

## Football vs. Baseball: Which Is Really The Slower Sport?



Football season is officially underway, which means that America no longer has to pretend it cares about baseball, tennis or races involving bicycles or jockeys. Step aside, it's time for football to appease the masses until it coldly drops us off into the barren wasteland known as February.

But before the dog days of summer completely give way to the glory of the gridiron, allow us to poke the big bear for a moment. Just for fun. Just because we've been itching to use this new bear pokin' stick.

The common knock against baseball among the sport's detractors is that it's too slow with a pace most suited for people trying to fall asleep. Football, on the other hand ... well, nothing is as exciting and raw as the snap, the blitz, split-second decisions, the hole, the break, the broken tackle, the unbroken tackle. It's about pace and action.

But is that true? [*Taking the bear poking stick out of its leather carrying case*] There's an awful lot of start-and-stop in football too, isn't there? [*Eyeballing the spot on the bear on which to poke*] Isn't a double, a stolen base, a play at the plate just as exciting and just as common as a long rush or a Hail Mary? [*Squaring up...*] Let's examine the pace of two non-descript games – one baseball and one football – and see if we can't break down the pace of each to settle which sport is truly slower. [... *And POKE!*]

### The Subjects

Chicago White Sox at Anaheim Angels. Sunday September 13, 2009. 2:35 pm (CST)

Chicago Bears at Green Bay Packers. Sunday. September 13, 2009. 7:30 pm (CST)

### The Rules

The way we're measuring pace in this instance is to count only the time action is taking place in either game. In baseball, action counts as from the time the pitcher throws toward the plate to the time the play is dead (strike, ball, fair, foul). In football, a live play is from the snap to when the play is dead.

Commercials, halftime, play reviews, meetings at the mound, etc. count toward real-life time, but not actual playing time. Why? Because clearly, the athletes are inactive at those points.

### Qualifiers

The sample size here is undeniably small. But the two games themselves were remarkably average in almost every way. Nothing abnormal happened. There were no odd plays, high scores or fights.

### The Results

Baseball:

After an hour in real time, 11m25s of actual game had been played. Exactly 120 minutes later during the seventh inning stretch, only 18m21s of baseball had actually been played. By the end, at 5:04 pm (2h26m in real time), the game yielded just 21m11s of game play.

**That's approximately 8m50s of actual game for every hour that passes in real time.**

Football:

The actual kickoff started at 7:32 pm. The 1st quarter lasted 37 real time minutes, but fans only saw 3m49s of actual football action. By halftime (89 minutes after kickoff) there had only been 8m24s of actual football played at that time. Incidentally, this is 20 fewer minutes than the time used to promote NBC's Jay Leno show. At the end of the game's 3 hr. 14 min. running time, only 15m27s of football was played. This is particularly sad considering football, unlike baseball, has a 60 minute game clock (15 minutes per quarter). So forget real time for a second. This means that nearly three quarters of game time is used up by a live clock on a dead ball.

**It also means that approximately 4m54s of actual game is played for every hour in real time.**

### Conclusion

It certainly appears (at least in these two games) that baseball provides almost 45% 80.3 percent more action every hour than football (or four minutes).

So when Game 7 of the World Series is scheduled opposite Monday Night Football, "baseball is so damn slow" better not be the reason you decide to skip it.

Game Time Log Notes: [Baseball](#) / [Football](#)

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