DATA608 – Knowledge and Visual Analytics

Final Project Proposal

Peter Gatica

I love baseball and I have always enjoyed playing the game as a little leaguer, high schooler, and adult. As a baseball fanatic and loyal Yankee fan in Texas, I have always enjoyed attending games because I consider it a social game for fans. What other sport can you visit with friends with little chance of missing something unlike other faster paced sports. At least that is how I used to feel.

In the last few years there has been an increase in injuries at major league baseball games due to foul balls hitting spectators and causing serious injuries including death. Many children and senior adults who cannot protect themselves have suffered near fatal injuries. This is not surprising with pitchers throwing faster, hitters getting stronger, and baseballs being wound tighter that in earlier years. The safety net that had previously been erected behind home plate has been extended to the dugouts at most stadiums. Signs warning about the dangers of high velocity foul balls have been placed in certain sections. Is that enough to protect fans? Should the safety nets be extended all the way to the foul poles? Can the MLB do more to protect fans?

The dangers of sitting in areas susceptible to hard hit foul balls will be explored in this interactive project. The foul ball numbers have been collected from the heaviest foul ball days at the ten highest average hit fall ball locations in the MLB in the 2019 season prior to June 5th of that year. Data source: <https://github.com/fivethirtyeight/data/tree/master/foul-balls>

For the analysis, there are several variables to consider for my model: MLB stadium, exit velocity, stadium zone, and the type of foul ball hit. Within my analysis, I will also try to determine the best area of a stadium to sit in and is the MLB doing enough to protect its fans.