sports columnist since 1984; author of many books including *Game Day* and *How Life Imitates the World Series*
- Dan Steinberg** Editor and columnist focusing on Washington sports and its history, Washington sports media, sports blogging
- Barry Svrluga** Sports columnist with beat writing experience on baseball, golf, the NFL, college basketball and college football

SUPPLEMENTS and Sunday MAGAZINE

- Kenneth Harney** Nation’s Housing column
- Adrian Higgins** Gardening, landscape design and related environmental topics
- Mari-Jane Williams** House Calls column
- Food • Review** Tom Sietsema, food critic
- On Parenting** Writers vary for this standing column
- Gene Weingarten** “Below the Beltway,” a weekly humor column in the Sunday Magazine; 2008 and 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing

The above lists are not complete, but give you an excellent beginning to your exploration of the columnists of *The Washington Post*.

NOTE: In the STYLE section there is also a group of critics and reviewers. They cover a particular beat area. Sometimes they write a news account. Other times they are expressing their opinion about a drama, a movie, a new release or performance or an architectural decision. They include Chris Richards, Pop Music Critic; Nelson Pressley, Theatre Critic; Ann Hornaday, Film Critic; and Hank Stuever, TV Critic. Although technically not columnists, they are informed commentators with distinct voices and opinions.

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Baseball needs fixing, and it starts with the courage to think radically

BY BARRY SVRLUGA

Sports Columnist

• Originally Published July 4, 2018

In less than two weeks, baseball will hold its first Washington All-Star Game since 1969, when the newly renamed Robert F. Kennedy Stadium hosted a contest in which Bob Gibson relieved Steve Carlton, in which Ernie Banks pinch-hit for Gibson, in which Roberto Clemente replaced Banks. Seventeen future Hall of Famers graced the District's ballpark for a rain-delayed Midsummer Classic that featured the best the sport had to offer: Willie McCovey homering twice for the victorious National League, hometown hero Frank Howard countering once for the American League.

That summer, though, was important for baseball for more fundamental reasons than an annual exhibition. When Carlton, then of St. Louis, and his counterpart Mel Stottlemyre of the New York Yankees toed RFK's rubber to start the matchup, they did so on a mound that was just 10 inches above the playing surface, five inches lower than the previous summer.

If 1968 was the year of the pitcher — and it was, with Gibson's modern-era record 1.12 ERA cast as the leading data point — 1969 showed that, faced with a crisis, baseball could adjust and fundamentally so.



JONATHAN NEWTON/THE WASHINGTON POST

Major League Baseball games are averaging 28,052 fans per game, which would be the lowest for a season in 15 years.

With the All-Star Game bringing baseball's focus back to Washington in a way it hasn't been in nearly half a century, it's worth reflecting back if only because that's what's necessary to move forward. You will hear it in the run-up to and the coverage of the All-Star Game itself: Baseball is in crisis; it needs to fix itself. Being open to radical change must be part of the process.

The issue, right now, is elemental to the game. Hitters have long argued that the most difficult pursuit in all of sports is to hit a pitched baseball. Right now, it's as if they're trying to prove that en masse. Their collective batting average through last weekend

was .246 — which, if it ended the year as such, would be the lowest mark since 1972 and the second-lowest since that offensive wasteland of 1968.

We can talk all we want about the length of games, and baseball is wise to keep tabs on that aspect of its health. Through last weekend, nine-inning games averaged 2 hours 59 minutes 44 seconds. That's long, for sure. But it's also down nearly 5½ minutes from a year ago.

You know what else is down? Attendance, to 28,052 per game, off by more than 6 percent from last year and on track to be the lowest average in 15 years.

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There has to be a relationship, then, between how often hitters are able to put balls in play and how willing fans are to pay to watch them try.

Now, ticket-buying trends don't show up in real time. They settle in. Maybe that makes the attendance number more alarming because the seeds of such a drop-off must have been sown in previous seasons.

But the current reality reflects the trends that lead to waning interest. In 2018, baseball games average 16.75 hits between the two teams. That number didn't strike me as particularly low. Frame it with the time-of-game data, and it sounds alarming: A baseball game features a hit once every 10 or 11 minutes.

Other stats you probably will hear in state-of-the game assessments as the All-Star Game approaches: Batters are striking out in 22.3 percent of their plate appearances, an all-time high. Fastball velocity averages 93.6 mph, down a tick from last summer's record (since 2007, when Pitchf/x began measuring stats in all parks) but right in line with the previous two years. And teams are now using 4.23 pitchers per game, according to Baseball-Reference.com, which would be a record should it hold up.

Put aside the specific numbers, and the conclusion is easy: Fresher, more specialized pitchers throw harder. That causes batters to swing and miss more often. That removes action from the game. The result: Through Monday's games, major league hitters have produced more strikeouts than hits — which would be a first, should it hold. And it will.

There are potential small-step

solutions. Try establishing a minimum of, say, three hitters that a pitcher must face. This would, in theory, make left-handed relievers face some right-handed hitters, potentially increasing offense — particularly in the late innings, when flame-throwing relievers have particularly deadened the game.

But at a larger structural level, the right way to construct and coach a team to win a baseball game doesn't marry with making an appealing product to watch.

The game and its teams are now run by bright people, people who could be running hedge funds or solving physics problems or exploring space. Instead, they have brought their analytical brains to baseball and applied that manner of thinking to the game.

I love baseball analytics. I recommend a FanGraphs.com membership to anyone who used to flip over baseball cards and study the fine print. Slicing and dicing numbers can be a joy.

But put the numbers in the hands of capable — even brilliant — front-office executives, and the result can be great for teams but detrimental to the game as an entertainment product. The list is endless.

Smartly deployed defensive shifts play to probabilities and help the pitching team record outs, which help that team. But defensive shifts also take away base runners, which decreases the action for the eye to follow. Clever front offices concluded that players should sacrifice contact for power and try to hit the ball in the air more frequently —

increasing their “launch angle” — which generates more home runs but decreases sustained rallies and all the subtleties contained within.

Keep going. Smart business executives who are reluctant to overpay for assets prefer to use younger, cheaper players to fill out their rosters, but that leaves out veterans with whom fans have a history, a relationship. A walk is as good as a hit if you're trying to win a baseball game; if you're sitting in the stands, it's not nearly as interesting to watch.

This applies even in — perhaps especially in — team-building. Losing was the right way for the Houston Astros to build a World Series-winning club because it provided them high draft picks that they used wisely and allowed them to trade their established players for prospects that developed more cheaply, meaning they could add established, expensive veterans of their choosing when the time was right.

But the fans who watched the Astros play on the road from 2011 to 2013 — when Houston averaged 108 losses — were punished by having to watch a no-name, noncompetitive outfit whose players were trying but whose front office wasn't. (Note: This territory isn't exclusive to Houston. We're looking at you, 2007-10 Washington Nationals and 2011-14 Chicago Cubs.)

So something has to give, and it has to be more than pitch clocks. Baseball can't ask its clubs to hire stupid people. The smart people they hire must be asked to identify their

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role in creating this problem — this game with less action than at any point in a century — and contribute to fixing it.

Back to that 1969 All-Star Game. All those Hall of Famers assembled at RFK, they dealt not only with the lowered mound but with a smaller

strike zone — both fundamental adjustments designed to give hitters a better chance. It worked: Teams scored nearly 20 percent more runs per game than they had in 1968.

That's the kind of radical change the sport needs now, whether it's minimums for relievers

or requirements for defensive alignments or something else entirely. In two weeks, a collection of the game's most important people will be in Washington talking about it. Let's hope they embrace it, too.

“How to fix baseball? *Washington Post* readers have a few suggestions.”

Move the mound back

We all (well, nearly) want to see the ball get smacked around more. Move the mound back two feet. I know that is probably heresy, but pretty much everything you change in baseball is heresy.

The other thing that needs to happen is get rid of the ridiculous nine- to-10-pitch at-bats because of foul balls. Limit fouls to three or so, and declare the batter out or walked. The smart analytics guys can figure out which would best benefit the game, but one thing would be certain, and that is the end of the interminable at-bats.

— *Roger Kurrus*



JEFF ROBERSON/AP

Make home runs automatic outs

Think radical:

Pitcher may throw once to a base occupied by player. Pitcher may continue to do so, but a ball is charged for each extra time. This will increase steals and save time.

Just as a foul bunt with two strikes is an out, so too any foul ball with two strikes is a strikeout. Enough of this silly praising of batters for a

Baseball fans stand in St. Louis seek shelter from the heat.

“good at-bat” when they foul off five pitches with two strikes.

Except when pitchers are injured, relief pitchers get only X pitches on the mound when coming in to relieve. It's the manager's job to have them ready when they leave the bullpen. My favorite: A home run is an “out,” but each base

runner may advance one base if the out is not the third out of the inning. Truth be told, home runs are boring — a slow trot around the bases, which is just dead time. And more balls would be put in play and there would be fewer strikeouts.

— *Ted Occhialino*

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The sound of silence

I think a big problem in Major League ballparks today, certainly for the Nationals, is that management is making the game experience too noisy, too full of electronic ads and generally just too frantic. I assume they are trying to do the same things some misguided museums and other cultural institutions are, livening up the product to compete with video games.

Baseball is a contemplative game. I grew up in St. Louis, attending a few Browns games before they moved, and following the Cardinals avidly, even to this day though I am far away. The broadcasting team I listened to included Harry Caray, Joe Garagiola and Jack Buck. When the Browns were still around, I eagerly watched Max Patkin, “the clown prince of baseball,” in the first base coaches box, put there by Bill Veeck to mimic the opposing pitcher and just generally entertain the fans. While the Cardinals games were generally well attended, there were quiet moments in every inning when I could hear the infielders chatting to each other. In the meantime, until I was old enough to go on my own, my grandfather would explain the nuances of the game to me, as he carefully filled out his scorecard with those confusing symbols.

The contemplative aspects of the game have been badly disrupted in modern times. Free agency means that fans have trouble identifying closely with many of the players that come and go through the revolving door. Current pitching patterns mean that there is little drama generated

over whether a pitcher will last for a complete game or get a shutout.

I think baseball management needs to work to restore some of the contemplativeness of baseball. For instance, how about teaching fans by using those obnoxious video scoreboards how to fill out a baseball scorecard, actually showing what to enter after each play? Major league leadership could begin pressuring teams to restore more base stealing, hit-and-run plays, and find some way to discourage today’s excessive focus on home runs by modifying the mound or the bats or the balls. And, finally, let the fans have some silence.

— Mike McGill

More bullpen carts

As a baseball fan of 65 years, I agree that the game has become more boring and less interesting. I haven’t

been to a Nats game in three years, after averaging six to 10 games a year from their arrival. And rarely can I sit through a game on TV without surfing the channels. However, I disagree with some of your conclusions. We all know that the exaggerated shifts can be beaten by bunting or going the other way. Even Ted Williams, late in life, admitted that only his stubborn pride kept him from hitting to left against the Boudreau shift. Had he done so, his lifetime batting average might have exceeded .350. Yet few do it or even try. Sitting back and playing for the three-run homer is self-defeating and boring. The real problem is that few teams and few players play fundamental baseball. Bunting, with few exceptions, is a lost art. Hit and run? What’s that?

You are correct that the use of situational relievers to face one batter



RICK SCUTERI/AP

The Arizona Diamondbacks’ bullpen cart.

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slows the game. But instead of requiring a reliever to face three batters, maybe limit the warmup pitches of subsequent relievers. Drive the relievers in from the bullpen. Is there any other activity in baseball more emblematic of its snail's pace than watching a reliever stroll in from the bullpen?

— Ben Mirman

Shrink the gloves

Two possible changes:

1. Move the pitching rubber back a couple of feet to provide batters slightly more time to react.

2. Reduce the size of gloves so more hit balls get through the infield or fall safely in the outfield. I'm sure some part of the higher batting averages in the first third or

so of the 20th century was due to the much smaller gloves; wouldn't go back to that size, but I think some reduction would be helpful.

— Fred Siskind

Lower the mound

If lowering the mound from 15 inches to 10 inches in the 1960s created more action, I'd support lowering it to five inches now. If that doesn't work, drop it to zero. Why? Lowering the height of the mound will necessitate recalculation of launch angles. This probably will result in fewer home runs but more total hits. Other than that, I'd leave the game alone. Let the hitters learn to hit to the opposite field.

— Steve Baker

Touch Strat-O-Matic

I have followed baseball closely since 1955 (I was 10 years old then growing up in North Carolina and fell in love with the game during the '55 World Series thanks to our 13-inch black and white TV — the state of the art in those days.)

What is happening to the game is sad indeed. One thing's for sure: Even though I'm approaching 74 years of age, I guarantee you I can stand up there and strike out ... and I'll do it for nothing! (In my way of thinking, strikeouts — once "shameful" — are boring, perhaps akin to the NFL's former extra point kicking distance while home runs are more like field goals from 35 yards. Give me a little hit-and-run occasionally!)

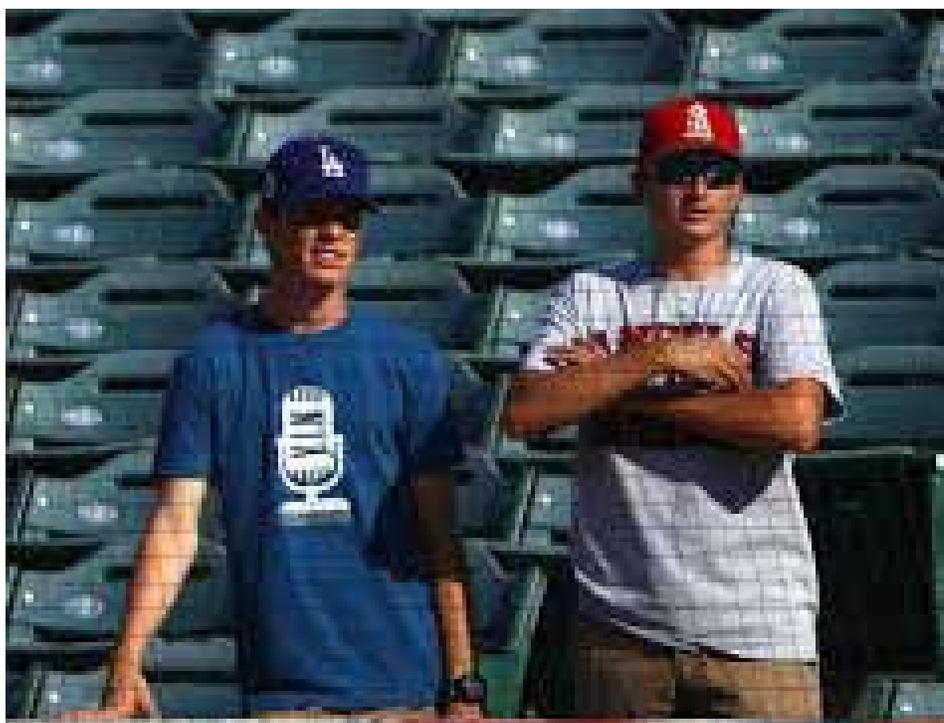
And these farcical shifts make a joke of scoring a baseball game. Yes, I remember the shifts they put on for Ted Williams — and he "made 'em pay"— but the great Splendid Splinter was the exception. Seemingly baseball — so dependent on computer data versus old-fashioned managerial instincts — now emulates the old baseball board game Strat-O-Matic instead of the other way around. So hand me the dice and save me some money.

Bottom line is: If they're losing me, they're truly in trouble.

— Lawson Deaton

Fans look bored

I don't go to Nats games anymore. Getting there's a hassle. But mostly, it's just too dull.



VICTOR DECOLONGON/GETTY IMAGES

Fans in Anaheim, Calif., watch batting practice before a game.

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Baseball's joined football in becoming better on TV than in person. You can see more. Close-ups, replays, etc.

But now, I mostly listen on the radio and keep the TV on in case something interesting happens. Which is rare. Because TV baseball is dull, too.

I see the faces of the people sitting behind home plate. They look bored, glancing at their phones, yawning. Contrast that with the fans you see watching hockey and basketball (even football) on TV. They're excited to be there. Not those fans behind the plate. What a great advertisement for MLB.

I also see the defensive shifts you mentioned. Looks wrong to me, all the infielders on one side. Does it work? Probably. Is it exciting? Please.

And the launch angle? Maybe a few more homers. But more strikeouts than hits, more lazy flyballs, and fewer base runners. Less action.

Bottom line: If they're losing me, a white guy in my 60s who used to love the game, they have big problems. And my 30-something son, who loved baseball as a kid, pays no attention at all anymore. He's all-NBA.

— *Dave Cassidy*

Elephants never forget

I develop models of how animals and people move through space and time. Using mathematical models, satellites and drones, I try to anticipate how rhinos, elephants and poachers move over immense tracts of land on a given day. With

this knowledge, I can strategically deploy Rangers to intercept poachers before they reach a target animal.

We can adapt this model to baseball: Where should pitchers throw a ball to a specific batter, how to move players into optimum defense positions, and how to use the pitch placement to shade infielders to the highest likelihood of an intercept, getting to the batted ball. It is what we call the shift.

Now, I suppose baseball could rule that you must keep two infielders on both sides of second base. Maybe the third infielder could not cross the vertical plane between home and second base until the pitch is delivered, contact is made, at the top of the windup, whatever you want. It is tough to enforce and will likely result in a player being stationed inches from the second base center line. While this may not have the same direct impact as the most radical of infield shifts, it will still skew the advantage to the defense.

Here is what I have learned from tracking things in Africa: Go where you are unexpected, change patterns of movement, cause instability, and create doubt in the mind of the actors that what they had previously been expecting will now change.

For Bryce, choke up on the bat, forget launch angle and smack a single to left.

I very carefully monitor the behavior of my good guys (Rangers) and bad guys (poachers). The latter will change tactics, so I need to anticipate and counter. Baseball should be the same. You can beat

the shift but not if you are trying to hit the ball into the next Zip code.

Except, money talks. If home runs are paid a premium, you cannot rationally expect players to execute a great sacrifice bunt.

Sadly, catching poachers will be easier than getting baseball players to hit sac flies. I do not believe baseball can legislate change in the game.

Here is the real problem as I see it: a failure to cultivate young fans who understand the game compounded by adults who do not pay attention at the game.

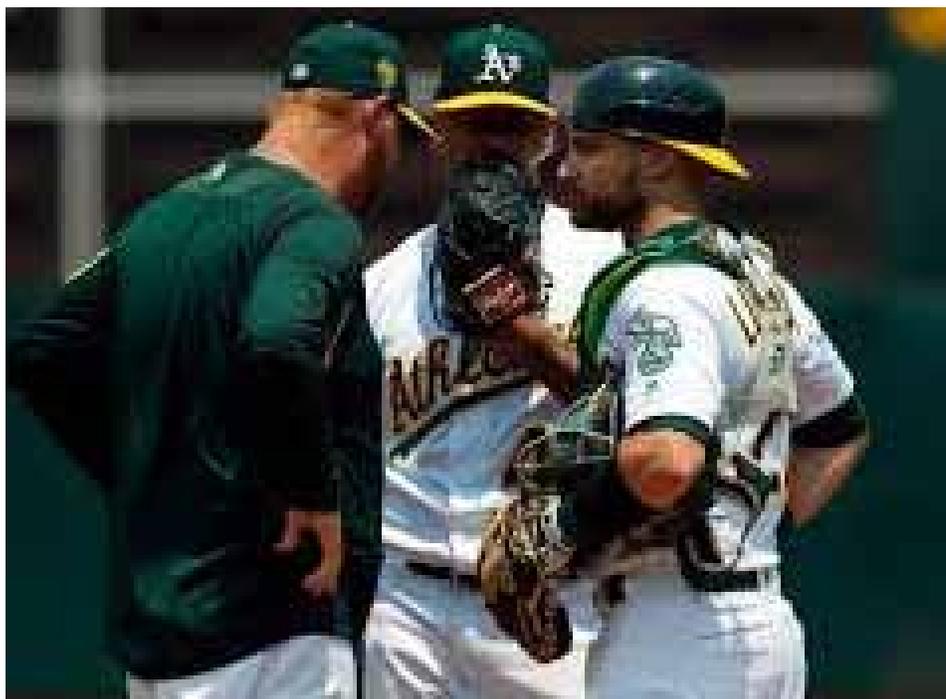
[Recently], I did some data collection in Section 215. At any given time during the game, over 25 percent of the fans were looking at a handheld device. I know because I counted. Two kids in 215 Row C (expensive seats) never looked up at the game for three innings. I sit right behind them, and they were totally disinterested. Not surprisingly, their mom and dad spent those same innings texting.

We can argue the shift, launch angle, exit velocity, automatic walks (I hate that), speeding up the game, anything. It does not matter if folks are no longer interested in baseball. Attendance figures and TV audiences tend to suggest this.

The real question for MLB is how to cultivate the fan base, especially youth, to enjoy what makes baseball different from other sports. Unfortunately, I don't have an easy answer.

The lesson for today: work hard in school and hit the ball to left. Wherever you are, that's where you

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JASON O. WATSON/GETTY IMAGES

It's a mound visit, so vexing to so many fans.

will be. At the ballpark, shut up, put down the phone and immerse yourself in a beautiful thing.

— *Tom Snitch*

Go faster

I have thought about this for some time. I am from Baltimore, and I used to go to Orioles games at Memorial Stadium.

It was different back then. Pitchers threw the ball almost as soon as they got it back from the catcher. Catchers did not look at the dugout before each pitch to see what the manager wanted to throw. Batters did not step out of the box after each pitch. There was no pitch count. Pitchers went as far as they could. If they ran out of gas, only then was a reliever brought in. It was fun to see if the hitters could get to the pitcher in the late innings.

Most of all, what has detracted from my enjoyment of the game is the practice of routinely bringing in hard-throwing relievers in the last two or three innings. Who can hit 99 mph fastballs with movement? The game has become too predictable.

— *Alan Rosenthal*

It's all about the fundamentals

Please let me politely take issue with your assertion that “radical” rule changes are needed to “fix” baseball.

If you watched the Nats [during a recent loss], you saw the Red Sox nearly squeeze four infielders onto the right side when slumping, overpaid Bryce Harper came to bat in the ninth, down three with a runner aboard. Rather than simply

square to bunt and dribble something (anything) serviceable down the third base line to sustain a last-chance rally and make the defense think twice about future shifting, Bam Bam instead flailed away with all his might and ultimately struck out by fanning at an eye-high fastball away.

If players making tens of millions annually have time to take groundballs at first, then they've got time to learn to bunt. After all, Bob Gibson, Steve Carlton, Ernie Banks, Roberto Clemente and even slugger Willie McCovey, among other '69 all-stars, all could have laid down a bunt if their opponents had ever dared to leave the left side of the infield undefended.

It's not the front-office algorithm geeks who've created baseball's overpriced boredom. I blame this generation of multimillionaire players who lack many fundamental baseball skills yet show little to no interest in remedial learning. For example, when was the last time you saw a Nats player hit one in a gap or down the line and properly cut first base on the way to second with his left foot instead of his right? Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, Jackie Robinson, Willie Mays, Lou Brock, Richie Allen, Davey Lopes and even the dopey Rickie Henderson and Vince Coleman never cut a bag with their right foot because they were taught that doing so makes it harder to control your momentum and will slow you down. But now it's very rare to see a young Nats millionaire cut a bag with anything other than his right foot. No wonder they're always getting injured on the base paths.

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And don't even get me started (again) on sliding. Why in the world would you choose both to slow your stride as you prepare to dive, for a bag and then expose your dainty fingers and wrists to that immovable bag and a defender's spikes when you could go in hard with stronger feet and legs like Brock, popping up and being quickly ready to take another bag if a throw gets away?

Bottom line is: Rule changes may be helpful, and I'm not necessarily opposed to some that have been discussed. But unless modern players develop sound, fundamental skills, the trends toward less action and more empty seats will likely continue.

— *Darren McKinney*

Drop the blackouts

Baseball is too difficult to watch on TV.

Growing up, I turned on the TV almost every day to watch the Red Sox and developed a serious loyalty that has lasted over the more than 40 years since I have lived outside of New England. When they were in pennant races or the World Series, I watched them on broadcast television (and no, we don't need to rehash the details.) Because I saw them on TV, I went to Fenway as often as I my dad would take me.

Unless you have an overly expensive cable package, it's nearly impossible to watch baseball. I subscribe to mlb.tv to watch the Sox, but am blacklisted from watching any Nats or Orioles games, whether they be on the road or at home.

In their greed for every last dollar, MLB is shutting itself off from developing a new fan base — and alienating its existing one. Several times, I have thrown my hands up in the air and said forget it. (Easier to do when the Sox are playing poorly; I'm back this year. Though what to do with the playoffs?)

This is no small thing. Every other industry seems to understand the concept of loss leaders save MLB. Yes, the games are too long and perhaps too many players strike out (I think it's a thrilling thing to watch; almost as fun as a home run) but fans don't even have the opportunity to be bored when it's this difficult, and expensive, to simply watch the game.

And if you don't watch, you're not going to be interested. Which means you won't go to the ballpark.

If MLB is really interested in regaining its fans, it should broadcast games and it should absolutely drop the blackouts on its paid subscriptions.

— *Norman Maynard*

Robot ump's now

I'd make three suggestions for improving the game:

1. Automate the strike zone. Way too many pitches outside the strike zone are called strikes, which causes batters to strike out more on called strikes, and also causes them to expand the zone that they have to cover. "Personalized" strike zones are often defended on the grounds that "batters can train themselves to recognize them," but why should batters be responsible for doing the

umpire's job?

2. Restore the general admission ticket. It would give fans much more incentive to go to Who Cares games if they knew that if they put out 10 bucks they could then sit in any unoccupied seat behind the (say) 10th row of the reserved sections all around the park, including between the foul lines and behind the plate. Today's ticket prices are a joke for anyone who doesn't want to sit in the nosebleed sections.

3. Shorten the time of games, or more specifically, shorten the time between pitches, and enforce the rule instead of ignoring it.

— *Andy Moursund*

Embrace tradition

Don't mess with the game. Instant gratification has taken over our society. Don't advocate for changes to force stuff to make so-called fans happy.

— *Tom Martella*

Or don't

My fix would be that after six innings, if a game is on pace to last over three hours, starting in the seventh inning every batter would start with a 1-0 count. Then each succeeding inning, batters would start with 1-1, 2-1, 3-1, then 3-2 counts!

You're welcome!

— *John Alarie*

Respond to a Columnist

Readers feel they get to know columnists better than they do reporters. They know the points of view, interests and biases of columnists. They know which columnists respond to their personal inquiries and which focus on the issues and events.

John Kelly (John Kelly's Washington) as Answer Man will take on family history or local color questions. On August 25, 2018, when asked about Turner Arena's history, he researched so far into Joe Turner's life that he could describe the 25-pound wedding cake "topped with a miniature boxing ring. The tiny cake-topping figures of the bride and groom had their fists raised in a boxing stance." Kelly has honed his research skills and knows the archives of *The Washington Post* first hand.

Petula Dvorak cares about children. Children named Makiyah, Relisha and nameless. She knows about boys "having a heck of a summer. On the couch." About economic disparity, video games, dress-coding and wards "ever more separate and unequal."

These and other columnists receive comments. Many are found online. Some are told their ideas are on target, limited, inflammatory, only part of the story.

Read "Baseball needs fixing, and it starts with the courage to think radically." Several observations can be made from the first paragraphs of Barry Svrluga's sports column:

- He knows baseball history and Washington's baseball history
- He knows changes in baseball rules
- His column has a news peg: The upcoming All-Star Game
- He knows current stats, including attendance figures

And he does not like what the stats are revealing about the slow game and lagging interest in it.

1. What are two suggestions to improve baseball with which you agree?
2. What are two suggestions to fix baseball with which you disagree?
3. What do you suggest to improve the game and encourage attendance?
4. We have reprinted some of the responses sent in by readers. Do any agree with you?
5. Which is a favorite solution of yours?
6. What does the sharing of readers' responses add to a columnist's interaction with readers?

An Integrated Curriculum For The Washington Post Newspaper In Education Program

WashPost PR Blog

Monica Hesse becomes gender columnist

Originally Published May 22, 2018

From Features Editor Liz Seymour, Deputy Features Editor David Malitz and Deputy Features Editor Mitch Rubin:

We are thrilled to tell you that Monica Hesse will become *The Post's* first gender columnist, bringing her signature voice to a wide-ranging column that will explore this defining social issue.

A national search brought us more than 100 applicants for this new position, but Monica stood out from the beginning. One of our most distinctive writers, she excels at everything from long-form narratives to breaking news, and is known for writing with poignancy and humor.

A 2007 Style intern, Monica has spent her career here as a general-assignment reporter in Features, except for a year on David Finkel's team in 2014. She has built an expansive portfolio of stories on politics, popular culture, social movements, forgotten histories and other narratives capturing the meaning of modern life.

She has already written extensively about gender. She has explored sexual identity through an older transgender woman and a teenager who identifies as non-binary. Her Election Day 2016 profile of Gladys Beeman, who was born the day women earned the right to vote and was headed to the polls to vote for a woman president, was a beautiful story about gender politics and women's rights. She has tackled abortion, Anita Hill, and Gwyneth Paltrow's website Goop. In October, she and Dan Zak led a team in Features that produced new reporting on Harvey Weinstein and his egregious behavior.

Monica grew up in Normal, Illinois. She graduated summa cum laude from Bryn Mawr College with a degree in English, and received a master's degree in writing from Johns Hopkins University. She is the author of six books, including *American Fire: Love, Arson and Life in a Vanishing Land*, which was based on a *Post* story about a series of fires set by a couple on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. It received widespread acclaim, was a year-end notable book in *The Post* and *The New York Times* and was nominated for an Edgar award for Best Fact Crime.

WashPost PR Blog

Theresa Vargas transitions to Metro columnist

Originally Published April 5, 2018

From Local Editor Mike Semel and Deputy Local Editor Monica Norton:

We are thrilled to announce that Theresa Vargas will be *The Post's* next Metro columnist. Theresa will join Petula Dvorak and Courtland Milloy anchoring the Metro page and generating new digital readers across the country.

In her nearly nine years on Local's Enterprise team, Theresa has written hundreds of stories making sure the region's marginalized had a voice. She introduced us to Khalil Bridges, who was about to enter his senior year at one of Baltimore's most troubled high schools when he found himself living in his family's home alone, with no electricity or gas. His story was so beautifully told that our readers started a GoFundMe page and got him his own apartment.

Her award-winning work about D.C. victims of gun violence who must now use wheelchairs explored not just the physical and emotional toll of the injuries, but also the rising costs to taxpayers. During the 2008 recession, she and photographer Michael Williamson traveled the country on "Recession Road," finding people deeply affected by the sagging economy.

The list goes on and on. But what's so impressive about Theresa is that she can write about anything. She was hired here in 2007 to cover cops in Prince William County. She found gems on that beat, too. She is adept at hard news, features, analyses and spotting trends. She most recently worked with Investigative on its Fired/Rehired series. All her work is deeply reported and riveting.

Theresa was born and raised in San Antonio, Texas. She attended Stanford University and Columbia journalism school. We hired her from *Newsday*, where she covered cops and schools before creating a Youth Beat.

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Inside e-Replica

Establish an Alert | *Know When Your Columnist Publishes*

As you have gotten acquainted with the many columnists at The Washington Post, some will interest you more than others. You like the style or humor of one. You may find the topic presented by one columnist is of interest or that several columnists relate to an area you are studying.

Create a Monitor

If you want to follow what these columnists have to say and not miss a topic, set up a monitor. Here are the steps to follow.



1. Open your e-Replica account and sign in (<http://newspaperdirect.com/>).
2. At the top of the page select the My Services pull-down tab.
3. Select My Monitors.
4. The page will show the current monitors you have created (All monitors) and a second button allows you to “add new monitor.” Select it.
5. In search term, type in the name of the columnist between quotation marks.
6. Be sure to select the notification frequency. You may choose 1) Once a day, 2) Every other day, or 3) As-it-happens.
7. Select the time of day you want the alert to arrive. Think about the best time for your schedule. Do you want it during a particular class? During study hall? Or when you are at home and can read it more easily?
8. Save the monitor you wish to establish.

Bookmark It



When you have read your chosen columnist’s latest commentary, decide whether to save it. It is easy to do. Select the “star” icon to add the column to your bookmark.