

Seattle Mariners R&D Analytics

Written Response

Q. What is one mistake that Seattle Mariners made in recent years?

Mariners has embarked on the rebuilding mission since 2018 having its star players like James Paxton and Mike Zunino got traded to, respectively, Yankees and Rays. I believe from the “Moneyball” standpoint, the decision that the mariners made is understandable as the organization attempts to seek the efficiency in the win/loss – money trade-off. Thanks to this, according to the Bleacher Report’s 2019 article “Re-Ranking All 30 MLB Farm Systems at the End of the 2019 MiLB Season”, Mariners was ranked amongst the Top 5 with five minor league prospects in the Top 100 category as of 2019. However, from a baseball fan point of view, I could argue that the action is not all healthy for the organization; fans want their star players and players that hype up the stadium, because for some of us certain players could be some or entire reason we come to watch the game for. Between what makes a team great and be loved exists the intangible elements, and one of them is the players. Surely on paper, it makes more sense to reduce the salary cap and replace with more win-efficient player, but the franchise stars like James Paxton and Mike Zunino were on their rising trajectory in terms of performance and were the fan favorites. Having kept the star players that represent the spirit of the team would have not only prevented the fan base from diminishing, which consequentially would have led to the increase in revenue, but also fostered the locker-room atmosphere and the synergetic growth of young talents.

Q. What is a rule change that could make baseball more fun?

Two things. There are two things I see that make the baseball less dynamic and less mass-appealing than the likes of basketball or football. I see one of them being the lack of personalities in the sport, which can be explained by the lack of player-fan engagement both in and outside the stadium, and the other being the baseball is not a timed sport. One plausible solution for the first thing is, not strictly constrained to the boundaries of the rule book, but have more exciting live commentary, more celebration and banter and overall mollification of the wall between the players and fans. For instance, Trevor Bauer, a pitcher for Cleveland Indians, owns his own media company to provide a platform for himself as a player to engage directly with the fans and build a narrative about himself as a person. I believe that such change poses the right direction for the future of baseball and media relationship. For the time element of the baseball, I have run into many people in my life that says the baseball is boring because it is a 9-inning sport of regular patterns of attacking and fielding, and even I, as a baseball fan, sometimes cannot deny that when the game goes dead or extra stretch. Although there may be some potential fixes to this like pitch clock, elimination of unlimited innings and bringing the “man on the second”, I think, if the technological scope allows, the game could be way faster and simpler with signs being exchanged between pitcher and catcher remotely and digitally without the complicated mix of hand signals. This can further prevent from signs being stolen, as well as improve the intricacy of the pitch demand from the catcher.