

# Need of a Better Scoring System

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THE scoring of a baseball game by the ordinary patron is generally a matter of minor consideration, for all he cares to know is how many runs were made and he scores the game with an "0" for an out and a "1" for a run and lets it go at that. But to a sporting editor who must write his account for his paper from his score-book it is an altogether different thing.

How many sporting editors can take their "Spalding" and tell just how each play was made and how the runs were forwarded? I will venture to say, not fifty per cent of those who go to a game in an official manner can do so.

It is no easy matter to score a ball game correctly, play for play, and at the end of the game read the account correctly from your book. A man should be able to read the score just the same as the fans read his account the next morning.

One of the reasons that there is not more uniform scoring is from the fact that there is not a uniform scoring system. Every man has his own idea of how to score a play and how a play should be scored. In my travels around the circuit (this also applies to all the boys who travel with ball clubs) I have discovered many young fellows who have just graduated from school and who in some way, certainly not from the fact of knowing the angles of baseball, have been selected to score the games. They have an idea of how to do it, but any more lets them out. Ask half of them how so and so went out and how so and so scored and they cannot tell you. Can one expect to find an accurate account of a game from such source?

The present day style of baseball is considerable harder to score than when

such noted writers as Morse, Crane, Foster, Murnane, Gruber, Richter, Flanner and other old-time writers started in to score the games. In those days keeping track of a game was easy for they did not have the squeeze play, bunt, sacrifice hit, hit and run, and all the late ideas now practiced.

The game is too far advanced for some and the present system will send many to the bug show if new plays come as fast as they have in the last two years.

What must be done and done soon is for the two major leagues to pass a rule to put scoring on the same basis as umpiring. This may seem like asking a whole lot from the magnates, but it will come eventually.

The game has advanced beyond the experimenting. Why not keep up with the game? It would not cost the two major leagues a whole lot to select four good efficient baseball men to act as official scorers and have them assigned the same as the umpires. Make out a schedule for them and have them travel from city to city. It would not be necessary to have them leave any particular city when a team has finished a series, they could remain there until a complete series was completed. That would cut down the railroad fare, which would mean a whole lot.

This argument may seem like a knock at some scorers, but it is not intended as such. There are many good scorers among the official scorers in different cities, but again there are many who really do not know how to score a game and they are selected as "official scorers." Why? Simply to keep on the good side of such and such a paper. The selecting of official scorers from the ranks of

sporting editors has caused much endless jealousy from others, older men in the business. The idea of dividing the work among several writers to keep peace in the family is bad. It will always be so until the moguls in the two major leagues adopt the traveling scorers. When this is done, it will stop all future arguments about how a hit was made. It will also stop one of the greatest evils in baseball, favoritism. It is a certainty that scorers in different cities that have the honor of having a player on their team who is likely to lead the league in batting are not going to give that particular player the worst end of the deal. This argument of course is an old one, but it will always live until the present scoring system is changed.

Should the major leagues select the men to travel the same as do the umpires, they could all meet in New York and Chicago before the season opens and argue out all plays and how to score them. Is a man to be credited with a sacrifice when he intentionally bunts a ball, but the fielder makes an error? Does a player who throws a ball to a bag for an out and gets the ball on the return, completing a double play, get an assist as well as a put out? Should a player be charged with an error when

he makes a bad throw in trying to complete a double play, the runner not advancing past first?

One of the greatest arguments for this idea is the fact, that the present way of deciding who wins and who loses a game would be settled once and for all, as the official scorer could decide then who should be charged with the victory or defeat. Is it right to charge a man with a defeat in a case like this: A pitcher becomes wild and fills the bases on balls, making the score a tie, with two out; a new man goes in without any warming up and the first ball he pitches is hit for a single, scoring the winning run. How are the secretaries to know just how that play came up? It is impossible to keep an accurate account of the number of games pitchers win and lose because no one in authority can decide. The official scorer is supposed to be the judge, but one reads every day that a pitcher is charged with a defeat by the secretary of the league, but the newspaper man who follows the game carefully cannot tell this from the account of the game as published any more so than the ordinary fan.

One could go on at length to show that a change from the present methods is very desirable, in fact, imperative.

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