

# "BASEBALL"

BY PAT/SALTY

SPORTS ARE GREAT.

BUT THEY ARE PLAYED BY, COACHED BY,  
AND OWNED AND RUN BY - WELL, BY  
PEOPLE WHO WILL NEVER EVER BE  
ROCKET SCIENTISTS - PUT IT THAT WAY.  
TAKE BASEBALL, FOR EXAMPLE.

ITS RESPECT FOR TRADITION IS GREAT  
BUT ITS CLINGING TO THE PAST IS NOT.  
ITS AMERICAN LEAGUE HAS HAD THE  
DESIGNATED HITTER RULE SINCE 1973  
YET ITS NATIONAL LEAGUE STILL CLINGS TO  
THE FICTION THAT PITCHERS ARE HITTERS.

SURE THEY ARE; PITCHERS HIT LIKE  
HITTERS PITCH - BADLY. VERY BADLY.  
YOU SEE, BASEBALL PEOPLE HATE CHANGE.

ANY AND ALL CHANGE. THEY ARE THE  
ULTIMATE REACTIONARIES OF SPORT.

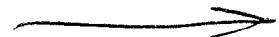
THIS HAS LED BASEBALL TO HAVING A  
FANATICALLY DEVOTED FAN BASE THAT -

VIS A VIS FOOTBALL - HAS BEEN IN GRADUAL  
DECLINE FOR YEARS. MEASURED BY EVERY  
RATIONAL CRITERIA, IT IS FOOTBALL THAT  
IS NOW AMERICA'S SPORT, AND HAS BEEN

FOR YEARS. THE FUNNY THING IS THAT,  
FOR ALL THEIR DEVOTION AND RESPECT FOR

BASEBALL TRADITION AND THE PAST, BASEBALL PEOPLE  
SUFFER A MYSTERIOUS COLLECTIVE AMNESIA  
IN SO FAR AS BASEBALL'S HISTORY TO PAST  
CHANGES IS CONCERNED. OH, SURE, THEY CAN  
CITE CHAPTER AND VERSE CONCERNING

NUMBERS & STATISTICS AND WHAT THIS OR  
THAT TEAM OR PLAYER HIT IN THE 1927  
WORLD SERIES - OR WHATEVER - BUT THEY



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ARE ABSOLUTELY 100% CLUELESS ABOUT HOW BASEBALL PLAYERS AND BASEBALL FANS AND BASEBALL PEOPLE HAVE - FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS - REJECTED AND RESISTED ~~UNWITTINGLY~~ EVERY CHANGE IN RULES AND EQUIPMENT EVER INTRODUCED INTO THE SPORT INCLUDING ALL THE NEW EQUIPMENT AND RULES THEY NOW TAKE TOTALLY FOR GRANTED AND TREAT WITH THE SANCTITY OF HOLY WRIT PASSED DOWN FROM ABOVE! WHEN CATCHERS MASKS WERE FIRST INTRODUCED? "THAT'S FOR SISSYS; BALLPLAYERS DON'T USE MASKS!"

NOW, OF COURSE, ALL CATCHERS DO AND HAVE FOR MANY, MANY DECADES.

BUT NEVER WOULD SUCH AN INNOVATION EVER HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IF IT HAD BEEN LEFT TO THE BASEBALL "PURISTS" AND BASEBALL "TRADITIONALISTS".

SHINGAURDS? NO. MODERN DAY MITS? NO. ~~AND~~ "MODERN" ELECTRIC LIGHTS IN ORDER TO PLAY NIGHT GAMES? HEAVEN FORBID!

"BASEBALLS MEANT TO BE PLAYED IN DAYTIME"

ALL THE TRADITIONALISTS + PURISTS OF THE PAST CRIED OUT. "IT'S A CHEAP GIMMICK THAT WILL DESTROY THE SPORT", THE FEAR OF CHANGE BUNCH CLAIMED. ON AND ON

AND ON BASEBALL PEOPLE FROM DAY ONE ALWAYS REJECTED + RESISTED CHANGE OF ANY KIND. BASEBALL HISTORY PROVES IT.

ONLY - AND THIS IS THE STRANGE PART - THE SAME BASEBALL PEOPLE WHO TODAY STILL OPPOSE ANY CHANGES DON'T EVEN KNOW THIS HISTORY. BASEBALL PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS HAD TO ALL →

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PREVIOUS changes in BASEBALL THAT HAVE -  
COLLECTIVELY - MADE BASEBALL WHAT IT IS!  
THE REACTIONARYS OF BASEBALL HAVE FOUGHT  
AND CRITISIZED AND REJECTED EVERY  
BASEBALL INNOVATION INTRODUCED OVER  
THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS OR MORE AND  
THEY DON'T EVEN REMEMBER HAVING DONE SO!  
OR, WE SHOULD SAY, TODAYS change RESISTERS  
HAVE NO IDEA HOW ALL THE PREVIOUS  
GENERATIONS OF change RESISTERS ALSO  
REJECTED + RESISTED EVERY change IN  
BASEBALL RULES OR EQUIPMENT. NONE.  
NADA. ZILTCH. ITS ANOOTHER EXAMPLE OF  
COLLECTIVE AMNESSIA ALIVE AND WELL  
ON A LARGE GROUP LEVEL. (THE DISTURBING  
IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH MASS AMNESSIA  
EPISODES - WHEN APPLIED TO FAR MORE  
SERIOUS SUBJECTS - BECOMES READILY  
APPARENT TO THE TUNED IN READER)  
PERHAPS, RATHER THEN AMNESSIA, IT SHOULD  
BE CHARACTERIZED AS IGNORENCE, PLAIN  
AND SIMPLE; A SIMPLE IGNORENCE OF  
HISTORY, OF THEIR OWN HISTORY. LETS JUST  
PAINT THE picture PLAIN + SIMPLE; IF ALL  
THE BASEBALL PURISTS HAD THEIR WAY,  
BASEBALL WOULD STILL BE PLAYING ONLY IN  
THE AFTERNOONS BY MEN IN BAGGY HOT  
FLANNEL UNIFORMS WITH DEFORMED FINGERS  
AND DEFORMED BODYS DUE TO ZERO ~~SAFE~~  
SAFETY EQUIPMENT; PURE ENOUGH FOR YA?  
IN SHORT, IT WOULD ~~BE~~ SUCK TO PLAY AND  
SUCK TO WATCH IT BE PLAYED; BUT AT LEAST ALL  
THE BASEBALL "PURISTS" AND "TRADITIONALISTS"  
WOULD ENJOY IT - OR WOULD THEY? NO! →

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FOR, LIKE MANY, MANY OTHER GROUPS,  
IF THEY EVER ACTUALLY GET THEIR  
OWN WAY, THEY WOULD HATE IT. THEY  
WOULDN'T ENJOY IT OR LIKE IT ONE BIT.  
THIS IS BECAUSE THEY ARE DREAMERS AND  
NOT REALISTS; DREAMERS IMAGINE  
SOME DREAMED UP UTOPIA THAT  
NEVER EXISTED AND CAN NEVER EXIST  
IN REALITY WHILE REALISTS STAY  
GROUNDED IN WHAT IS ACTUALLY POSSIBLE  
TO BRING ABOUT. THATS THE DIFFERENCE.  
BASEBALL "PURISTS" IMAGINE SOME  
MYTHICAL PAST THAT IN REALITY NEVER  
EXISTED! SO WHAT ARE THEY "PRESERVING"  
FROM CHANGE? NOT BASEBALL, THATS  
FOR SURE. BECAUSE BASEBALL HAS ~~SOONER~~  
~~CREATED~~ ADAPTED CHANGE AFTER CHANGE  
AFTER CHANGE THESE LAST 100 ODD YEARS  
WHETHER THEY LIKED IT OR APPROVED OF IT OR  
NOT. IT HAD TO IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.  
IT NEEDS EVER MORE + GREATER CHANGE  
AND AT A FASTER RATE OF CHANGE, IN ORDER  
TO COMPETE AND STAY INTERESTING  
AND PROFITABLE AND RELEVANT AS A  
SPORT IN THE DECADES AHEAD AND NOT  
TO END UP AS A MINOR DYING PASTIME  
EMBRACED ONLY BY A SMALLER + SMALLER  
GROUP OF FANATICAL FOLLOWERS. I SAY THIS  
- I DO, SALTY DOES - BECAUSE I LOVE BASEBALL  
AND HAVE LOVED BASEBALL ALL MY LIFE AND  
I WANT TO SEE IT IMPLEMENT AND EMBRACE  
CHANGES AND INNOVATIONS THAT ARE LONG  
OVERDUE AND NEEDED - WHILE AT THE SAME TIME  
KEEPING IT AS A TOP AMERICAN SPORT (IT CAN BE DONE) XX