

The Effects of Structural and Secular Changes on Baseball

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This paper analyzed the effects of various changes, both structural and secular on baseball. The measure of effect concentrates on key variables of individual player performances (batting averages, ERA, slugging average, on-base average) analyzed yearly since 1901. The effect measure is subjected to a series of statistical tests of change influences such as the introduction of the live ball, the World War II disruption of player personnel, expansions, and other specific rule changes. Our analysis both supports and at times disputes many commonly held beliefs as to the effects of these various change influences. In general we show that specific rule changes have far less enduring effects on player performance than do broader societal changes. The most significant of these societal changes is the general change of orientation in leisure activity and patterns of affluence in America following World War II.