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Why Interleague Play Is A Great Thing

By Jay Nault

This past weekend was the first opportunity during the 2006 season for fans and teams alike to

renew relatively young but sometimes heated rivalries between teams of different leagues. It's hard to believe, but this is already the 10th season of interleague play, and the argument for and against the scheduling of games between different leagues continues to rage. The "purists" who decry interleague play generally lean on a few standard points to make their case, and we'll examine some of these below.

Argument One: Interleague play creates scheduling inequity.

Baseball lovers everywhere claim that interleague "draws" that are logically eschewed somewhat based upon geographic considerations create an unfair advantage. For example, this past weekend, the Cardinals got to play the lowly Royals while the Cubs had to play the World Champion White Sox.

Although the numbers may somewhat support the notion that as a result of these scheduling considerations, the teams have unequal strength of schedules, the fact remains that we are talking about a very small number of games within a 162-game season. Not to mention, a championship-caliber team in any sport needs to measure up to any test that's presented. If the Cubs are going to contend for the pennant, they need to step up for these few games and play well. Also, the chance to play a very good team from the other league creates an opportunity for invaluable experience. Teams that are battle-tested are better suited for a late-season surge, which is really what makes the difference between winning a division or not in October.

Argument Two: Interleague play devalues the World Series.

Purists claim that one of the historic draws of the World Series is the mystery that surrounds the matchups once they're determined. If two teams have already played each other, the teams will already have an idea as to how to approach specific hitters and pitchers before the World Series starts.

Purists need to look at a few surrounding facts before staking this claim. First, the World Series is the World Series. It's highly dubious that baseball fans will not be as interested in a World Series simply

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because the two teams playing had a series in May. Secondly, many Super Bowls have featured teams that have played each other during the NFL season, and this has never diminished the competitive nature of that game. NBA Finals series always feature teams that have played each other, and there doesn't appear to be any falloff in terms of competitiveness or fan interest in this setting either. If anything, a small dose of familiarity creates better games, as adjustments need to be made immediately.

Argument Three: Fan and player interest has waned as the novelty of interleague play has dissipated.

Purists argue that interleague play was a fun idea for the first year or two, but now fans and players treat each series as just another set of games on the schedule.

One only needs to look at this past weekend to completely debunk this argument. Anyone who watched the White Sox–Cubs series can tell you that there was definitely not a lack of intensity during

these games, and the packed house of mixed fans in Chicago was frenzied for every game. The "Subway Series" between the Yankees and Mets is as feverishly–anticipated as any series in baseball, and every game was a battle to the end. Overall, attendance for these interleague games is higher than the average regular season figures, and that's no accident.

Basically, the chance to see players that fans don't normally get to see at their home parks, the opportunity for intra–city or intra–state bragging rights creates tangible interest for fans, and experience in adjusting to playing different teams under a different set of rules is valuable experience for the teams involved.

What else could you ask for during May, before pennant races heat up? Not to mention, baseball is a sport that's as important in regards to off–field debate as it is in regards to on–field results. Interleague play creates interest in the game, and hopefully it will continue for the foreseeable future.

Written by Jay Nault sponsored by

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Professional Teams Past & Present

By Dana Bradley

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Major League Baseball has existed since 1903 and is a professional baseball league that consists of teams in Canada and the US. This entity runs the American League. They have an organizational structure that allows them to run and organize both leagues.

The league's rules and structure are based on a constitution that has existed ever since 1876. In 1876, it was called the NL constitution then they called the Major League Baseball Constitution. The last revision of this constitution was in 2005. The constitution says that the commissioner hires and maintains the umpires and negotiates with the players, the marketers and the TV contracts.

Though the United States does not usually allow monopolies, Major League Baseball is allowed to be a monopoly. There are no competing professional baseball leagues in the United States. It is allowed to be a monopoly because the US Supreme Court ruled in 1922 that MLB is not interstate commerce. MLB has a production/multimedia and it called MLB Advanced Media. It maintains the

<http://MLB.com>

website and all 30 of the individuals' teams' websites. The charter says this wing is independent of the league as far as editorial control. It is under the same ownership group and revenue-sharing group of MLB. MLB has also a production wing that focuses on video and broadcast call MLB Productions.

MLB has two leagues and there are 30 teams in the whole league. The National League is the oldest league and has 16 teams. The AL has 14 teams. The leagues do not have the same number of teams because of they did, they would have to play interleague games every day. They would like to have some rest days. Each league has three divisions based mostly on geography. The leagues are the NL East, the NL Central, the NL West, the AL East, the AL Central and the AIL West.

A team's regular season is 162 games, a duration that has lasted in both leagues since 1962. From 1904 to 1962, one season had 154 games. There were only 7 opponents that a team could play against and you played 22 games against each opponent. The number of games was changed in 1962 because the number of opponents expanded. You now had 9 opponents with 18 games against each opponent. This changed again when more interleague games were allowed, but the number of games stayed the same. A team's regular season is 162 games, a duration that has lasted in both leagues since 1962. From 1904 to 1962, one season was made up of 154 games. There were only 7 opponents that a team could play against and you played 22 games against each opponent. The number of games was changed in 1962 because the number of opponents expanded. You now had 9 opponents with 18 games against each opponent. This changed again when more interleague games were allowed, but the number of games stayed the same.

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