

# OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES

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- 8.00 The Pitcher.
- 9.00 The Umpire.
- 10.00 The Official Scorer.

Recodified, amended and adopted by Professional Baseball Official Playing Rules Committee at New York, N.Y., December 21, 1949; amended at New York, N.Y., February 5, 1951; Tampa, Fla., March 14, 1951; Chicago, Ill., March 3, 1952; New York, N.Y., November 4, 1953; New York, N.Y., December 8, 1954; Chicago, Ill., November 20, 1956; Tampa, Fla., March 30-31, 1961; Tampa, Fla., November 26, 1961; New York, N.Y., January 26, 1963; San Diego, Calif., December 2, 1963; Houston, Tex., December 1, 1964; Columbus, Ohio., November 28, 1966; Pittsburgh, Pa., December 1, 1966; Mexico City, Mexico, November 27, 1967; San Francisco, Calif., December 3, 1968; New York, N.Y., January 31, 1969; Fort Lauderdale, Fla., December 1, 1969; Los Angeles, Calif., November 30, 1970; Phoenix, Ariz., November 29, 1971; St. Petersburg, Fla., March 23, 1972; Honolulu, Hawaii, November 27, 1972; Houston, Tex., December 3 and 7, 1973; New Orleans, La., December 2, 1974; Hollywood, Fla., December 8, 1975; Los Angeles, Calif., December 6, 1976; Honolulu, Hawaii, December 5, 1977; Orlando, Fla., December 4, 1978; Toronto, Ontario, Canada, December 3, 1979; Dallas, Tex., December 8, 1980; Hollywood, Fla., December 7, 1981; Honolulu, Hawaii, December 5, 1982; Nashville, Tenn., December 5, 1983; New York, N.Y., January 8, 1985; New York, N.Y., March 27, 1986; Hollywood, Fla., December 9, 1986; New York, N.Y., November 23, 1987; New York, N.Y., January 26, 1989; Chicago, Ill., December 3, 1990; Miami, Fla., December 5, 1991; Louisville, Ky., December 4, 1992; Atlanta, Ga., December 12, 1993; New York, N.Y., January 30, 1996; Mail vote, January 2006; Teleconference, December 20, 2006.

## Foreword

This code of rules is written to govern the playing of baseball games by professional teams of the American League of Professional Baseball Clubs, the National League of Professional Baseball Clubs, and the leagues which are members of the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues.

We recognize that many amateur and non-professional organizations play their games under professional rules, and we are happy to make our rules available as widely as possible. It is well to remember that specifications as to fields, equipment, etc., may be modified to meet the needs of each group.

Money fines, long-term suspensions and similar penalties imposed by this code are not practicable for amateur groups, but officers and umpires of such organizations should insist on strict observance of all the rules governing the playing of the game.

Baseball not only has maintained its position as the National Game of the United States, but also has become an International Game being played in 100 countries. Its popularity will grow only as long as its players, managers, coaches, umpires and administrative officers respect the discipline of its code of rules.

### PLAYING RULES COMMITTEE

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## **IMPORTANT NOTE**

The Playing Rules Committee, at its December 1977 meeting, voted to incorporate the Notes/Case Book/Comments section directly into the Official Baseball Rules at the appropriate places. Basically, the Case Book interprets or elaborates on the basic rules and in essence have the same effect as rules when applied to particular sections for which they are intended.

This arrangement is designed to give quicker access to any written language pertaining to an Official Rule and does not require a reader to refer to different sections of the Official Baseball Rules book in considering the application of a particular rule.

Case Book material is printed in smaller type than the rule language.

## Changes for the 2007 Major League Season

The Playing Rules Committee made the following changes before the 2006 season that went into effect in the National Association for the 2006 season and that will be in effect in the Major Leagues for the 2007 season (as amended further, in some Rules):

- Removed prohibition on multi-colored gloves and added prohibition on gloves that are distracting in any manner. Added sanction for noncompliance. (Rules 1.15(a) and 1.15(c)).
- Amended definition of League President and added new Comment for Major Leagues, in which “league president” duties are to be carried out by the designees of the Commissioner. (Rule 2.00).
- Removed archaic references describing preparation of baseballs for a game. (Rule 3.01(c)).
- Amended rules relating to responsibility for rosin bags. (Rules 3.01(f) and 8.02(a)).
- Moved the penalty for a pitcher delivering a doctored ball from Rule 3.02 to Rule 8.02(a). Reorganized Rule 8.02(a), changed standard for ejection of a pitcher doctoring a ball from second to first offense, added a mandatory suspension in National Association Leagues and added a Comment giving an umpire discretion to not apply the automatic penalty if he believes that the pitcher did not intend to alter the characteristics of the ball. (Rules 3.02 and 8.02(a)).
- Amended rules on regulation tie games and suspended games so that a tied regulation game that is stopped will be suspended and resumed before the next scheduled championship season game between the two Clubs, rather than replayed in its entirety. Certain rules in regard to suspended games moved from Rule 4.11(d) to Rule 4.12(a). Rules added to explain result of a suspended game that is not completed and that becomes a called game. (Rules 4.10(d), 4.11(d) and 4.12).
- Amended Comment relating to protested games, clarifying that any appeal must be lodged before the next pitch, play or attempted play. (Rule 4.19).
- Changed consequences of batter refusing to enter batter’s box to an automatic strike, instead of requiring the pitcher to deliver a pitch that is then called a “strike” regardless of where it is thrown. (Rule 6.02(c)).

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- Revised Comments clarifying that a player may reach into the dugout and other out-of-play areas to make a catch, but that he may not step into the dugout or any other out-of-play areas to do so. (Rules 6.05(a) and 7.04(c)).
- Added Comment to clarify that a batter shall be deemed to have “used or attempted to use” an illegal bat if he brings such a bat into the batter’s box. (Rule 6.06(d)).
- Amended Comment on consequences of catcher’s interference to agree with Rule 7.07. (Rule 6.08(c)).
- Amended rules on batter-runner after third strike not caught. A batter is declared out after a dropped third strike if he leaves the dirt circle around home plate while not on his way to try to reach first base. (Rules 6.09(b) and 7.08(a)).
- Added rule relating to pitched ball touched by detached equipment, allowing batter-runner and other runners to advance one base. (Rule 7.05(j)).
- Amended rules on positioning of pitcher’s pivot foot on the rubber and his free foot to allow a pitcher to have only a portion of his pivot foot, rather than the entire foot, on the rubber and to allow his free foot to be anywhere in the Windup Position. (Rules 8.01(a) and 8.01(b)).
- Added Comment providing that a pitcher is not required to stop at the Set Position with no runners on base, but would allow the umpire to deem a delivery an illegal “quick pitch” if, in the umpire’s judgment, the pitcher delivers the ball in a deliberate effort to catch the batter off guard. (Rule 8.01(b)).
- Amended time limit for pitcher to pitch requiring pitchers to deliver a pitch within 12 seconds when there is no runner on base, rather than 20 seconds. (Rule 8.04).
- Added Comment clarifying the inter-relationship among the several penalties in the Rules for pitcher delaying a game. (Rule 8.05(h)).

The Playing Rules Committee made the following changes before the 2007 season that will be in effect in the Major Leagues and the National Association for the 2007 season:

- Made stylistic changes in Rules 1.09 and 6.05(h).
- Excepted piping from rule regulating color of pitcher’s glove and made a stylistic change. (Rule 1.15(a)).

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- Added definition and Comment for “ordinary effort,” a standard set forth frequently in the Official Scoring Rules. (Rule 2.00).
- Removed archaic rule relating to offensive players crossing the catcher’s lines. (Rule 4.03(d)).
- Amended rule on winning runs to note that the game does not end if, with two out, the winning run has not reached home plate before a subsequent runner passes another in violation of the rules. (Rule 4.11(c)).
- Added Comment instructing umpires, after calling an automatic strike on a batter who refuses to take his position in the batter’s box, to give a batter a reasonable opportunity to take his position before calling a successive strike. (Rule 6.02(c)).
- Made permanent for National Association play the rule requiring a batter, except under certain circumstances, to stay in the batter’s box during an at-bat, amended the rule to provide that the ball is dead if an automatic strike is called pursuant to the rule and added a comment instructing umpires, after calling an automatic strike, to give a batter a reasonable opportunity to take his position before calling a successive strike. (Rule 6.02(d)).
- Amended Comment permitting batter-runner to exit the three-foot lane in the immediate vicinity of first base in order to touch first base. (Rule 6.05(k) Comment).
- Amended rule defining a runner’s baseline as a straight line from the runner to the base he is attempting to reach safely. (Rule 7.08(a)).
- Added Penalty of an automatic ball and, if there are any runners on base, a balk, if the manager of the team at bat does not elect to accept the play that follows the violation of the rule pertaining to a pitcher doctoring a ball. (Rule 8.02(a) Penalty (d)).
- Revised index of Official Scoring Rules. (Rule 10).
- Made style revisions and added certain cross-references. (Rule 10).
- Standardized the process for league review of a scorer’s judgment call. Set time limits to file a request for review and submit evidence (such as videotapes). Empowered the league to overrule a clearly erroneous judgment call by a scorer. (Rule 10.01).

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- Clarified that official scorer duties apply to post-season and All-Star games. (Rule 10.01(a)).
- Amended the official score report filing time to “as soon as practicable” after a game. Amended certain reporting requirements of the official scorer. (Rules 10.01(a), 10.01(a) Comment, 10.01(b)(3), 10.02(a)(17), 10.02(a)(18), 10.02(i), 10.02(j), 10.02(l), 10.02(l) Comment and 10.02(m)).
- Added Comments to address fractions of an inning pitched after an appeal play and to cover putouts and assists on appeal plays. (Rules 10.02(c)(1), 10.09(a)(2) and 10.10(a)(1)).
- Added Comment to address “official” 9-0 score of a forfeit. (Rule 10.03(e))
- Combined former Rules 10.05 and 10.06, in regard to scoring base hits, into one rule section. (Rule 10.05).
- Added Comment on determining the value of a base hit on a game-ending play in situations where the winning run may score slightly before the batter-runner reaches an extra base. (Rule 10.06(f)).
- Added Comment to instruct the official scorer to consider the totality of the circumstances of the game in determining “defensive indifference” on stolen base attempts. (Rule 10.07(g)).
- Replaced “perfect play” standard with “ordinary effort” standard in sacrifice hit scoring rule. (Rule 10.08(b)).
- Added concept of tagging a base (after catching a batted or thrown ball) to scoring rule in regard to putouts. (Rule 10.09(a)(2)).
- Clarified that automatic putout for catcher if runner refuses to advance home is not to be limited to winning run. (Rule 10.09(b)(8)).
- Combined former Rules 10.13 and 10.14, in regard to scoring errors, into one rule section. (Rule 10.12).
- Added Comment to clarify that a wild pitch or passed ball should not be charged if the team on defense makes an out before the runners advance. (Rule 10.13).
- Corrected parenthetical to “exclude” (not “include”) catcher’s interference from errors in inning-reconstructions for purposes of calculating earned runs.

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Incorporated existing interpretation of treatment of catcher's interference into Comment. (Rules 10.16 and 10.16(a)).

- Added Comments to provide guidance on choosing the “most effective” relief pitcher and judging an “ineffective and brief” appearance by a relief pitcher in determining the winning pitcher. (Rules 10.17(b) and 10.17(c)).
- Separated scoring rule in regard to shutouts into new rule. (Rule 10.18).
- Added a requirement for a relief pitcher to be credited with at least  $\frac{1}{3}$  of an inning pitched to be eligible for a save. Eliminated the requirement of “effectiveness” if a relief pitcher pitches three or more innings in finishing a game to qualify for a save. (Rules 10.19(c) and 10.19(d)(3)).
- Clarified that fractions of an inning are counted for a pitcher in determining ERA. (Rule 10.21(e)).
- Amended rules relating to qualification for individual statistical championships. Added on-base percentage to batting and slugging in the minimum-plate-appearance rule. Added the 2.7-plate-appearances-per-game concept in National Association leagues to the rule. Addressed fractions of an inning in minimum qualifications for pitcher championships. (Rules 10.22(a) and 10.22(b) Comment).
- Added obstruction to the list of events that preserves a consecutive-game hitting streak. (Rule 10.23(a)).
- Added general definitions of RBI (Rule 10.04), Base hit (Rule 10.05), Putout (Rule 10.09), Assist (Rule 10.10), Error (Rule 10.12), Passed ball (Rule 10.13) and Chances. (Rule 10.21(d)).
- Added examples in Comments to provide clarification in regard to charging errors, calculating earned runs, adding plate appearances in determining individual batting championships, determining minimum innings pitched for individual pitching championships, charging batters with grounding into double plays, charging caught stealing and crediting games played. (Rules 10.12(a)(1), 10.12(a)(6), 10.16(a), 10.22(a), 10.22(b), 10.2(a)(17), 10.07(h), and 10.20).