

1860 National Association of Baseball Players

Rules and Regulations of the Game of Baseball

Adopted by The National Association of Baseball Players - New York, March 14, 1860.

Section 1

The ball must weigh not less than five and three-fourths, nor more than six ounces avoirdupois. It must measure not less than nine and three-fourths, nor more than ten inches in circumference. It must be composed of India rubber and yarn, and covered with leather, and, in all match games, shall be furnished by the challenging club, and become the property of the winning club, as a trophy of victory.

Section 2

The bat must be round, and must not exceed two and a half inches in diameter in the thickest part. It must be made of wood, and may be of any length to suit the striker.

Section 3

The bases must be four in number, placed at equal distances from each other, and securely fastened upon the four corners of a square, whose sides are respectively thirty yards. They must be so constructed as to be distinctly seen by the umpire, and must cover a space equal to one square foot of surface. The first, second, and third bases shall be canvas bags, painted white, and filled with sand or sawdust; the home base and pitcher's point to be each marked by a flat circular iron plate, painted or enameled white.

Section 4

The base from which the ball is struck shall be designated Home Base, and must be directly opposite to the second base, the first base must always be that upon the right-hand, and the third base that upon the left-hand side of the striker, when occupying his position at the Home Base.

Section 5

The pitcher's position shall be designated by a line four yards in length, drawn at right angles to a line from home to the second base, having its center upon that line, at a fixed iron plate, placed at a point fifteen yards distant from home base. The pitcher must deliver the ball as near as possible over the center of the home base and for the striker.

Section 6

The ball must be pitched, not jerked or thrown to the bat; and whenever the pitcher draws back his hand, or moves with the apparent purpose or pretension to deliver the ball, he shall so deliver it, and he must have neither foot in advance of the line at the time of delivering the ball; and if he fails in either of these particulars, then it shall be declared a baulk.

Section 7

When a baulk is made by the pitcher, every player running the bases is entitled to one base, without being put out.

Section 8

If the ball, from the stroke of the bat, is caught behind the range of home and the first base, or home and the third base, without having touched the ground or first touches the ground behind those bases, it shall be termed foul, and must be so declared by the umpire, unasked. If the ball first touches the ground, or is caught without having touched the ground, either upon, or in front of the range of those bases, it shall be considered fair.

Section 9

A player making the home base shall be entitled to score one run.

Section 10

If three balls are struck at, and missed, and the last one is not caught, either flying or upon the first bound, it shall be considered fair, and the striker must attempt to make his run.

Section 11

The striker is out if a foul ball is caught, either before touching the ground, or upon the first bound;

Section 12

Or, if three balls are struck at and missed, and the last is caught, either before touching the ground or upon the first bound,

Section 13

Or, if a fair ball is struck, and the ball is caught either without having touched the ground, or upon the first bound;

Section 14

Or, if a fair ball is struck, and the ball held by an adversary on the first base, before the striker touches that base.

Section 15

Any player running the bases is out, if at any time he is touched by the ball while in play in the hands of an adversary, without some part of his person being on a base.

Section 16

No ace nor base can be made upon a foul ball, nor when a fair ball has been caught without having touched the ground, and the ball shall, in the former instance, be considered dead, and not in play until it shall first have been settled in the hands of the pitcher; in either case the players running the bases shall return to them, and may be put out in so returning in the same manner as the striker when running to the first base.

Section 17

The striker must stand on a line drawn through the center of the home base, not exceeding in length three feet either side thereof, and parallel to the line occupied by the pitcher. He shall be considered the striker until he has made the first base. Players must strike in regular rotation, and, after the first innings is played, the turn commences with the player who stands on the list next to the one who lost the third hand.

Section 18

Players must make their bases in the order of striking; and when a fair ball is struck, and not caught flying (or on the first bound), the first base must be vacated, as also the second and third bases, if they are occupied at the same time. Players may be put out on any base, under these circumstances, in the same manner as the striker when running to the first base.

Section 19

Players running the bases must, so far as possible, keep upon a direct line between the bases; and, should any player run three feet out of this line, for the purpose of avoiding the ball in the hands of an adversary, he shall be declared out.

Section 20

Any player, who shall intentionally prevent an adversary from catching or fielding the ball, shall be declared out.

Section 21

If the player is prevented from making a base, by the intentional obstruction of an adversary, he shall be entitled to that base, and not put out.

Section 22

If an adversary stops a ball with his hat or cap, or takes it from the hands of a party not engaged in the game, no player can be put out unless the ball shall first have settled in the hands of the pitcher.

Section 23

If a ball, from the stroke of a bat, is held under any other circumstances than as enumerated in Section 22, and without having touched the ground more than once, the striker is out

Section 24

If two hands are already out, no player running home at the time a ball is struck, can make an ace if the striker is put out.

Section 25

An innings must be concluded at the time the third hand is put out.

Section 26

The game shall consist of nine innings to each side, when, should the number of runs be equal, the play, shall be continued until a majority of runs, upon an equal number of innings, shall be declared, which shall conclude the game.

Section 27

In playing all matches, nine players from each club shall constitute a full field, and they must have been regular members of the club they represent, and of no other club, for thirty days prior to the match. No change or substitution shall be made after the game has been commenced, unless for reason of illness or injury. Position of players and choice of innings shall be determined by captains previously appointed for that purpose by the respective clubs.

Section 28

The umpire shall take care that the regulations respecting balls, bats, bases, and the pitcher's and striker's positions, are strictly observed. He shall keep record of the game, in a book prepared for the purpose; he shall be the judge of fair and unfair play, and shall determine all disputes and differences which may occur during the game; he shall take especial care to declare all foul balls and baulks, immediately upon their occurrence, unasked, and in a distinct and audible manner.

Section 29

In all matches the umpire shall be selected by the captains of the respective sides, and shall perform all the duties enumerated in Section 28, except recording the game, which shall be done by two scorers, one of whom shall be appointed by each of the contending clubs.

Section 30

No person engaged in a match, either as umpire, scorer, or player, shall be, either directly or indirectly, interested in any bet upon the game. Neither umpire, scorer, nor player shall be changed during a match, unless with the consent of both parties (except for a violation of this law), except as provided in Section 27, and then the umpire may dismiss any transgressor.

Section 31

The umpire in any match shall determine when play shall be suspended; and if the game can not be concluded, it shall be determined by the last even innings, provided five innings have been played, and the party having the greatest number of runs shall be declared the winner.

Section 32

Clubs may adopt such rules respecting balls knocked beyond or outside of bounds of the field, as the circumstances of the ground may demand; and these rules shall govern all matches played upon the ground, provided that they are distinctly made known to every player and umpire, previous to the commencement of the game.

Section 33

No person shall be permitted to approach or to speak with the umpire, scorers, or players, or in any manner to interrupt or interfere during the progress of the game, unless by special request of the umpire.

Section 34

No person shall be permitted to act as umpire or scorer in any match, unless he shall be a member of a Baseball Club governed by these rules.

Section 35

Whenever a match shall have been determined upon two clubs, play shall be called at the exact hour appointed; and should either party fail to produce their players within fifteen minutes thereafter, the party so failing shall admit a defeat.

Section 36

No person who shall be in arrears to any other club, or who shall at any time receive compensation for his services as player, shall be competent to play in any match.

Section 37

Should a striker stand at the bat without striking at good balls repeatedly pitched to him, for the apparent purpose of delaying the game, or of giving advantage to a player, the umpire, after warning him, shall call one strike, and if he persists in such action, two and three strikes. When three strikes are called, he shall be subject to the same rules as he had struck at three fair balls.

Section 38

Every match hereafter made shall be decided by a single game, unless mutually agreed upon by the contesting clubs.