

We Tried Baseball and It Didn't Work

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An allegory? Sarcasm? Humorous pastiche? You decide.

The fanatical proponents of baseball tell us that it is a very exciting game, fun to play and fun to watch. They are clearly either stupid or evil or both, because we tried baseball and it didn't work.

First of all, the requirements for the game are stupid: it does not scale. They say you need at least nine players on a side. That's stupidly inefficient. The minimum number of players is clearly four: three men on and one batting. That's how we played: four people on a side.

With only four players, we didn't need all those bases (another obvious inefficiency and lack of scaling), so we just used one base: home. When a batter makes a hit, he just runs around a square (but see below), coming back to the one "home" base. At first we had the runner run around the full ninety foot square designated by the baseball proponents, but for some reason the baseball guys couldn't see that 360 feet is too far for the runner to run on most hits. No one ever got all the way around without being put out. We found a circle with diameter of 28.64 feet to be nearly ideal. (The circle, with its optimal ratio of area to circumference, is much more efficient than the square proposed by the baseball pushers.)

The equipment "required" by these baseball guys is ludicrous, anachronistic, discriminating, and cruel. First of all, the "baseball" is supposed to be covered in horsehide. This is simultaneously cruel to horses, and discriminatory against the traditional providers of ball covering, pigs and cows. In view of this, we used other balls. We tried an uncovered ball of twine, but its continually decreasing size made the game difficult, especially in later innings. Golf balls went too far and were hard to catch. One of our teams used the heads of dolls they had borrowed from their sisters, but this led to difficulties at home. How the proponents of baseball could push a game that leads to such problems is beyond us.

We finally settled on woolen socks, stuffed with scrap paper and knotted. These were easy to catch, did not go too far, and the dangling end of the sock makes them easy to throw.

The so-called "bats" are also a bad idea. First of all they are nothing like those furry insect-catchers of the night-time sky. The resulting name confusion has delayed many a game. In addition, "baseball bats" (we had to go to a fully-qualified name) are expensive to purchase and difficult to make. We tried letting each batter use any implement he wanted, but this delayed the game and made statistics keeping (a key part of baseball according to the proponents) difficult. We settled on using sticks from around the field. Pine works best, as it is easy to break off the trees, and as the hands get sticky from the pine tar, it becomes easier to catch the sock, when you are in the field.

Speaking of the field, another problem that baseball proponents have not properly handled is that with one person pitching, one catching, and only two in the field, the ball is too often hit to where the fielders aren't, resulting in too much running and also in games that go on too long and have scores that are far too high. We finally figured out – why the original baseball guys didn't, we can't imagine – that using one player as catcher is horribly inefficient. Instead, if the brancher (the term "batter" is both ambiguous and inappropriate in view of the equipment changes we found necessary to make the game work at all) misses a pitch, he

merely picks up the sock himself and tosses it back to the pitcher. This lets you have all four defensive players in the field, which is much more efficient in use of resources, another proof that baseball doesn't scale.

The thing that finally condemns the entire "baseball" idea, however is this: even with all these improvements, the game is no fun at all.

We tried baseball, and it didn't work.