

OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES

DIVISIONS OF THE CODE

- 1.00 Objectives of the Game, the Playing Field, Equipment.
- 2.00 Definition of Terms.
- 3.00 Game Preliminaries.
- 4.00 Starting and Ending the Game.
- 5.00 Putting the Ball in Play, Dead Ball and Live Ball (in Play).
- 6.00 The Batter.
- 7.00 The Runner.
- 8.00 The Pitcher.
- 9.00 The Umpire.
- 10.00 The Official Scorer.

Recodified, amended and adopted by Professional Baseball 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; Teleconference, February 5, 2008.

Foreword

This code of rules governs the playing of baseball games by professional teams of Major League Baseball and the leagues that 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 more than 100 countries. The popularity of the game will grow only so 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 2008 Major League Season

The Playing Rules Committee made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2008 season:

- Labeled diagram of fielder's glove as Diagram No. 4. (Rule 1.14)
- Conformed style in Rule 3.01. (Rule 3.01(f))
- Revised Comment to require a coach, until a batted ball passes him, to position himself no closer to home plate than the front edge of the coach's box and no closer to fair territory than the side edge of the coach's box. (Rule 4.05)
- Made stylistic revisions to Rule 4.05(a).
- Conformed style in titles of rules. (Rules 5.00 and 6.00)
- Revised Comment for National Association play to provide for automatic strike sanction (instead of starting over from scratch) if the pitcher does not go through with his pitch because the batter has stepped out of the box. Added a cross-reference to Rule 6.02(d). (Rule 6.02(b))
- Added to Comment for National Association play to give the umpire the discretion to issue a warning in lieu of an automatic strike to a batter failing to remain in the batter's box, if the violation is the batter's first such violation in the game and the umpire judges the violation to be brief and inadvertent. Eliminated a reference to Rule 6.02(c). (Rule 6.02(d)(1))
- Revised Comment to clarify that a batted ball accidentally hitting a helmet remains in play as if it had not hit the helmet only if the contact occurs on or over fair territory. (Rule 6.05(h))
- Amended rule on two runners occupying the same base, to add situations in which the following runner is forced to advance by reason of the batter becoming a runner. (Rule 7.03)
- Amended rule on interference by a runner who impedes any following play being made on another runner, to include interference by a runner who has just scored. (Rule 7.09(e))
- Amended rule on pitcher taking signs, to require the pitcher to be in contact with (rather than standing on) the pitcher's plate. (Rule 8.01)
- Corrected style in Rule 8.05(a).

In addition, the index has been revised.