

## All Megablunders 3

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Each of the following sentences is correct or exemplifies a Mega-blunder. Possible Megablunders include ROS, FRAG, AGREE, PR, CASE, PAR, MM, DM. In the space to the left of the sentence, write either C for correct or the abbreviation for the Megablunder. For sentences containing an error, write a complete corrected version in the space below.

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CORRECTED VERSIONS ARE SUGGESTIONS ONLY; OTHER ANSWERS ARE POSSIBLE.

1.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: By dropping a game to the pathetic Tampa Bay Devil Rays, we may be on the verge of another Red Sox collapse.

ERROR: DM

CORRECTED VERSION: By dropping a game to the pathetic Tampa Bay Devil Rays, the Red Sox may have moved to the verge of another collapse.

EXPLANATION: *The introductory phrase contains a gerund, "dropping," whose implied subject is "the Red Sox"--the Red Sox dropped a game. Therefore, "the Red Sox" must be the subject of the main clause.*

2.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: Although, if history is any indication, the tease could still go on for several weeks.

ERROR: FRAG

CORRECTED VERSION: Nevertheless, if history is any indication, the tease could still go on for several weeks.

EXPLANATION: *The original sentence contains two subordinate clauses ("if history is any indication" and "Although...the tease could still go on for several weeks") and no main clause. Substituting the conjunctive adverb "Nevertheless" for the subordinating conjunction "Although" converts "the tease..." to a main clause.*

3.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: The Sox almost never go down uneventfully, which is the most frustrating thing for their legion of fans.

ERROR: PR

CORRECTED VERSION: The Sox' refusal to go down uneventfully is the most frustrating thing for their legion of fans.

EXPLANATION: *In the original sentence, the relative pronoun "which" has no antecedent; it apparently refers to the whole main clause. The easiest solution is to eliminate the pronoun from the sentence by combining the two clauses into one.*

4.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: Because of the accumulated bad karma that hangs over the franchise, the skill of the players in any given year seem to be irrelevant to the outcome.

ERROR: AGREE

CORRECTED VERSION: Because of the accumulated bad karma that hangs over the franchise, the skill of the players in any given year seems to be irrelevant to the outcome.

EXPLANATION: *The subject of the main clause is "skill"--a singular noun. Therefore, the main verb must also be singular--"seems." The plural noun "players" in the intervening phrase does not affect the subject-verb relationship.*

5.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: The team not only has squandered huge leads but also it has come roaring from behind only

to fall short.

ERROR: PAR

CORRECTED VERSION: The team not only has squandered huge leads but also has come roaring from behind only to fall short.

EXPLANATION: *The correlative conjunctions "not only...but also" require parallel structure. In the original sentence, a verb phrase ("has squandered") follows "not only" and a complete clause ("it has come...") follows "but also." The corrected version reduces the clause to a parallel verb phrase by eliminating its subject.*

6.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: The many disappointments over the years leave fans wanting to tear their hair out; or possibly organize a boycott of Fenway Park.

ERROR: FRAG

CORRECTED VERSION: The many disappointments over the years leave fans wanting to tear their hair out or possibly organize a boycott of Fenway Park.

No change required here.

EXPLANATION: *A semicolon must have an independent clause on each side of it. In the original sentence, the words following the semicolon form a fragment because they do not form an independent clause. To fix the error, simply remove the semicolon.*

7.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: In each of the last four World Series the Red Sox have played, their opponents have won exactly one more game than them.

ERROR: CASE

CORRECTED VERSION: In each of the last four World Series the Red Sox have played, their opponents have won exactly one more game than they.

EXPLANATION: *Don't be too quick to assume that a pronoun at the end of a sentence must be an object. The pronoun that ends the original sentence is actually the subject of an elliptical (implied) clause: "...they [have won]." It must be in the subject form.*

8.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: In 1986, the Sox were just one strike away from a World Championship against the Mets, then the roof fell in.

ERROR: ROS

CORRECTED VERSION: In 1986, the Sox were just one strike away from a World Championship against the Mets when the roof fell in.

EXPLANATION: *The original sentence contains two main clauses joined by a comma and a conjunctive adverb ("then"). Raising the comma to a semi-colon or period would be one way of correcting the error. Subordinating one of the clauses, as shown above, may produce a tighter sentence.*

9.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: Still, the most painful moment may have come in the last playoff game in 2003 when Manager Little left Pedro Martinez on the mound to take a beating that the bullpen could probably have prevented.

ERROR: NONE

10.

ORIGINAL SENTENCE: Fans everywhere wondered how Little could have made such a stupid decision as they lay sleepless in their beds that night.

ERROR: MM

CORRECTED VERSION: As they lay sleepless in their beds that night, fans everywhere wondered how Little could have made such a stupid decision

EXPLANATION: *In the original sentence, the adverb clause "as they lay sleepless in their beds that night" appears to modify "could have made," but it more logically modifies "wondered." As is often the case, the adverb clause works better at the beginning of the sentence. Moving it there clarifies the modification.*