

Rule 4.01 to 4.02

4.00—Starting and Ending a Game.

4.01 Unless the home club shall have given previous notice that the game has been postponed or will be delayed in starting, the umpire, or umpires, shall enter the playing field five minutes before the hour set for the game to begin and proceed directly to home base where they shall be met by the managers of the opposing teams. In sequence—

- (a) First, the home manager shall give his batting order to the umpire-in-chief, in duplicate.
- (b) Next, the visiting manager shall give his batting order to the umpire-in-chief, in duplicate.
- (c) The umpire-in-chief shall make certain that the original and copies of the respective batting orders are identical, and then tender a copy of each batting order to the opposing manager. The copy retained by the umpire shall be the official batting order. The tender of the batting order by the umpire shall establish the batting orders. Thereafter, no substitutions shall be made by either manager, except as provided in the rules.
- (d) As soon as the home team's batting order is handed to the umpire-in-chief the umpires are in charge of the playing field and from that moment they shall have sole authority to determine when a game shall be called, suspended or resumed on account of weather or the condition of the playing field.

Rule 4.01 Comment: Obvious errors in the batting order, which are noticed by the umpire-in-chief before he calls "Play" for the start of the game, should be called to the attention of the manager or captain of the team in error, so the correction can be made before the game starts. For example, if a manager has inadvertently listed only eight men in the batting order, or has listed two players with the same last name but without an identifying initial and the errors are noticed by the umpire before he calls "play," he shall cause such error or errors to be corrected before he calls "play" to start the game. Teams should not be "trapped" later by some mistake that obviously was inadvertent and which can be corrected before the game starts.

4.02 The players of the home team shall take their defensive positions, the first batter of the visiting team shall take his position in the batter's box, the umpire shall call "Play" and the game shall start.

Rule 4.03 to 4.05

4.03 When the ball is put in play at the start of, or during a game, all fielders other than the catcher shall be on fair territory.

- (a) The catcher shall station himself directly back of the plate. He may leave his position at any time to catch a pitch or make a play except that when the batter is being given an intentional base on balls, the catcher must stand with both feet within the lines of the catcher's box until the ball leaves the pitcher's hand.

PENALTY: Balk.

- (b) The pitcher, while in the act of delivering the ball to the batter, shall take his legal position;
- (c) Except the pitcher and the catcher, any fielder may station himself anywhere in fair territory.

4.04 The batting order shall be followed throughout the game unless a player is substituted for another. In that case the substitute shall take the place of the replaced player in the batting order.

4.05

- (a) The offensive team shall station two base coaches on the field during its term at bat, one near first base and one near third base.
- (b) Base coaches shall be limited to two in number and shall (1) be in team uniform, and (2) remain within the coach's box at all times.

PENALTY: The offending base coach shall be removed from the game, and shall leave the playing field.

Rule 4.05 Comment: It has been common practice for many years for some coaches to put one foot outside the coach's box or stand astride or otherwise be slightly outside the coaching box lines. The coach shall not be considered out of the box unless the opposing manager complains, and then, the umpire shall strictly enforce the rule and require all coaches (on both teams) to remain in the coach's box at all times.

It is also common practice for a coach who has a play at his base to leave the coach's box to signal the player to slide, advance or return to a base. This may be allowed if the coach does not interfere with the play in any manner.

Rule 4.06 to 4.08

4.06

- (a) No manager, player, substitute, coach, trainer or batboy shall at any time, whether from the bench, the coach's box or on the playing field, or elsewhere—
- (1) Incite, or try to incite, by word or sign a demonstration by spectators;
 - (2) Use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, an umpire, or any spectator;
 - (3) Call "Time," or employ any other word or phrase or commit any act while the ball is alive and in play for the obvious purpose of trying to make the pitcher commit a balk.
 - (4) Make intentional contact with the umpire in any manner.
- (b) No fielder shall take a position in the batter's line of vision, and with deliberate unsportsmanlike intent, act in a manner to distract the batter.

PENALTY: The offender shall be removed from the game and shall leave the playing field, and, if a balk is made, it shall be nullified.

4.07 When a manager, player, coach or trainer is ejected from a game, he shall leave the field immediately and take no further part in that game. He shall remain in the club house or change to street clothes and either leave the park or take a seat in the grandstand well removed from the vicinity of his team's bench or bullpen.

Rule 4.07 Comment: If a manager, coach or player is under suspension he may not be in the dugout or press box during the course of a game.

4.08 When the occupants of a player's bench show violent disapproval of an umpire's decision, the umpire shall first give warning that such disapproval shall cease. If such action continues—

PENALTY: The umpire shall order the offenders from the bench to the club house. If he is unable to detect the offender, or offenders, he may clear the bench of all

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substitute players. The manager of the offending team shall have the privilege of recalling to the playing field only those players needed for substitution in the game.

4.09 HOW A TEAM SCORES.

- (a) One run shall be scored each time a runner legally advances to and touches first, second, third and home base before three men are put out to end the inning. EXCEPTION: A run is not scored if the runner advances to home base during a play in which the third out is made (1) by the batter-runner before he touches first base; (2) by any runner being forced out; or (3) by a preceding runner who is declared out because he failed to touch one of the bases.
- (b) When the winning run is scored in the last half-inning of a regulation game, or in the last half of an extra inning, as the result of a base on balls, hit batter or any other play with the bases full which forces the runner on third to advance, the umpire shall not declare the game ended until the runner forced to advance from third has touched home base and the batter-runner has touched first base.

Rule 4.09(b) Comment: An exception will be if fans rush onto the field and physically prevent the runner from touching home plate or the batter from touching first base. In such cases, the umpires shall award the runner the base because of the obstruction by the fans.

PENALTY: If the runner on third refuses to advance to and touch home base in a reasonable time, the umpire shall disallow the run, call out the offending player and order the game resumed. If, with two out, the batter-runner refuses to advance to and touch first base, the umpire shall disallow the run, call out the offending player, and order the game resumed. If, before two are out, the batter-runner refuses to advance to and touch first base, the run shall count, but the offending player shall be called out.

Rule 4.09 Comment: APPROVED RULING: No run shall score during a play in which the third out is made by the batter-runner before he touches first base. Example: One out, Jones on second, Smith on first. The batter, Brown, hits safely. Jones scores. Smith is out on the throw to the plate. Two outs. But Brown missed first base. The ball is thrown to first, an appeal is made, and Brown is out. Three outs. Since Jones crossed the plate during a play in which the third out was made by the batter-runner before he touched first base, Jones' run does not count.

APPROVED RULING: Following runners are not affected by an act of a preceding runner unless two are out.

Example: One out, Jones on second, Smith on first, and batter, Brown, hits home run inside the

Rule 4.09 to 4.10

park. Jones fails to touch third on his way to the plate. Smith and Brown score. The defense holds the ball on third, appeals to umpire, and Jones is out. Smith's and Brown's runs count.

APPROVED RULING: Two out, Jones on second, Smith on first and batter, Brown, hits home run inside the park. All three runs cross the plate. But Jones missed third base, and on appeal is declared out. Three outs. Smith's and Brown's runs are voided. No score on the play.

APPROVED RULING: One out, Jones on third, Smith on second. Batter Brown flies out to center. Two out. Jones scores after catch and Smith scores on bad throw to plate. But Jones, on appeal, is adjudged to have left third before the catch and is out. Three outs. No runs.

APPROVED RULING: Two out, bases full, batter hits home run over fence. Batter, on appeal, is declared out for missing first base. Three outs. No run counts.

Here is a general statement that covers:

When a runner misses a base and a fielder holds the ball on a missed base, or on the base originally occupied by the runner if a fly ball is caught, and appeals for the umpire's decision, the runner is out when the umpire sustains the appeal; all runners may score if possible, except that with two out the runner is out at the moment he misses the bag, if an appeal is sustained as applied to the following runners.

APPROVED RULING: One out, Jones on third, Smith on first, and Brown flies out to right field. Two outs. Jones tags up and scores after the catch. Smith attempted to return to first but the right fielder's throw beat him to the base. three outs. But Jones scored before the throw to catch Smith reached first base, hence Jones' run counts. It was not a force play.

4.10

- (a) A regulation game consists of nine innings, unless extended because of a tie score, or shortened (1) because the home team needs none of its half of the ninth inning or only a fraction of it, or (2) because the umpire calls the game. EXCEPTION: National Association leagues may adopt a rule providing that one or both games of a doubleheader shall be seven innings in length. In such games, any of these rules applying to the ninth inning shall apply to the seventh inning.
- (b) If the score is tied after nine completed innings play shall continue until (1) the visiting team has scored more total runs than the home team at the end of a completed inning, or (2) the home team scores the winning run in an uncompleted inning.
- (c) If a game is called, it is a regulation game:
 - (1) If five innings have been completed;
 - (2) If the home team has scored more runs in four or four and a fraction half-innings than the visiting team has scored in five completed half-innings;

Rule 4.10 to 4.11

- (3) If the home team scores one or more runs in its half of the fifth inning to tie the score.
- (d) If a regulation game is called with the score tied, it shall become a suspended game. See Rule 4.12.
- (e) If a game is called before it has become a regulation game, the umpire shall declare it “No Game.”
- (f) Rain checks will not be honored for any regulation or suspended game which has progressed to or beyond a point of play described in 4.10(c)

4.11 The score of a regulation game is the total number of runs scored by each team at the moment the game ends.

- (a) The game ends when the visiting team completes its half of the ninth inning if the home team is ahead.
- (b) The game ends when the ninth inning is completed, if the visiting team is ahead.
- (c) If the home team scores the winning run in its half of the ninth inning (or its half of an extra inning after a tie), the game ends immediately when the winning run is scored. EXCEPTION: If the last batter in a game hits a home run out of the playing field, the batter-runner and all runners on base are permitted to score, in accordance with the base-running rules, and the game ends when the batter-runner touches home plate.

APPROVED RULING: The batter hits a home run out of the playing field to win the game in the last half of the ninth or an extra inning, but is called out for passing a preceding runner. The game ends immediately when the winning run is scored, unless there are two out and the winning run has not yet reached home plate when the runner passes another, in which case the inning is over and only those runs that scored before the runner passes another shall count.

Rule 4.11 to 4.12

- (d) A called game ends at the moment the umpire terminates play, unless it becomes a suspended game pursuant to Rule 4.12(a).

4.12 SUSPENDED GAMES.

- (a) A game shall become a suspended game that must be completed at a future date if the game is terminated for any of the following reasons:

- (1) A curfew imposed by law;
- (2) A time limit permissible under league rules;
- (3) Light failure or malfunction of a mechanical field device under control of the home club. (Mechanical field device shall include automatic tarpaulin or water removal equipment);
- (4) Darkness, when a law prevents the lights from being turned on;
- (5) Weather, if a regulation game is called while an inning is in progress and before the inning is completed, and the visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead, and the home team has not retaken the lead; or
- (6) It is a regulation game that is called with the score tied.

National Association Leagues may also adopt the following rules for suspended games. (If adopted by a National Association League, Rule 4.10(e) would not apply to their games.):

- (7) The game has not become a regulation game (4½ innings with the home team ahead, or 5 innings with the visiting club ahead or tied).
- (8) If a game is suspended before it becomes a regulation game, and is continued prior to another regularly scheduled game, the regularly scheduled game will be limited to seven innings.

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- (9) If a game is suspended after it is a regulation game, and is continued prior to another regularly scheduled game, the regularly scheduled game will be a nine inning game.

EXCEPTION: Optional Rules 4.12(a)(7), 4.12(a)(8) and 4.12(a)(9) for National Association Leagues will not apply to the last scheduled game between the two teams during the championship season or league playoffs.

No game called because of a curfew (Rule 4.12(a)(1)), weather (Rule 4.12(a)(5)), a time limit (Rule 4.12(a)(2)) or with a tied score (Rule 4.12(a)(6)) shall be a suspended game unless it has progressed far enough to have been a regulation game pursuant to Rule 4.10(c). A game called pursuant to Rules 4.12(a)(3) or 4.12(a)(4) shall be a suspended game at any time after it starts.

NOTE: Weather and similar conditions—Rules 4.12(a)(1) through 4.12(a)(5)—shall take precedence in determining whether a called game shall be a suspended game. If a game is halted by weather, and subsequent light failure or an intervening curfew or time limit prevents its resumption, the game shall not be a suspended game. If a game is halted by light failure, and weather or field conditions prevent its resumption, the game shall not be a suspended game. A game can only be considered a suspended game if stopped for any of the six reasons specified in Rule 4.12(a).

- (b) A suspended game shall be resumed and completed as follows:
- (1) Immediately preceding the next scheduled single game between the two clubs on the same grounds; or
 - (2) Immediately preceding the next scheduled doubleheader between the two clubs on the same grounds, if no single game remains on the schedule; or
 - (3) If suspended on the last scheduled date between the two clubs in that city, transferred and played on the grounds of the opposing club, if possible;
 - (i) Immediately preceding the next scheduled single game, or

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- (ii) Immediately preceding the next scheduled doubleheader, if no single game remains on the schedule.
- (4) Any suspended game not completed prior to the last scheduled game between the two teams during the championship season shall become a called game. If such game becomes a called game and
- (i) has progressed far enough to become a regulation game, and one team is ahead, the team that is ahead shall be declared the winner;
 - (ii) has progressed far enough to become a regulation game, and the score is tied, the game shall be declared a “tie game.” A tie game is to be replayed in its entirety, unless the league president determines that playing the rescheduled game is not necessary to affect the league championship; or
 - (iii) has not progressed far enough to become a regulation game, the game shall be declared “No Game.” In such case, the game is to be replayed in its entirety, unless the league president determines that playing the rescheduled game is not necessary to affect the league championship.
- (c) A suspended game shall be resumed at the exact point of suspension of the original game. The completion of a suspended game is a continuation of the original game. The lineup and batting order of both teams shall be exactly the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules governing substitution. Any player may be replaced by a player who had not been in the game prior to the suspension. No player removed before the suspension may be returned to the lineup.

A player who was not with the club when the game was suspended may be used as a substitute, even if he has taken the place of a player no longer with the club who would not have been eligible because he had been removed from the lineup before the game was suspended.

Rule 4.12 to 4.13

Rule 4.12(c) Comment: If immediately prior to the call of a suspended game, a substitute pitcher has been announced but has not retired the side or pitched until the batter becomes a base runner, such pitcher, when the suspended game is later resumed may, but is not required to start the resumed portion of the game. However, if he does not start he will be considered as having been substituted for and may not be used in that game.

- (d) Rain checks will not be honored for any regulation or suspended game that has progressed to or beyond a point of play described in Rule 4.10(c).

4.13 RULES GOVERNING DOUBLEHEADERS.

- (a)
 - (1) Only two championship games shall be played on one date. Completion of a suspended game shall not violate this rule.
 - (2) If two games are scheduled to be played for one admission on one date, the first game shall be the regularly scheduled game for that date.
- (b) After the start of the first game of a doubleheader, that game shall be completed before the second game of the doubleheader shall begin.
- (c) The second game of a doubleheader shall start twenty minutes after the first game is completed, unless a longer interval (not to exceed thirty minutes) is declared by the umpire-in-chief and announced to the opposing managers at the end of the first game. EXCEPTION: If the league president has approved a request of the home club for a longer interval between games for some special event, the umpire-in-chief shall declare such longer interval and announce it to the opposing managers. The umpire-in-chief of the first game shall be the timekeeper controlling the interval between games.
- (d) The umpire shall start the second game of a doubleheader, if at all possible, and play shall continue as long as ground conditions, local time restrictions, or weather permit.
- (e) When a regularly scheduled doubleheader is delayed in starting for any cause, any game that is started is the first game of the doubleheader.

Rule 4.13 to 4.16

- (f) When a rescheduled game is part of a doubleheader the rescheduled game shall be the second game, and the first game shall be the regularly scheduled game for that date.

4.14 The umpire-in-chief shall order the playing field lights turned on whenever in his opinion darkness makes further play in daylight hazardous.

4.15 A game may be forfeited to the opposing team when a team—

- (a) Fails to appear upon the field, or being upon the field, refuses to start play within five minutes after the umpire has called “Play” at the appointed hour for beginning the game, unless such delayed appearance is, in the umpire’s judgment, unavoidable;
- (b) Employs tactics palpably designed to delay or shorten the game;
- (c) Refuses to continue play during a game unless the game has been suspended or terminated by the umpire;
- (d) Fails to resume play, after a suspension, within one minute after the umpire has called “Play;”
- (e) After warning by the umpire, willfully and persistently violates any rules of the game;
- (f) Fails to obey within a reasonable time the umpire’s order for removal of a player from the game;
- (g) Fails to appear for the second game of a doubleheader within twenty minutes after the close of the first game unless the umpire-in-chief of the first game shall have extended the time of the intermission.

4.16 A game shall be forfeited to the visiting team if, after it has been suspended, the order of the umpire to groundskeepers respecting preparation of the field for resumption of play are not complied with.

Rule 4.17 to 4.19

4.17 A game shall be forfeited to the opposing team when a team is unable or refuses to place nine players on the field.

4.18 If the umpire declares a game forfeited he shall transmit a written report to the league president within twenty-four hours thereafter, but failure of such transmittal shall not effect the forfeiture.

4.19 PROTESTING GAMES. Each league shall adopt rules governing procedure for protesting a game, when a manager claims that an umpire's decision is in violation of these rules. No protest shall ever be permitted on judgment decisions by the umpire. In all protested games, the decision of the League President shall be final.

Even if it is held that the protested decision violated the rules, no replay of the game will be ordered unless in the opinion of the League President the violation adversely affected the protesting team's chances of winning the game.

Rule 4.19 Comment: Whenever a manager protests a game because of alleged misapplication of the rules the protest will not be recognized unless the umpires are notified at the time the play under protest occurs and before the next pitch, play or attempted play. A protest arising on a game-ending play may be filed until 12 noon the following day with the league office.