

Baseball is back with its ballpark hotdogs, pitches “juuuust a bit outside”, and for fans’ offseason questions to be answered. Coming into the season, for the fans on their yearly rant about all the new rules and restrictions that will destroy what was once America’s pastime, allow me to show you why you’re wrong.

Three major new rules are being introduced this year throughout the MLB to speed up the game and increase offensive production, as games have tended to drag on without much action. Play times have hovered around three hours since 2015 according to Baseball Reference. One clever YouTube user even combined two game clips to show Astros shortstop Jose Altuve was faster at hitting seven inside-the-park home runs than Dodgers pitcher Pedro Baez could throw a single pitch to Cubs player David Ross in the 2016 NLCS.

The new addition from the minor leagues is known as the pitch clock. Like any rule in sports, there is more minutiae than a Stephen King novel, but to put it simply, the pitcher has 15 seconds between pitches, and a batter has to get in the box when eight seconds remain. The days of a pitcher showing off his terpsichore around the mound like a TikTok dancer between pitches is no more.

The banning of the shift is another much needed addition to help to increase hitting stats. Before the ban, the defense could rearrange its infielders to align with the tendencies of where the batter hits, but there now must be two players on each side of second base.

Defenders won't be able to sleep at night knowing they can't send a shortstop between second and first against a left-handed hitter.

The final rule change that has fans whining is about base sizes.

Starting this year, the first, second and third bases will increase in size from 15 to 18 square inches. The change was meant for player safety and reducing collisions rather than game speed.

Baseball, as we all know, is a game of inches. The rule will stop player collisions on steals, and it also should allow more opportunities for stolen bases.

Fans were up in arms when a new rule was introduced where extra innings started with a runner on second, but over time it showed to be a positive addition to the game. The three new rules this year are no different.

The players will need time to adjust, but new and improved baseball is a win for fans, players, officials and franchises alike. Most of the main offensive stats have never been lower, and the new changes this season are a way to balance that out. With faster games and more offense, there doesn't seem to be any reason to complain.