I. Introduction

A. The 2022 Major League Baseball season saw many rule changes, including changes to the playoffs and extra innings games. By increasing the number of Wild Card spots from 2 to 3 per league, teams like the Philadelphia Phillies were able to reach the postseason and advance as far as the World Series. The changes did not stop with the 2022, and previous season’s changes are outside the scope of this presentation.

II. Rule Changes

A. There were three major rule changes added to the game which will be a thoroughly analyzed for its holistic impact on the game.

1. Larger Bases

a. Primary goal is to improve player safety

i. More room to operate

ii. Avoid collisions

b. Base sizes were increased from 15 in2 to 18 in2

c. This decreases the distances between bases

i. 1st to 2nd and 2nd to 3rd reduced by 4.5 in (89.625 ft)

ii. Home to 1st and 3rd to Home reduced by 3 in (89.75 ft)

d. Impact on Game

i. More Stolen Bases?

ii. Infield Singles and RBI Sac-Flies?

iii. Injuries on the base paths

2. Pitch Timer

a. Goal

i. Create a quicker pace of play

b. Rule changes

i. Large set of rule changes

ii. <https://www.mlb.com/glossary/rules/pitch-timer>

c. Review

i. Length of Games

ii. Fan Attendance/Viewership Numbers

iii. Ball/Strike Counts

iv. Free Balls/Strikes

3. Defensive Shift Limits

a. Primary Goals

i. Increase the batting average on balls in play

ii. Allow infields to showcase their athleticism

b. Rules

i. The four infielders must be within the boundary of the infield when the pitcher is on the rubber

ii. Two infields completely on either side of second base

iii. Infielders may not switch sides (to face the “pull” side of a hitter)

iv. If infielders are not properly aligned at the time of the pitch the offense can choose an automatic ball or the result of the play

c. Impact on Game

i. Batting Average

ii. Batting Average on Balls in Play

iii. Highlight plays?

III. Review of Data

A. Where the data was gathered from

1. Baseball Savant

2. MLB Website

3. baseball-reference.com

4. Society for American Baseball Research

5. Analyzing Baseball Data with R

6. The New Ballgame: The Not-So-Hidden Forces Shaping Modern Baseball

B. Only looking at Pre-All-Star Game Statistics for most recent 5 years

C. Review the impact on Teams

1. Which teams have the rule changes seemed to help/hurt the most

IV. Analyzing the Data

A. Stolen Bases

1. Stealing %

2. Attempts

3. Impact on Teams (Winning %)

B. Injuries on the Basepaths

1. Does it actually make the game safer?

C. Highlight Plays

1. Fielding %

2. Defensive Wins Above Replacement (WAR)

D. Game Lengths (Time)

1. Decrease in Game Length

2. Does it increase Fan Attendance/TV Ratings

E. Pitches

F. Batting Average

1. Standard BA and BA on Balls in Play

2. Impact on Teams (Winning %)

V. Conclusion

A. Review of Findings

1. Winners and Losers of rule changes

B. What teams could look for before the trade deadline

1. How have the rule changes impact how the league organizes teams

2. What changes were made by teams this year and how does it look to impact their team

C. Rule changes in recent years have had major impacts on the game of baseball. From decreasing game time to expanding the playoffs, many of the most memorable moments in baseball