

Shmanners 15: Baseball

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Travis:

Hey, Teresa, do you want to talk about baseball etiquette?

Teresa:

I think that would be a home run.

Travis:

It's Shmanners!

[theme music plays]

Travis:

Hello, internet. I am your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa:

And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis:

And you're listening to Shmanners.

Teresa:

It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis:

...for ordinary occasions. Teresa, take me out to the ball game.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

Take me out... to the crowd. Is that right?

Teresa:

Yeah. That's the— That's right.

Travis:

Will you buy me some peanuts and/or Cracker Jack?

Teresa:

Uh, yes.

Travis:

And in case you're wondering, my opinion on coming back, I have none.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

I don't care if it happens, but it would probably be great to get home. I have certain responsibilities, uh, that I have to take care of. This week we're talking about baseball etiquette. Um...

Teresa:

Because a lot of, uh, teams are opening their seasons this month.

Travis:

Yeah. We just started baseball season. Um, I want to get right out of the way, right at the beginning, the biggest etiquette thing, before we talk about the history, before we talk about any of that, and I say this, and I use this word with love because I am one.

Hey nerds, it's okay to not like sports. It's very okay to not like sports. It is not okay to make fun of people who like sports. And I know what you're thinking, "But they made fun of me when I was growing up." Yes, yes, yes. I love baseball. I think baseball is great, but I acknowledge that it's not for everybody. You know what I mean?

Teresa:

I think that's a very kind outlook, Travis.

Travis:

Hey, thank you. I try. Every so often, I'm a good person.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

So let's talk a little bit about baseball. Now, Teresa, are you a baseball fan? Do you like the baseball?

Teresa:

I don't not like baseball.

Travis:

I see.

Teresa:

Um, we did live in Cincinnati for a long time, which is a real big baseball town.

Travis:

Mm-hmm.

Teresa:

Uh, the Cincinnati Reds, uh, love 'em or leave 'em, basically, when you live in Cincinnati. Um, so I have gone to several baseball games.

Travis:

Do you want to know a fun fact about the Cincinnati Red Stockings?

Teresa:

Hit me.

Travis:

They were the first all professional, um, baseball team. The Cincinnati Red Stockings played their first game May 4th, 1869. They won out over the Great Westerns of Cincinnati, which was another Cincinnati team at the time,

45 to 9, which is a pretty ridiculous baseball score. And that season, uh, in 1869, the Red Stockings posted a perfect 65 and 0 record, the only perfect season in professional baseball history.

Teresa:

Wow.

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

Well, did you know that before professional baseball there were lots of iterations of, quote, baseball.

Travis:

Mm-hmm.

Teresa:

In the United States and really, like, in Europe, is where it originated.

Travis:

Uh, from what I understand, one of those is, like, cricket. Cricket and baseball kind of sprang from the same origins-ish.

Teresa:

Right, well there were...

Travis:

You know, like the same beginning—

Teresa:

... a ton of those little games. Every kind of little village had their own iteration of some sort of ball game.

Travis:

I actually, I found references to, you know, throw a thing, hit a thing, run around some things.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

Games referenced as early as the 1300s.

Teresa:

That's amazing.

Travis:

So it's been going a long time. There was actually a version of baseball, if you know anything about baseball now, there was a version of baseball in which the teams pitched to themselves rather than the other teams pitching, and the only way to get people out was to peg them with the ball, to hit them with the ball while they're running around.

Teresa:

So kind of like baseball meets dodgeball.

Travis:

Yeah. A little bit... A lot more dangerous, I would imagine.

Teresa:

Well, so I'd like to go over this, uh, vintage baseball resurgences that is happening in, uh, the United States especially. Um, it harkens back to the days before professional teams in the mid 1800s, um, and a lot of these ball games were pitched, first of all, underhand.

Travis:

Mm-hmm.

Teresa:

Um, and they were done in, you know, sort of municipal fields, so it wasn't so much like a backyard game, they were sanctioned, but there weren't really stadiums. So if you wanted to watch a vintage baseball game, back then called baseball, [Laughs]. Uh, if you wanted to watch one, it was kind of like a picnic atmosphere.

Travis:

Mm-hmm.

Teresa:

Um, and because it was underhand, the pitcher's block, pitcher's mound was 45 feet away, um, and in general, it was just much smaller.

Travis:

Mm-hmm.

Teresa:

Smaller scale there. And there weren't any kind of like, um, fencing or gating, or anything like that. You had the one ball and hitting the ball out of bounds was always a foul, so there wasn't, like, that home run deal 'cause, because you only had one.

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

You only had the one ball.

Teresa:

Only had the one ball. Uh. So that one of the things that was different. And the game itself was a little different because there were no gloves.

Travis:

You caught barehanded.

Teresa:

Caught barehanded, usually two-handed, you would catch it because, you know, it was coming pretty fast and you didn't want to jam your fingers up, and all that kind of stuff, so you would catch the ball two-handed, and it was permissible to catch it on a bounce, so it could bounce one time, onto the

ground before you caught it. I think that that was probably to help save your hands, again, because then the ground took a lot of the force instead of your hands.

Um. And there was only one official, like, and he wasn't really an umpire type deal, he was just kind of a... he would help make—

Travis:

He was a bouncer.

Teresa:

He would... [Laughs]. Not really a bouncer, but he was, he was kind of, like, the voice of reason in the game, and he would often defer to the audience to... because he couldn't be everywhere at once, if a person said, "Well, I didn't get hit out," and another person said, "But I definitely hit him out," and there was someone picnicking next to wherever they were, the official would go and talk to them and be like, "What did you see?" So kind of like an arbitrator.

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

No, arbiter?

Travis:

No, yeah, whatever.

Teresa:

Yeah. Yeah.

Travis:

Yeah, sure.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

Yeah, the intention is clear, what you meant was clear.

Teresa:

[Laughs]. Um, so this was really kind of, like, the neighborhood municipal game.

Travis:

Yeah, it wasn't like the professional athletes that we think of today...

Teresa:

Exactly.

Travis:

...of people that, like, play and that's all they do for a job. This was like people getting together and they also were the, you know, the newspaper man and the...

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

The milkman and stuff.

Teresa:

Yeah. So their uniforms were a lot different, they were often dressed in workman's uniforms. There was no sliding into bases.

Travis:

No, you could get hurt.

Teresa:

There was no bunting the ball. Um. There was no swearing and there was no alcohol.

Travis:

Well, maybe they would be better, we'll talk about that later.

Teresa:

Uh, there was no yelling at the umpire. None of that. It was considered, um, a, uh, gentlemanly game and it—

Travis:

As well it should be. I mean, if... and we'll talk more about, like, the actual rules and why I think baseball is great in a moment, but I think that it is a very gentlemanly game, or should be.

Teresa:

Well, it was even more so then. You weren't allowed to spit or swear, and you could be fined as a player for doing any of those things.

Travis:

Um, one of the big turnarounds in baseball is when it went from being a pitcher's game to being a hitter's game. And my friend Justin, who was kind of a lot of my baseball fandom inspiration, explained it to me that for a long, long time you could scuff up, and tear up, and dirty up the ball as much as you wanted.

And this was also before there were, like, well-lit night games. In fact, the first lit night game was also played in Cincinnati. Um, but so they would like dirty up these balls, scuff up these balls, and they were so hard to see for batters that batters almost, it was almost impossible to hit anything faster than like a curve ball, you know, any kind of fast ball.

And then it got to a point where they were so hard to see that batters were getting hit by them pretty consistently. And after like several concussions, and I want to say, don't correct me on this because I don't have the exact data, but that there was like an injury, a serious concussion injury, and the rules changed that you couldn't do that to the ball anymore.

You couldn't dirty it up, you couldn't ... so it stayed a white, very visible ball, and suddenly it became much more of a hitter's game, much more of a slugger's game. And that's where we started seeing a lot more home runs, and especially if you think about the Babe, Babe Ruth...

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

... and like all these rules changed, like right before he came up. So suddenly you had this guy who was super good at hitting in a game where hitting had never really been the focus before.

Teresa:

And this was when it changed to overhand, right?

Travis:

Correct.

Teresa:

In the late 1800s, like, 1890s.

Travis:

Yeah. And so all of this led up to this idea of like sluggers and home runs being the goal. And it used to be very, very rare to get a home run in baseball, and then pretty soon it became the norm, to the point where people were, like, kind of, you know, judged by whether or not they could hit home runs.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

There used to be a lot more scrambling of, like, you were just trying to get on base, and then you were just trying to advance one base at a time, and then pretty soon it became a lot more of, like, no, you're trying to hit it out every time. So here's a quick fact check on, like, the updating of pitching. So in 1883, they, uh, removed the ban on overhand pitching.

Teresa:

Oh, okay. So 1883, not the 1890s.

Travis:

Yeah. In 1887, the game moved even further towards the modern rule set at the time with five balls becoming a requirement for a walk, um, and if you hit the batsman, they were awarded, uh, a base.

Um, and then in 1889, the current ball and strike rules, uh, were first established, which is four balls to a walk, three strikes for an out. Um. And in 1893, the distance for pitching was changed from 50 feet, um, to the modern, um, distances of 60 foot and six inch, and the pitching rubber was introduced and the pitcher, uh, being required to have his rear foot against the rubber slab until he released the ball.

Um. So as long as we're moving towards the modern ... let's talk about the modern rules of baseball.

Teresa:

Okay.

Travis:

Um, and there's lots of ins and outs. There's lots of like infield fly and like, you know, ground rule double, and lots ... but I'll just go through the basics. So basically what you're looking at is you have either the team who's on the field or the team who's at bat.

Teresa:

Okay.

Travis:

Um. And on the field you have nine players. You have your catcher, your pitcher, first base, second base, shortstop, third base, and then you have left field, center field, and right field. And the reason for the shortstop is, with most right-handed batters, it's going to pull to between, um, second and third.

Teresa:

Well, that's makes sense.

Travis:

Right? And there's just a lot more plays happening over in that area, so you have a, uh, shortstop to kind of help make the connection between the outfield and second and third. You can run through first, right, so that way you don't have to, like, slide for first or anything like that.

Teresa:

You can overrun the base.

Travis:

You can overrun the base, but you can't turn. So if you get to first base and you turn to go towards second, you can be thrown out at first.

Teresa:

Okay.

Travis:

So if you get on base, first, second or third, you have to be touching the base to be safe, otherwise they can throw you out if you're off base and you get tagged before you go on base.

Teresa:

And unlike before, where you had to throw to hit the player, you can just throw to the base that they're going to.

Travis:

Okay, so those are the positions and then what happens is your batter gets up, pitcher throws to the catcher. The batter is trying to make contact with the ball. Um, you can either get on first base by being walked, which means they throw four balls, which means it's outside of the strike zone.

Strike zone is typically about, like, chest to knees, somewhere in there, and then about the width of the home plate, a little bit wider. But anyways, you're trying to throw in there. If they swing at it and miss, it's a strike. If they throw in the strike zone and don't swing, it's a strike. If they throw outside of the strike zone and don't swing, it's a ball.

So if you get on first base, you're done. Or you can get a hit, get on first base, get to home. Now, they're trying to get the player out by either striking them out, by throwing three strikes, by throwing them out or tagging them out. Or catching a hit ball before it touches the ground. And then once you get three outs, you move to the next half of an inning. Play nine innings, so that's 18 halves, so each gets nine at bats.

So the thing about baseball is there's no set time limit, which is one of the main differences between other sports, like hockey, and soccer, and football, and that kind of thing, because baseball could hypothetically go on for way too long.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

Um, I was at a Cincinnati Reds game once where they were tied, and as long as they're tied, you keep playing until an inning ends with someone winning.

Teresa:

Wow.

Travis:

So they've gone as long as, like, I want to say 17 innings, instead of the traditional nine. They've gone on for like eight or nine hours. So games can get a little bit grueling, but the thing about it is that also means that, unlike football, where you know ... so say in football, a team's up, you know, by like seven touchdowns to nothing ...

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

Right? And it's 49 to nothing and there's two minutes left in the game, that game is done.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

But in baseball, you could be down seven runs to nothing, and in one inning get nine runs and you're winning.

Teresa:

That's right.

Travis:

So that's why, for me, I like the tension of baseball and I like that it takes so long to play because it could change in an inning. And instead of just like, "Well, clearly the Broncos are going to win, they've thrown so many touchdowns." Like, it could still change in the ninth inning. And there have been lots of games that have been decided that way.

Um, but I also recognize that for many people that would be tedious and not fun. But the other thing about baseball and the reason baseball's my favorite sport to see live is that, yes, it's about the sport, but it's also about, like, the crowd environment.

You're there, you're all having the shared experience. That there's hot dog vendors and there's, like, music playing, and, like, there's videos playing, and the National Anthem, and it's all this, like, shared communal experience.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

That even friends of mine who don't care about sports have gone to baseball and have had a good time, because we're all just hanging out together.

Teresa:

Right. I mean, it's similar in the way of, I mean, even if you don't know and enjoy baseball, you can kind of feel the atmosphere of all the people who do enjoy it.

Travis:

Yep.

Teresa:

And it's totally different from going to a sports bar.

Travis:

Exactly. Um. One last thing, because I forgot to mention it when we were talking about history. If you're ever talking to someone about the history of baseball and they say, "Oh yeah, Abner Doubleday. He invented baseball."

Teresa:

Oh, yes, you're um...

Travis:

It's not true. It's, like, that's a myth. Um, Abner Doubleday never claimed to have invented baseball. There's, like, no corroboration. There's no proof that he did. Um. And it was, like, a weird study done where they were like, "We found that Abner Doubleday invented baseball," and it's, like, nobody believes that, but everybody is told that that is the case. But in fact, like baseball, there are so many different origins and I don't think it was, like, one thing...

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

Where somebody was like, "A bat, a ball, a glove. I've got it!" It was, like, it all evolved from all these other, like we talked about, all these other games.

Teresa:

Does Abner Doubleday have any other claim to fame?

Travis:

I mean, I think that he was like a sports kind of person, but he just didn't invent baseball.

Teresa:

Wow.

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

This random guy didn't do this.

Travis:

He didn't do that thing, but like I, I don't know why everybody wants to— I guess because everybody wants to know the history and wants to think that there was a guy who did it but, like, there were also, for a while, like, many different concurrent sets of rules. The one that's kind of evolved into the one we know is like the knickerbocker rule set-

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

But there was a whole bunch of rule sets being all played at the same time because there was no governing body. And there was the American League and the National League, which is now governed by the Major League Baseball, you know, MLB.

But at the time, like, the American league and the National League had different rule sets. And if you played in Ohio, you had a different rule set than people who played in California.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

And people who played in Texas, and people who played everywhere else. So, like, the Major League Baseball came down and like, "Okay, great. We're going to like universalize the rules so that everybody can play against each other."

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

And that was like a brand new evolution of the thing.

Teresa:

Well, okay, so now that we've gone over some of the history and the rules, I'd like to talk a little bit about attending a baseball game.

Travis:

Okay. We should do that, but first, here's a word from another Max Fun show.

[theme music plays]

Jonathan:

You guys, I'm so excited to introduce to you my new baby, Getting Curious with Jonathan Van Ness. This is going to be a really fun look at things that I find curious, whether it's a menstrual cup, it might be the Romanov family, it might be fracking, it could be Carly Fiorina. I don't even know. Who knows?

It's going to be whatever I think is interesting. I can't wait to bring it to you guys. We're going to be bringing in content experts. I'm going to be learning the things. It's only going to take about 30 minutes for you to expand your baby brains with me and have a super fun time. So I can't wait to see you on our first episode of Getting Curious.

[ad ends]

Travis:

Okay, we're back. So let's talk about actually, like, being a fan, the thing that most of us are going to do. Unless you are a professional baseball man, which first of all, flattered, thank you for listening.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

But then you probably are not worried about most of this stuff because you probably know how to be a good baseball attendee. But what are some, what are some basics, Teresa?

Teresa:

Well, some basics are, it— Sitting in a baseball stadium, no one expects anyone to sit the whole time.

Travis:

Mm-hmm.

Teresa:

It is a long game. You know, they have places for you to go eat and shop, and do whatever you need to do, uh, like, go to the restroom, in the stadium. But it is generally accepted that you should get up during a changeover.

Travis:

That's the nice thing about baseball and the way it's structured is, because you have the innings and because ... so both between innings and between halves of innings, when you go from the top of, you know, the top of the fourth to the bottom of the fourth, then you have breaks kind of built in.

Teresa:

Right, because the teams are changing positions.

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

So they're switching from batting to going to the outfield.

Travis:

You don't want to do it during someone's at bat. That's generally frowned upon.

Teresa:

Well, right. Well, because in the same way of my, uh, grandpa used to always say, "You make a better door than a window."

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

People can't see through you.

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

So they want to be able to see the person, and I know that there are big like Jumbotron screens and stuff like that, but it really is encroaching on the other player, the other, um, spectators' experience if you get up during that time. So wait for the changeover, unless it's an emergency.

Travis:

And the thing is, is like, just to kind of a point that I'm sure I will reiterate multiple times throughout this episode, it's okay to go to baseball games if you don't love baseball.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

Like I said, it's an experience and it's fun just to go, and I highly recommend it. It's a much different experience in person than watching it on TV. But keep in mind that probably the majority of people there are there to watch baseball.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

And so maybe they paid a whole lot of money for it. Maybe they drove four hours to see their favorite team play, and just because you're there, like,

casually, just kind of keep in mind that there may be people there that, for them, this is, like, the highlight of, like, four or five months for them.

Teresa:

Okay, so, um, so more general etiquette rules for spectators. Um, the wave isn't really something that people, uh, do very much in, in baseball, but if you want to do it, there are certain stadiums and teams that are more kind of wave friendly than others.

Travis:

Don't start it ironically though.

Teresa:

Yes.

Travis:

Like I've seen people do that, like, "You know, it'd be fun if we did the wave." And it's like, uh, especially, especially if it's a tense game. If they're tied or if it's, like, you know, three and two, and like you know, it's the ninth inning, like, no. Now, if it's a blowout and it's like 12 to nothing, and it's like the sixth inning, fine, whatever. But like...

Teresa:

Well, and you really shouldn't do it while, uh, you're ... while the team that you are rooting for is at ... is at bat.

Travis:

The home team.

Teresa:

The home team. Don't do it while the home team is at bat.

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

Because that's kind of like the tense situation part.

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

You should do it while they're in the outfield.

Travis:

If all else fails, look to the mascot. There will be a mascot on the field...

Teresa:

Oh, that's, that's a great idea.

Travis:

And sometimes you'll see the mascot, like, jumping down the sidelines, like, waving at people to, like, do the wave. But like if there's no ... if they're not playing music to pump up the crowd, and the Jumbotron doesn't say like, "Make some noise," or there's not a mascot doing stuff, it's probably a moment where everyone's supposed to be focused on what's going on.

Teresa:

Right. And this is kind of a call back to the vintage games. Um, in general, a vintage game, you would clap more than you would cheer...

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

...because it's kind of, like, a, almost like a golf atmosphere, where everyone's very quiet while things are happening, and then when something good happens, then you kind of clap, and maybe you would say, "Woot," or, "Yay." Um, but it's not a very, like, loud, boisterous kind of atmosphere. As opposed to now games, they do, like they play music and they give you prompts of, "Make some noise," or...

Travis:

Stomp your feet, clap your hands.

Teresa:

Yeah.

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

Stuff like that.

Travis:

But I would also say, think of it like a concert too. Um, because for example, if you went to a concert and everybody stood the whole time, you would get upset because you paid for a seat.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

And if you went to a concert and everybody sat down during very exciting, like, this is the big number, you'd be like, "Why isn't everybody dancing? This is great." It's the same in baseball. Most of the time you're going to remain seated, but like I said, if it's that tense, like, you know, there's two outs, bases loaded, they're down by two, like, and everybody stands ...

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

That's a good time to stand. Like first inning, second at bat, stay seated.

Teresa:

Right. So then, um, bringing a glove, you should... if you're going to bring a glove, you really need to be a kid.

Travis:

Yeah, that's a good call.

Teresa:

You need to be under, you know, under 13, I think. Um, because other than that, it makes you kind of ... I don't want to say—

Travis:

They're not going to rookie of the year you into the game, and that's kind of what it looks like.

Teresa:

Right. That's what it is. It's a little presumptuous of you to bring a glove, unless you're a child.

Travis:

And if you've never been to a game before, most modern stadiums have nets up and like barriers so that if you were close enough to get pegged by a ball ... you're probably not going to, but even if you do, the chances of getting hit are very slight, and it's just, like, you can probably barehand it, most of them are going to be pop flies to you.

You can bare-handed catch them or let them hit, and if that happens, hand it to a kid. Always hand it to a kid. It's not a good look to hold onto the ball, no matter how bad you want it, I get it, we all want to keep that souvenir. Now, I would—

Okay, with one exception. If it's, like, the winning home run from, like, a playoff game, or, like, the World Series, then it's, like, this is a piece of memor— You keep it. If it's, like, a foul ball from, like, the third game of the season, from the other team, give it a kid.

Teresa:

It's probably always safer to give it to a nearby child.

Travis:

Yes. Especially if that child was trying to get it.

Teresa:

Yeah.

Travis:

Because you don't want to show up on ESPN as being the dude that snaked, you know, a ball from a kid who was trying to catch it.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm. So moving on, um, dressing for a game. Uh, in the days ... in these days of athletaleisurewear ...

Travis:

Ooh.

Teresa:

Yeah. Right?

Travis:

I like that word.

Teresa:

Um, all of that is perfectly acceptable to wear to a baseball game. It's not really a thing people get dressed up for anymore, unless it's like an opening day and you want to wear, uh, something a little fancier or maybe a...

Travis:

But you don't have to.

Teresa:

Maybe a playoff game.

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

Something really— I wouldn't say really fancy.

Travis:

Or if it's hopper night.

Teresa:

[Laughs]. But for ladies, a sundress would work just fine. Anything, I think, you'd wear to a regular park is okay. Um, I would always discourage heels.

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

And I would encourage baseball caps.

Travis:

Yeah, keep in mind that, especially if it's a day game, um, a lot of the stadiums get a lot of direct sunlight and you will burn. You know what I mean? Or and you also get very warm. So, like, sunscreen, um, and, like, light colors.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

Uh, this question came from Alan on Twitter, "should I wear my favorite team's hat/apparel, even if that team is not one of the two playing in the game?" No.

Teresa:

It is generally frowned upon that you do that. And when you ... when that happens, you kind of open yourself up to ridicule from those teams' fans.

Travis:

At the very least some nasty glares and like ...

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

You're not making any friends, you know what I mean? And, and here's the thing, I've also heard people express ... we went to, uh, an LA Dodgers game last year, um, with our friends who were big Kansas City Royals fans.

Teresa:

They were playing the Royals.

Travis:

Yeah. And so they were in Royals— And of course there were people, like, giving them, you know, side glances and everything, and that's part of the game. You know, you get rivalries, you root for the team you want to root for, you do that. But also, be cool. At the end of the day, rivalry is one thing and a little bit of like, "Ooh, we're going to get you," is one thing. Getting in fights over it...

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

And, like, throwing drinks on people is never a good look. No team would want you to do that. Nobody appreciates that. Don't do it.

Teresa:

Um, so if you're going to wear a logo at all, you should wear one of the teams playing or wear one of the colors of the team that you support the most, or don't wear anything divisive at all.

Travis:

Let me ask you this; this is from Bogie on, on Twitter, "Would I look like—" Um, well, this is a word I don't want to say on our ... "Would I look like a real dumbo if I got a jersey customized with my own name? I will say— I will say don't do that."

Teresa:

Well, because it, it'll probably confuse people more than they'll equate it with your own name. They'll read the name and be like, "I ... who is that player? What is that?" They just won't—

Travis:

Well, not only that, but it's very. like, "Look at me." Like if you're going to support the team, support like the players.

Teresa:

Yeah.

Travis:

As opposed to being like, "I support the team but really I just want to make this about me."

Teresa:

Yeah, I think at that point you're— It's not— No one's going to get that joke like you will.

Travis:

Um, so when you go to a baseball game, and ever present, especially if it's... Well, I guess only if it's like there's no roof, if it's an open air stadium, rain is always a concern.

Teresa:

Oh, that's a great... yeah.

Travis:

Um. So keep that in mind, pay attention to the thing. If you're concerned about rain, poncho, not umbrella.

Teresa:

Right. So you don't get, um, in anybody else's way.

Travis:

Exactly. Umbrella blocks the people behind you. Poncho keeps you dry without blocking anybody's vision.

Teresa:

That's a great idea. Yeah. Um, so let's move on to cheering. Any questions about cheering or jeering?

Travis:

Yes. Um, Tyler asked what are the guidelines to things like yelling at and/or jeering players?

Teresa:

Um, in today's modern baseball stadiums, it's kind of encouraged that you might, uh... you know, different players have different things that you shout out to them, like isn't there one where people say, "Boss," or something?

Travis:

I don't know, but sure.

Teresa:

No. Well, what's the one—

Travis:

Bruce.

Teresa:

Bruce.

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

Bruce. They say Bruce.

Travis:

Bruce.

Teresa:

Um. That's what it is. I'm so good at baseball, you guys. Um. So it's kind of encouraged in the modern atmosphere. The thing is you want to be topical in the way that you're yelling. Like you want to ... if you are jeering at the person at bat, you want to do just that person, not, like, other people on the team.

Travis:

You also don't want it to be too personal though.

Teresa:

Exactly.

Travis:

Like there's one thing of ... there's a difference between booing and saying, like, "I hate you, I want to kill your whole family."

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

You know what I mean? Like— And, oh, and just side note, two things, we want a pitcher, not a belly-itcher and swing batter, batter, neither of those are fresh or clever.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

Don't do them.

Teresa:

Oh, well.

Travis:

I'm just saying ...

Teresa:

Even ironically, Travis?

Travis:

No. Especially not ironically.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

You know I don't endorse anything ironic. You want... come up with stuff, boo and cheer. Think of it this way, one of the questions we got, and I can't find it now, but somebody asked like is it okay to jeer players because they can't hear me? And it's, like, well, hold on. One, if you're close enough to the field, you don't know that. And two, I guess put it this way, if they could hear you, would you still say the thing you were going to say?

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

I think that's a good point of view of, like, it's one thing to boo, it's another to be mean.

Teresa:

So let's keep it family friendly and all in good fun.

Travis:

Well, and that's another... that's an excellent point because baseball is a pretty family friendly sport.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

You see a lot of people with their kids there and so you don't want to get too blue, you don't want to get too, like, gross.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

You know, you've got kids there. Like there are kids at baseball games. It's a big part of baseball, is that kids love it.

Teresa:

Exactly. Um, I would go so far as to say you shouldn't boo or jeer at the other fans.

Travis:

Oh no, of course.

Teresa:

That's not what this is about. You can...

Travis:

Or get upset if they boo or jeer at your team...

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

...because you don't know who they're rooting for.

Teresa:

It should— All of the cheering and jeering should be subjected at the team and at the game, not at the fans around you. It is never appropriate to, um, go up to someone and berate them because they like the other team than you like.

Travis:

Well, let me ask you this. This is from Phil. "What are the guidelines to correcting people you aren't with about rules and stats?"

Teresa:

Unless they ask you, you should ignore it.

Travis:

I think that they're... Well, okay, I will say this. I could see a scenario, because it is a very communal, like, I've started conversation - and I don't like small talk - I've started conversations with people at baseball games because like you're so close to each other and you're often sitting there for,

like, three or four hours, that if you hear somebody go, "How, what is, what's going ... we went to the bathroom, what's going on?" I think it's okay to lean forward and say like, "Oh, he got struck out." Right? But like it's...

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

It's another thing to lean forward and lecture somebody on how their understanding of the way baseball played is wrong.

Teresa:

Exactly. I think that's a good distinction, is it's all right to answer, like, general questions if they're directed in your direction.

Travis:

Yeah, if they're like talking out to the universe like, "What happened?"

Teresa:

Exactly.

Travis:

You would say, like, "Oh, it was this."

Teresa:

Or I don't understand this rule. Or something like that. But nobody wants to be given a lecture.

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

On how baseball should be played or should be, um, scored, or whatever it is that you feel deep down.

Travis:

So let me ask you this. As long as we're talking about fans and we're talking about family friendly, and all of that, Katherine asked, "How drunk is too drunk for a ball game?"

Teresa:

When you get drunk enough that you're too drunk, that's too drunk.

Travis:

Yep. That's a great answer. Um.

Teresa:

You... The way that I would say is you should know your limits and get no more drunk than you would in any other public place. It's not an excuse to get, um, to go three sheets to the wind.

Travis:

Especially when beers are, like, \$10 a beer. Come on.

Teresa:

Yeah. Woo. Um. Just because you're at a baseball game.

Travis:

And in fact—

Teresa:

You should know your limits and, and stay well within those limits.

Travis:

And in fact, if you're going ... if you know you're the type of person or you're going with a group, or the intention is to drink a bunch at a baseball game, you can usually find, like, bleachers or a section that is more for that. Do a little bit of research.

Because mostly, in... there are seats where it's, like, "This is where all the families sit." And then there's like an, kind of unspoken drinking section. Um, or a lot of these places have bars in the stadium, but if you pay for a

baseball ticket and you're going to be paying \$10 a drink, just go to a sports bar. If your intention is to just get drunk...

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

Like why pay money for a ticket and spend so much on beer? Just go to a bar. You'll spend way less and you'll still get drunk and watch the baseball game.

Teresa:

Yeah, everyone will have more fun if you have your drink, but not overdo it.

Travis:

Yes. Um. Kristy asked, uh, "etiquette on the National Anthem?"

Teresa:

It is always appropriate to remove your headgear.

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

You should stand ...

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

And remove your headgear. Um ...

Travis:

And stop wherever you are.

Teresa:

Yes.

Travis:

If you're still finding your seat ...

Teresa:

Stop.

Travis:

Stop wherever you are.

Teresa:

Uh, whether or not you put your hand over your heart is up to some debate. There are some people who say you should remove your headgear and put it over your heart. I say that if that's not something that you feel in the moment, you still need to be respectful and stop, remove your headgear, and just stand there quietly.

Travis:

Um, I think you can also sing quietly to yourself.

Teresa:

Yeah, I think you— As long as you're not giving your, uh, giving the people around you a private concert ...

Travis:

Exactly.

Teresa:

Uh, singing quietly to yourself, I think is also acceptable.

Travis:

Um, Andrew asked, and I like this question, "how do I politely state my desire to never ever be involved with the watching of this or any sport?"

Teresa:

Wow. Um, I think that that is more in your behavior in the rest of your life than it is in this one singular moment. If you are known as a person who says what they mean, and means what they say, if you say to a person who

has invited you to a baseball game, "I don't enjoy baseball, no thank you very much. I will be happy to join you in the bar afterwards."

Travis:

I would...

Teresa:

Any of that kind of stuff, I think, is more about your behavior outside of the invitation than it is within the invitation.

Travis:

I would also say, I mean, you're entitled to feel however you want to feel, I would also say, if you've never been to a baseball game before, maybe try it once because, for two reasons. One, you might find that, like, while maybe you've never enjoyed it on TV or you think you wouldn't like the idea of it, you get there, you have a bratwurst, you've—

You know, everybody's there and cheering, and you're like, "You know what? Actually, I don't care about baseball, but this experience was kind of fun." Or you also then, the next time that friend asks, you can say, "Well, I went that one time, I didn't enjoy it, and I would rather not go again," that person's going to believe you and take you at your word way more than if you've never tried it before.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

Um, but I also think it depends on what type of person you ... For example, Justin, who I mentioned earlier, is like hardcore loves baseball, right? So when we go to baseball games with Justin, we are there to watch baseball, especially if the Cardinals are playing, you don't talk to Justin.

Teresa:

[Laughs]. Not while they're at bat.

Travis:

He watches the game. He watches the game. But if you go to a baseball game with me, I'm there to, like, hang out with people. You know what I mean?

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

So like...

Teresa:

And then watch the game a little bit.

Travis:

And watch the game. I'm definitely going to watch the game, but I'm not there to, like, silently, like, "Shh, I have to pay attention." Right? So, like, maybe your friend just wants to hang out, and you know, you actually, you get more face-to-face time than if you just went to a movie.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

You know what I mean? Um.

Teresa:

But if you still have no desire to go, a good polite way to say is, "Thank you for the invitation, but no thank you."

Travis:

And then don't turn around and tell them how they're stupid for wanting to go. That's never a good look.

Teresa:

That's not very gracious of you, have...

Travis:

Yeah, but you go have fun ...

Teresa:

For being invited.

Travis:

...and let's meet up afterwards.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

For dinner. You know? That always works great. So I want to touch on two things.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

Speaking of, like, not liking it. Arriving late and leaving early.

Teresa:

It's kind of frowned upon. You, you should really be in your seat for the first pitch, and you should leave once the whole game is done. Uh, it's just kind of a little more respectful to both teams. Um, there are always emergencies that, you know, your babysitter has to leave or, um, or you've sudden—

Travis:

Or the game goes 17 innings.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

Uh, if it's an exorbitantly long game, um, I would say that you're welcome to stay the nine innings...

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

But extra innings are not necessary to stay for. Um. Or if you become ill, you can certainly leave. But you know, there are always those things about parking and, uh, waiting for the rest of your group with tickets and things like that, but you should try and plan ahead enough to get there in time for the game.

Um, and if you do need to get to your seat, um, and people— And you're late, you know, just use your general common sense and say, "Excuse me. I'm sorry."

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

And sit down as fast as you can.

Travis:

Um. And "this is clearly over" is never a good reason to leave the game early. Because like I mentioned earlier, it can turn around at any point. A team can go on a 15 run streak, so to sit there and go, "Well, my team's losing 10 to nothing, it's over. I'm leaving."

Teresa:

But it's not over.

Travis:

It's not over. And it makes you look like a real jerk. You know?

Teresa:

It looks, it makes you look like a fair-weather fan ...

Travis:

Yeah.

Teresa:

... is what it makes you look like.

Travis:

And the team needs your support. It's the whole reason you're there.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

You know? And plus, like I said, it's not about winning and losing, it's about, like, being there for the experience and watching the game, and doing the thing, and, like, you got to stay for it.

Teresa:

Now, I have left an early... left a baseball game early because of several hours of rain delay.

Travis:

Oh, yes, that will happen. That's the other thing. So the way that, if you're ever at a baseball game and it starts to rain, they will try to play through as long they can, but then they will delay if there is a chance that they will be able to start playing again later.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

Because they play 162 games in a season. So any time they have to reschedule a game, it becomes a huge imposition on both teams. And so a lot of the times, they will just try to play it, um, if they can. Otherwise, it's a huge imposition on everyone.

Teresa:

Yeah.

Travis:

Um, I think it is okay if it, you know, it's huge black clouds in the distance and like it's pouring rain on the field, and you know, you wait, you know, 20 minutes, 30 minutes, and it doesn't look like it's going to clear up any time soon, I think in that case it's acceptable to leave. Um...

Teresa:

Yeah. But you may not, uh— You should look on your ticket stub carefully because you may not be able to get into a second game.

Travis:

Mm-hmm.

Teresa:

Uh, because of rain delay or, um, if they do reschedule the game, you might have to do something particular with, uh, with that stadium in order to get into the reschedule.

Travis:

I'm trying to think if there's any other kind of, like, general rules. Let me look over my list of rules here. I— so we talked about it earlier, the— Like it's okay not to like sports.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

It is not okay and it's not funny to pretend ignorance to frustrate those around you by like calling the umpires referees, or runs as points, or like are they going to score a touchdown, or ... because really you're— Whether you know it or not, what you're really doing is you're making a joke at the expense of people around you that really care about the thing that they're watching.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

So that's not really funny, it's just mean.

Teresa:

Well, I have done that on occasion to Justin, just...

Travis:

Okay, but it's Justin McCombs.

Teresa:

Okay, if it's Justin McCombs.

Travis:

If it's specially Justin McCombs, you can pick on Justin. I— Okay, there's a difference between my wife leaning over to me and saying a thing versus drunkenly, loudly making jokes to frustrate strangers around you.

Teresa:

Yes.

Travis:

Know what I mean?

Teresa:

Yes. No ... read the room...

Travis:

Yes.

Teresa:

... as Travis McElroy says.

Travis:

There you go. Um, also, unlike theater, I would say that usually there are lots— So there's lots of people who are, like, season ticket holders ...

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

And when you get to the game and you're, like, four innings in, and there's, like, seats 20 rows ahead of you that have been open for four innings and you want to move forward, everybody does it. But if you do that and then people show up, and they're like, "These are my seats. I was late, these are my seats."

Teresa:

You have to move.

Travis:

You have to move. There is no like, "Should've been here on time, bro." You got to move. You don't own those tickets. Um. You can tip the vendors, which I highly recommend. Like if you buy a \$4.50 hot dog and you ask for your change back, it's not really cool. You know what I mean? So you just let them keep the 50 cents. It's not that big. And like if they're walking up and down the aisles, they're working really, really hard.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

Um, so tip those people. Okay. This is a big one, folks. If you're at a game, I'm going to talk to you about a no hitter and a perfect game. Okay?

Teresa:

This is good because I have always wondered about this distinction.

Travis:

Okay. So a no hitter means that no one has gotten a hit, but you can walk batters and people can move ahead on errors.

Teresa:

So there can still be a score ...

Travis:

Right.

Teresa:

On a no hitter.

Travis:

Correct. On a perfect game, it means that no one has gotten on base and, like, the bat— The pitcher is, like, throwing a perfect game, has made no mistakes, there's been no errors to advance people.

So like, for example, someone could get a hit, right? And it should be an easy out for the center fielder. If the center fielder bobbles an easy out and blows it, it counts as an error rather than a hit against the pitcher. So the pitcher is still throwing a no hitter.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

But now they're no longer throwing a perfect game because somebody got on base.

Teresa:

Right.

Travis:

Right? If that's happening, it's incredibly rare and incredibly special, and so if a hush falls over the crowd and people are like, "He's pitching a perfect game," don't make a joke about jinxing it, don't be funny about it, be very respectful because it's a very big deal for the people sitting around you. Um.

Teresa:

I think what we've come to, the generality that we would like to impart to our listeners, is that being at a baseball game is mostly about the game, but it's also about the experience that you are having with the people in the stands.

Travis:

Correct.

Teresa:

And that's a really singular experience, and so almost, like, all of these etiquette rules we've gone over is about the shared experience that we're all having, making that, uh, a good place for all of us to be at one time.

Travis:

And you don't have to be a huge diehard fan to enjoy a baseball game, but I do think it's good to remember that there may be those around you who are diehard fans and they are also there.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

Um, and like you don't want to be having loud cell phone conversations while they're trying to watch the game. You don't want to put an umbrella up in front of their face when they're trying to watch the game.

You don't want to have a screaming fight with your significant other while they're trying to watch the game. You know what I mean? At the end of the day, everybody should be having a good time, and it's okay to read a book if you want. If somebody asks a question like, "Could I come and read a book?" Yeah. Go for it. Just like don't sit there playing music on your iPhone without headphones on while someone's trying to watch the game.

Teresa:

Mm-hmm.

Travis:

You know? Just keep other people's experience in mind as well.

Teresa:

I would like very much to go and see a vintage baseball game. Can you set that up for me, Travis McElroy?

Travis:

I would like that too. I know that there's a group of people that every opening day they, you know, cosplay as the 1869 Red Stockings, and, like, go and do all that stuff. I would love to see them play sometimes if they do it.

If you are interested in going to a ballgame by yourself, I highly recommend getting a program or a scorecard and giving yourself the job of keeping track of, like, errors and runs, and hits and strikes, especially if you're ...

That's how I learned as much about the game as I did, is like I would go with my dad and he would get me, like, the scorecard stuff, and then I would sit there and like really keep track of how it was going. And it kind of, like, really forces you to very quickly understand what's going on. And don't be afraid to ask questions.

If you're with someone who knows a lot about baseball, and you legitimately want to learn, it's completely okay to say, like, "Okay, so what's going on now?"

Teresa:

And those people love to tell you about it.

Travis:

Love it. So if you ever get to go to a baseball game with Justin McCombs, I highly recommend it.

Teresa:

I want to go to a baseball game with Justin McCombs.

Travis:

I do too. Um, well that's going to do it for us this week. Thank you so much for listening.

Teresa:

We need to do some thank you notes.

Travis:

Yes, we do. Let's do that. Thank you for listening, one.

Teresa:

Yes.

Travis:

Um, thank you to iTunes, they featured us, uh, on the banner, the front page of iTunes Podcasts, and we've seen a really great response from it. Um, we made it up to, when we recorded this, 13th in the top 200 comedy podcasts.

Teresa:

That's fantastic. Thank you guys so much.

Travis:

It's amazing. Um, if you want to help out and see if we can't get any higher, you can rate and review us on iTunes and it really helps us out, and it means a lot to us.

Teresa:

I'd like to say, um, thank you to the Vintage Baseball Association. Their website is a wealth of knowledge and I really enjoyed looking over it.

Travis:

I want to say thank you to Wikipedia, who taught me about the 1869 Red Stockings.

Teresa:

[Laughs]

Travis:

Uh, I also want to say thank you to Brent Black, who is not only my cohost on Trends Like These, he also did the intro and outro music for Shmanners, which you can get as a ringtone on iTunes.

So if you have an Apple device, um, like, say an iPad or an iPhone, or the like, you can go onto the iTunes store and buy it as a ringtone. Just search

Shmanners and you'll find it. It's really, really great. I highly recommend it. Um, you should also go check out all the other amazing Maximum Fun shows. They're really, really good, and I really recommend it. Um, I think—

Teresa:

We love being part of the Maximum Fun network.

Travis:

We do. Let's see, what do I want to recommend this week? Um, you should check out Can I Pet Your Dog? It's a really... I'm kind of on it, but mostly it's just a really cute show about dogs and I highly recommend it. Um. I recommend a lot of things to you guys, I love stuff and I love you. Thank you for listening. Um.

Teresa:

Uh, join our Facebook group, follow us on Twitter. Twitter is @ShmannersCast, um, and our Facebook group is growing rapidly, we are almost at a thousand members.

Travis:

You can find at Shmanners the Podcast in the groups tab. And you know, if you like the show, just click Retweet on the link that we'll post every time, we'll Tweet out a link every time we put up a new episode, just click Retweet. So that's going to do it for us. Join us again next week.

Teresa:

No RSVP required.

Travis:

You've been listening to Shmanners.

Teresa:

Manners, Shmanners. Get it?

[theme music plays]

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