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MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL IMPLEMENTS RULES TO SPEED UP PLAY IN 2018

By Sid Elford

In order to increase the speed of play and shorten games, Major League Baseball will be implementing new rule changes for the 2018 season that will help to attract younger fans and to keep the attention of the fans throughout the game. Among other rules, the most drastic revision will be a limit on the number of pitcher's mound visits per game, regulating teams to six per nine-inning game, with one additional visit allowed per extra inning that may follow.

There are some exceptions to what constitutes a mound visit according to MLB's new rules including, discussions between pitchers and position players that occur between the normal course of play and do not require either the position player or pitcher to relocate, visits by position players to the mound to clean cleats in rainy conditions, visits to the mound due to an injury sustained by the pitcher, and visits to the mound after the announcement of an offensive substitution.

Major League Baseball also said that it plan to set two-minute limits on breaks between innings and at pitching changes. To the relief of players, the MLB won't implement a 20-second pitch clock or a between batter timer, though Commissioner Rob

Manfred indicated those steps may be considered on the future if these new changes aren't sufficient.

“I am hopeful that the changes we make directed at downtime will eventually get us into a spot where we're comfortable with pace of play and the length of the game,” Manfred told reporters. “But if not, there can be conversations about other types of changes that might go beyond downtime.”

In a sport so rich in history as baseball, new rule changes can be difficult to implement because of the fear of changing the way the game is played. But, many managers and players have spoken out to say that they support the new changes to eliminate some downtime during the games.

“I do hope we can improve the pace,” said Milwaukee Brewers manager, Craig Counsell. “I would have the goal to do that, and it's going to require some change for all of us. We can just say ‘no’ off the bat to that. We have to look at it and try it.”

Colorado Rockies catcher, Chris Iannetta said, “I guess we'll see how it goes. The players have been committed to streamlining the game and making it more efficient. We definitely identified that we need to make it a little bit more efficient, and the players have really worked hard to come up with ways to do those things.”

With spring training just beginning, we will wait and see what changes these rules will make on the games going forward, and what other changes may be implemented later on if these rules don't work as planned.

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