



**Items of interest to baseball umpires, coaches, players, and fans, from the [UmpireBible](#)**

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## **Umpire News & Notes / 15 April 2019**

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### **Time Magazine reports on study of MLB error rate calling balls and strikes**

I don't vouch for the data and conclusions (originating with a Boston University study), but the Time article reports that the umpire error rate in calling balls and strikes hovers around 20%. The error rate increases to almost 30% with a two-strike count. But here's the most interesting (if not highlighted) finding: younger umpires were more accurate than the older, more experienced umpires. Sounds counterintuitive.

Boston University's Mark T. Wilson reports in Time Magazine, in an article entitled [Are Baseball Umpires Wrong As Often As Fans Think They Are?](#)

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### **Maddon calls for robots (I guess) to call checked swings**

I exaggerate. But the Cubs got burned recently on a checked swing call that didn't go their way and now Chicago manager Joe Maddon is arguing for taking the checked swing call out of the hands of umpires. "I want an electronic method to control a checked swing," says Maddon. More robots, apparently. Maybe we have robot players, too. That would eliminate errors.

ESPN writer Bradford Doolittle covers the issue in [Maddon: Take check swing calls away from umps.](#)

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### **Umpire Angel Hernandez pushes his discrimination case against MLB**

Angel Hernandez takes another leap in his two-year-old discrimination suit against MLB, targeting MLB's VP of Baseball Operations Joe Torre specifically for, in the words of the complaint, "Since Torre assumed his current role, MLB has made professional life even harder for minorities in baseball," says the official complaint.

Stephen Rex Brown of New York Daily News covers the latest blast in the Hernandez lawsuit

in his article [Umpire Angel Hernandez prepares publicity blitz against MLB as he pursues discrimination claims](#).

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## 'Tommy John' surgeries for teens an "epidemic"

To its credit, Little League has taken aggressive steps to protect young pitchers from overzealous parents and coaches, However, overall youth sports doesn't do enough to protect young players from dangerous injuries.

Matt Smith covers the issue at WebMD in an article entitled [Foul Ball: More Kids Having 'Tommy John' Surgery](#).

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## Trump administration kills deal allowing Cuban players to sign with MLB

Continuing the trend to roll back just about anything and everything positive from the previous administration, the Trump administration reversed a rule that had allowed payment of a "release fee" like the one in place for Chinese, Korean, and Japanese players, all but killing the opportunity to bring Cuban prospects into the League.

Jeff Passan of ESPN covers the development: [White House scuttles MLB's Cuban agreement](#).

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## Rule of the Day: Spectator interference

Spectator interference is one of the few rules infractions where there is no penalty (you can't penalize a spectator, after all), and whose remedy is entirely in the hands of the umpire, who is empowered to "nullify the act of interference." Spectator interference is defined in the OBR in the section [Definitions \(interference \[d\]\)](#). The rule itself, along with remedies, are laid out in [Rule 6.01\(e\)](#).

For a discussion, read the full [UmpireBible](#) article, [Spectator Interference](#).

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