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OPINIONS.

▶ INSIDE

New MLB rule changes upset fans, the TikTok ban has less to do with keeping your data safe, and MLS fans can't chant!

FAST GAMES & FURIOUS FANS

On Saturday, Feb. 25, a tie between the Boston Red Sox and Atlanta Braves caused controversy.

With the game tied, and two outs in the bottom of the ninth, Braves infielder Cal Conley stepped to the plate. The bases were fully loaded, and the hitters' count was 3-2.

As the pitcher began his windup to throw (being rushed by the new rule change), the umpire called off the pitch and ended the game. Conley, the batter, was not set in time and was given a strike, resulting in a game-ending strikeout.

It only took two days for the new Major League Baseball rule changes to cause controversy at the end of a close game. If we were to apply this to a playoff game, or a late regular season game with major playoff implications, the backlash would echo everywhere.

The new MLB rules say the pitcher only has 20 seconds to begin their pitch delivery with runners on base. If there is nobody on base, they have 15 seconds.

As for the batter, he must be set in the box with at least eight seconds remaining on the pitch clock, or else he gets a strike applied to his count.

I love the idea of speeding the pace of baseball for a larger audience to enjoy. But, it should not determine a game. In the later innings of a game, the rules should not apply. I believe the pitch clock should stop going into effect during the sixth inning.

When the game slows down, the intensity rises. Especially in a close matchup, fans build their excitement. Each pitch becomes methodical.

In 2016, David Ross of the Cubs faced off against Pedro Baez of the Dodgers. Game one of the National League Championship Series.

I the sixth inning, the Cubs lead 3-1 and were looking to add insurance.With a runner on second base. Baez took one minute and 51 seconds just to throw a single pitch.

For reference, during spring training this year, the Dodgers got three outs against the Padres in that exact same time period.

These scenarios could be blended to satisfy both old new fans. The first five innings of a game would run smoothly and much faster, while the last four would be a slow grind that feels more important than they are.
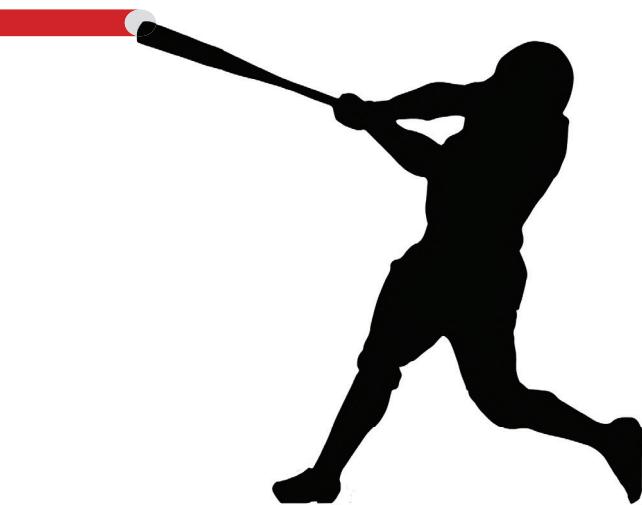
However, the pitch clock is still flawed. A great example was when Max Scherzer pitched for the Mets against the Washington Nationals on Friday, March 3rd. Scherzer got the Nationals batter to ground into a double play, yet after the play was over, it got waved off.

The umpires ruled that Scherzer hadn't delivered the ball in the pitch window. The Nationals ended up scoring eight runs in that inning, instead of having a momentum killing double-play.

If the opposite happened, and the batter hit a home run off the pitch, the Nationals would be angry. In that scenario, the batter would be awarded a ball, but not the run.

The play had already occurred. Hypothetically, if a runner slid into the second baseman on that play, injuring the baseman (which has happened before), his injury would be in vain. That's another potential problem

Pitch clock violations should not nullify a play. If a play wasn't to be interfered after a violation, the next batter should be given the effects of the violation. So, in this case, the double play would stand, but the next batter would start their at-bat off with a ball.

Since we've already seen the worst-case scenario of these rules, without serious effects on the standings, we can still prevent this from happening again. The last thing the baseball world wants is to see a game ruined by the new rules.

Written By: Nicholas Wire

The War on TikTok

On March 7 Congress introduced the RESTRICT Act, a bill that would give the government the power to ban TikTok. Lawmakers spoke about doing this in order to protect your privacy. The truth is that this is a witch hunt focused on keeping Americans (and their data) on American-made social media apps.

Tik Tok has given a platform and sustainability to so many peoples' small businesses, many of which were born on TikTok. Without TikTok many of these businesses will be forced to close their shops, or worse, move to another app.

The RESTRICT Act doesn't focus solely on banning just TikTok. It gives the government power to be able to ban any foreign apps they deem a danger to our safety and privacy. But the bill doesn't even specify that this bill focuses on apps. The bill says its purpose is to "review and prohibit certain transactions between persons in the United States and foreign adversaries".

With this broad phrasing, if the bill is passed, Congress will have the power to ban any and all foreign apps. Although the bill states its only tech from "foreign adversaries", the definition of this phrase is set and can be changed by the government.

Not only this but the bill gives the government a scapegoat as the RESTRICT Act puts this power directly in the hands of the secretary of commerce. If this bill was truly about TikTok then it should be directly targeted in the bill. Instead the bill uses vague wording so that it can continue to be used on any and all foreign tech.

Clearly this bill is not about TikTok but instead a way for the government to keep American people using American apps and tech.

This is made more clear by the fact that the CEO of TikTok has already started working on a plan to protect our data and privacy, however, this project was met with nothing but resistance. On March 23 the CEO, Zou Zi Chew, testified in front of the US congress over proposed a plan he is calling Project Texas. The plan revolves around holding the data of its American users within the state of Texas.

When Chew was on trial, facing allegations that TikTok was selling user data. Many of our lawmakers were concerned with the fact that holding our data on foreign soil would mean we couldn't protect it.

Unfortunately, TikTok's direct solution to the concerns of our Congress people fell on deaf ears. Our lawmakers's unwillingness to meet TikTok halfway with the Project Texas proposal shows us that this bill has nothing to do with protecting tour data. The true intent of this bill isn't to keep us safe but to keep us on American apps.

Written By: Eduardo Velasquez

While soccer has steadily grown into American culture, one thing has remained stagnant: chant culture. Americans suck at creating original chants. I wish there was a better way to put it.

This trademark "Fight and Win!" cheer from the Seattle Sounders of Major League Soccer lives in infamy amongst foreign soccer fans. It's clear why we get made fun of by fans abroad.

I'm not cherry picking the worst American chants and the most impressive chants from around the world either. The Sounders are known countrywide for having one of the best and most loyal fan bases in MLS, and they use this chant proudly at every game.

The clips I've presented from clubs around the world showcase a fully original song curated by each group of fans. This level of passion, dedication, and inventiveness is the norm in areas where soccer is the most popular sport—which happens to be most of the world. The difference in creativity and volume between our songs and theirs is palpable.

This isn't to say there's any lack of passionate and loyal fan bases here. Take newly formed Charlotte F.C. For example. in their inaugural home match in MLS last February, they filled the Carolina Panthers stadium to its 74,479 capacity.

If you told me even five years ago that an American soccer club would fill more than 70,000 seats on their debut, I'd call you insane. Let alone a team from North Carolina, which, according to The 18 Futbol and Estately, wouldn't even make the top 10 in American soccer hubs.

The point is, Americans love soccer now. However, creative and original fan music is a massive contributor to what makes a live atmosphere so electric. Until we're able to improve upon this, we will continue to be subject to taunting and teasing from the rest of the world.

Written By: Aydin Abdollahi

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