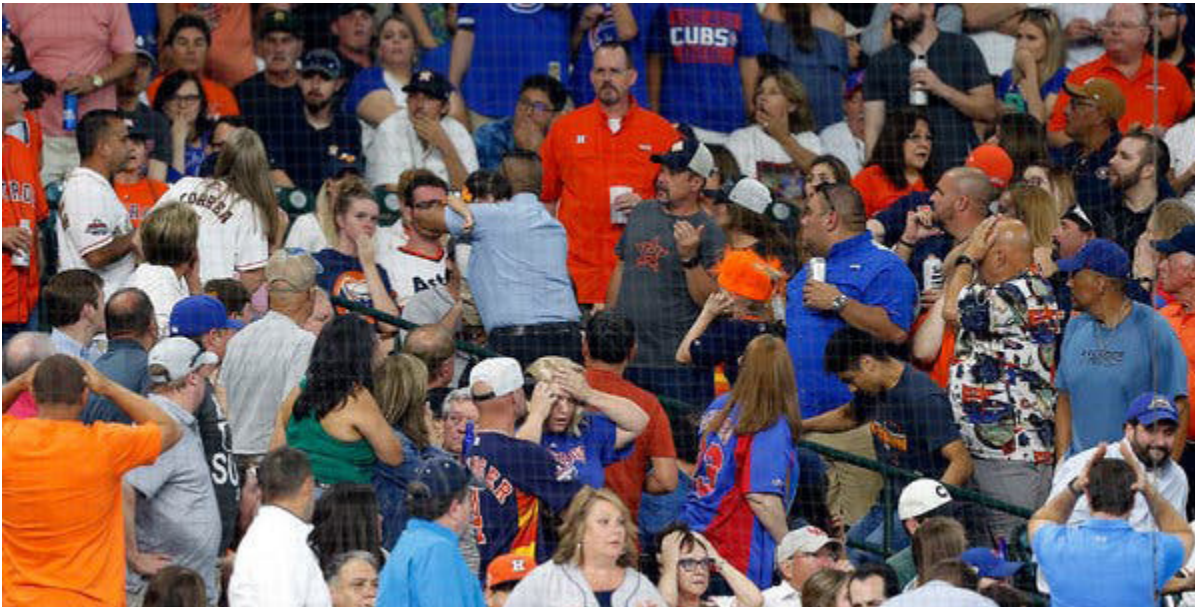


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Girl Hit by Foul Ball in Houston Had Serious Head Injuries, Lawyer Says



The 2-year-old girl struck by a ball in May was carried away by her grandfather, center. She sustained brain injuries and had seizures after being struck. CreditCreditBob Levey/Getty Images

By Billy Witz

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A 2-year-old girl who was struck in the head by a foul ball last month at a Cubs-Astros game in Houston sustained a skull fracture, bleeding on the brain and seizures, according to a lawyer hired by the girl's family.

"Any time you have bleeding or swelling on the brain, that's significant," said Richard Mithoff, the lawyer, who was retained several days ago by the family of the girl, who is recovering at home.

[The incident on May 29, and the horrified reaction of the player who hit the ball](#), Chicago Cubs outfielder Albert Almora Jr., prompted players

and safety advocates to urge M.L.B. to do more to protect its fans in an era when pitchers are throwing balls harder and batters are hitting them harder than ever.

Commissioner Rob Manfred has pushed back against any immediate action, choosing to leave

the matter largely in the hands of individual teams, as he did after another similarly serious incident [involving a toddler at Yankee Stadium near the end of the 2017 season](#). After that season, each of the 30 major league clubs agreed to extend the netting at their stadiums to the far end of the dugout — two years after Manfred issued a memo asking them to do so.

Manfred said last month that it is difficult to extend netting during the season and that some fans did not want netting extended, but he added that conversations would begin and continue into the off-season.

Since Manfred spoke, three teams — the Chicago White Sox, the Washington Nationals and the Los Angeles Dodgers — have announced they would extend protective netting down to the foul poles. The White Sox and Nationals said they would extend the netting this season, and the Nationals

said they would do so during the All-Star break in July.

The Dodgers have not said when they will extend the netting, but their announcement came on Monday, one day after [a young fan was hospitalized](#) after being struck by a foul ball hit by outfielder Cody Bellinger. Last year, a 79-year-old woman died from brain injuries after being struck in the head by a ball in the second deck at Dodger Stadium.

Mithoff said in a phone interview that it was too soon to determine if the family of the girl would file a lawsuit against the Houston Astros. But M.L.B. has been largely inoculated from lawsuits because of a disclaimer that has been printed on tickets since 1913 that says “the holder assumes all risk and danger inherent to the game of Baseball.”

Mithoff said that the Astros’ risk manager had reached out to the girl’s family, and that the team had been informed of the extent of the girl’s injuries. He said the girl was sitting in her grandfather’s lap facing him when the ball was hit. It struck her in the back of the head.

There had been scant information about the toddler’s condition since she was carried away from her seat after being struck. She spent several days in the hospital, a stint that was extended after she had a seizure before she was to be discharged, Mithoff said.

“It’s a line drive, coming off at 100 miles per hour,” Mithoff said. “I don’t care how good you are, it’s a hard to stop a ball going that fast.”