

Why Americans Like Baseball

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On Monday afternoon two weeks ago, men who were at home sat glued to their comfortable chairs beside a radio; people who were in the business sectors crowded around radios on the sidewalk in front of stores; college students carried portable radios with them; sailors were standing near short wave sets on ships at sea; and soldiers on distant battle fronts gathered around short wave radio sets also, while 70,000 lucky people were able to crowd into Yankee Stadium.

Although at that very moment Americans were engaged in a war for survival, in what historians claim is the greatest war of all time, and official Washington was sending out vast amounts of important up-to-the-minute news, the newspapers on that Monday afternoon carried in two-inch bold type as the banner headline: "CARDS WIN SERIES."

The American people as a whole go for baseball in a big way. They like baseball because it stresses fair a whole go for baseball in a big way. They like baseball because it stresses fair play and decency. Baseball can transform players into skilled players and presents the superiority of mind over matter. Baseball offers the use of chance, contains psychological attributes and puts a green rookie on equal terms with an experienced veteran. This is why Americans show a keen interest in this sport.

Baseball is the pioneer game for Americans. It originated one hundred and two years ago in Cooperstown, New York, fifty years before the creating of basketball and hockey. It was one of the first competitive games that brought both mind and body into play. This gave baseball quite an edge in popularity over the sports which followed later.

People like baseball for the opportunity it offers as a career. Boys in their teens rise from the sandlots with hard work and ability that only God can furnish to climb that long ladder to success in the major leagues. They can make from \$5,000 to \$40,000 a season — not bad, if money is the athlete's goal. It makes no difference from where the lad comes. He may come from the sandlots, from a college campus, a coal mine, a steel mill, or a farm. That is the American way.

Americans are machine-minded. A ball team playing together represents a well developed machine, with each man a unit. However, this machine is far from perfect. One day a team may look unbeatable. The next day an underdog rises to great heights and defeats the supposedly invincible club. Ball players make mistakes. That is only human. Fans forgive and forget and like the players all the more.

Competition is a trait all Americans admire. Competitive spirit and courage form baseball's finest characteristics. It is true that baseball has suffered from corruption and graft. Baseball has produced its scandals and disgraces. All this, however, has been apprehended and foiled. Law and order have come to stay on the ball field. Jurisdiction is maintained over players on the diamond, no matter how difficult it seems at times. This assures Mr. and Mrs. Gus Fan that they are probably seeing the most honest professional sport that exists today.

Undoubtedly, the main reason why we who live under the Stars and Stripes like and enjoy baseball is that this game is as American as apple pie and the hot dog.