

## Baseball . . . So it goes

by Jason\_Love

Some say that baseball is the national pastime, while others believe it is watching celebrities have nervous breakdowns. As that debate rages on, we will focus on baseball.

Baseball dates back to 1845, when Alexander Cartwright created an actual rulebook with page numbers and everything. He convinced players to stop throwing the ball at the runner, and he replaced the upright poles with soft, harmless bases (the kind of forward thinking inspired by impalement).

Not everyone agreed with his rules, but Cartwright had the upper hand: He could write.

Soon there were "umpires" and, shortly thereafter, chants to "kill the umpire!" I can be watching a broadcast two thousand miles away and still shout loud enough for the umps to hear.

"Are you blind?! I'm watching frame by frame. Kill the umpire!"

Helpful tip: When you're watching a recorded game, you have to shout extra loud to go back in time.

And though baseball has evolved into the higajillion-dollar business it is today, there are still some basic flaws. Why, for instance, do we call it a walk when the player jogs to first base and then becomes a runner? And how come a "strike" when a player misses the ball?

And why, God, why, must each game take longer than childbirth? Really. Games are so long that we have to stop and sing just to stay awake. That may have worked for Alexander Cartwright, but you and I get 300 channels.

But I digress. The real problem with baseball is Joe Morgan.

During his career, Joe broke all sorts of records, but what made him truly great was that, on the field, he didn't have a microphone. Now he announces games with a mission to not once change his inflection until we are completely spellbound and become his minions.

“The two-seamer fastball, see, moves different because of how you hold it. See, I’m holding it different. Two-seamer. I’m holding it different. For fastballs. Jones just hit a home run, but look at my fingers!”

So it goes.

When I hear about the size of the universe, I’m embarrassed by how much time I give to baseball. Come the playoffs, I schedule my weeks around it.

“The funeral’s at three?! Shoot, that doesn’t work for me. Yankees-Braves.”

But baseball is a part of life, as evidenced by *The Natural*, *For Love of the Game*, *Eight Men Out*, and of course *Ed*, the blockbuster hit starring Matt LeBlanc and his monkey Ed, who not only plays baseball but also wrote the script. These films give meaning to our pastime and, yea, our journeys on earth.

[Enter movie trailer voice] “For those who marveled at the story of Shoeless Joe comes an even more remarkable tale of hope and glory that of Legless Bob.”

Baseball has even shaped our language. Before 1845, for instance, you couldn’t say “right off the bat.” Things just happened as they happened, in total chaos. You couldn’t “cover your bases” or give a “ballpark figure” or “make it to first base with your date.”

And let’s not forget the woman in Texas who knocked out a burglar with her 34-ounce Louisville Slugger. If it weren’t for baseball, that scene could have played out much differently.

So you non-fans must forgive us our passion for baseball. It takes our mind off the end of the world and places it on something that is, if not more entertaining, certainly more safe. That’s right. SAFE. Are you kidding? Kill the umpire!

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