

The Rules of 1865, as adopted by the National Association of Base-Ball Players

RULES AND REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE National Association of Base-Ball Players. HELD IN NEW YORK, DEC. 14TH, 1864.

Section 1.

The ball must weigh not less than five and one-half, nor more than five and three-fourths ounces, avoirdupois. It must measure not less than nine and one-half, nor more than nine and three-fourths 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 the 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. And in all match games, a line connecting the home and first base and the home and third base, shall be marked by the use of chalk, or other suitable material, so as to be distinctly seen by the umpire.

- Many of our clubs have an iron quoit for the home base that is in direct violation of the rule, which states that the home base must be marked by "a flat circular iron plate." Those we allude to rise in the center, and the consequence is, when a ball touches the base, it flies off at a tangent, instead of rebounding as if it had touched the ground, as it would do were it flat,

as the rule prescribes.

Section 5.

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

- It will be seen that the rule requires the ball to be pitched as near as possible over the home base, and for the striker; the pitcher, therefore, has no right to pitch the ball to the catcher especially, as is often done when a player is on the first base, and umpires should see that the rule is enforced. This important change was made by the Convention of 1863. The object being to do away with the unfair style of pitching that was in vogue during 1861, 2, and 3, during which period those pitchers who failed in achieving the success attained by the lamented Creighton offset their want of skill by trying to intimidate the batsmen by pitching the ball at them instead of for them as the rules require.

Section 6.

Should the pitcher repeatedly fail to deliver to the striker fair balls, for the apparent purpose of delaying the game, or for any other cause, the umpire, after warning him, shall call one ball, and if the pitcher persists in such action, two and three balls; when three balls shall have been called, the striker shall be entitled to the first base; and should any base be occupied at that time, each player occupying them shall be entitled to one base without being put out.

- In warning the pitcher before calling balls on him, all that is necessary is to call "ball to the bat;" and if two balls are pitched unfairly after such warning, "one ball" should be called, and if one unfair ball be delivered after that call, then "two" and "three" balls should be promptly called. A pitcher "repeatedly" fails if he fails twice in succession; and he "persists" in his unfair delivery if he pitch one ball after the first penalty has been imposed. In the first innings of a game, a little more latitude is allowable, but afterwards the rule should be strictly enforced to the very letter of the law.

Sec 7.

The ball must be pitched, not jerked nor 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 front line or off the ground at the time of delivering the ball; and if he fails in either of these particulars, then it shall be declared a baulk.

- The pitcher makes a baulk when he either jerks a ball to the bat, has either foot in advance of the line of his position, or off the ground at the time of delivering the ball, or moves with the

apparent purpose of pitching, without delivering the ball. The sentence "time of delivering the ball" has been interpreted by the Committee on Rules and Regulations of the National Association to mean, the period when the last movement of the arm is made in delivering the ball; and consequently if either foot of the pitcher be off the ground when this movement is made-it being nearly simultaneous with the ball's leaving the hand of the pitcher-umpires must declare a baulk without being appealed to.

Section 8.

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

- The striker can not take a base, on a baulk, as he is not considered a "player running the bases" until he has made the first base and ceased to be a striker.

Section 9.

If the ball, from a stroke of the bat, first touches the ground, the person of a player or any other object behind the range of home and the first base, or home and the third base, it shall be termed foul, and must be so declared by the umpire, unasked. If the ball first touches the ground, either upon, or in front of the range of those bases, it shall be considered fair.

- Nothing is mentioned in section 9 in reference to any ball that is caught, either on the fly or first bound, after touching the side of a building, a fence, or a tree. In such cases a special rule is requisite before beginning a match.

Section 10.

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

Section 11.

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 12.

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

Section 13.

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

- The bound-catch, in this instance-the ball striking the ground back of the home base-is considered in the light of a foul ball, as far as the fly-game is concerned, and consequently when the ball is caught on the bound, on the third strike, the player must be given out, the same as he was last year under the bound rule.

Section 14.

Or, if a fair ball is struck, and the ball is caught either without having touched the ground. (upon the

first bound; this phrase is deleted. Fair balls can only be caught out on the fly not the bound.)

Section 15.

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

Section 16.

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. All that is requisite for a player to "hold his base," according the meaning of the rule, is, for him to touch the base bag, no matter whether the bag is in its position or not.

Section 17.

No ace nor base can be made upon a foul ball; such a ball shall be considered dead, and not in play until it shall first have been settled in the hands of the pitcher. In such cases players running 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 18.

No ace or base can be made when a fair ball has been caught without having touched the ground; such a ball shall be considered alive and in play. In such case players running bases shall return to them, and may be put out in so returning, in the same manner as the striker when running to first base; but players, when balls are so caught, may run their bases immediately after the ball has been settled in the hands of the player catching it.

- It will be seen by the above two Sections that a player running a base on a foul ball must return to the base he has left and remain on it until the ball has been fairly settled in the hands of the pitcher. But in case of fly-catches, a player running a base is only required to return and touch the base, after which he can leave it at once and try and make the next base. He must, however, touch the base after the ball has been caught.

Section 19.

The striker must stand on a line drawn through the center of the home base, not exceeding in length three feet from either side thereof, and parallel with 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.

- This rule should be strictly enforced by the umpire. A striker has no right to avail himself of the advantage derived from standing back of the line of his position, thereby increasing the distance between himself and the pitcher and obtaining a better opportunity of judging the ball. Besides which, a poorly hit ball which would strike the ground in front of the home base-

if the batsman stood on the line of his base—and lead to his being put out, is changed to a foul ball by his standing back of his base, and he thereby escapes the penalty of his poor batting.

Section 20.

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, this phrase is deleted thereby confirming the abolishment of the “bound” rule), 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 21.

Players running the bases must touch them; and, so far as possible, keep upon the direct line between them in the following order; first, second, third, and home, and if returning must reverse this order; 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.

- A player failing to touch his base must be declared out—after an appeal—unless he can retrun to the base before he is touched...

Section 22.

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

Section 23.

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 be put out.

- These two latter sections are, of course, intended solely for any willful and unnecessary obstruction. It is impossible that a player, while in the act of fielding a swiftly sent ball, can always be on the look out as to where his adversary is running; or that a player running the bases can always be equally careful in regard to his preventing an adversary from getting to his base. Some base players have a habit of pushing players off their bases while in the act of receiving the ball. Such unfair play should be punished by promptly inflicting the above penalty.

Section 24.

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

Section 25.

If a ball, from the stroke of a bat, is held under any other circumstances than as enumerated in Section 24d, and without having touched the ground more than once, the striker is out.

Section 26.

If two hands are already out, no player running home at the time a ball is struck, can make a run to count in the score of the game (run reference replaces ace) if the striker is put out.

Section 27.

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

Section 28.

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 29.

In playing all matches, nine players from each club shall constitute a full field, and they must have been regular members of the club which they represent, and of no other club, either in or out of the National Association 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.

- This rule of course excludes players belonging to Junior clubs from taking part in Senior club matches, and likewise excludes players belonging to any base ball club, but not cricket clubs, as cricket is a distinct game of ball.

Section 30.

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 be the judge of fair and unfair play, and shall determine all disputes and differences which may occur during the game; he shall take special care to declare all foul balls and baulks, immediately upon their occurrence, unasked, and in a distinct and audible manner. He shall, in every instance, before leaving the ground, declare the winning club, and shall record his decision in the score books of the two clubs.

Section 31.

In all matches the umpire shall be selected by the captains of the respective sides, and shall perform all the duties enumerated in section 30, except recording the game, which shall be done by two scorers, one of whom shall be appointed by each of the contending clubs.

Section 32.

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 29, and then the umpire may dismiss any transgressors.

- This rule was almost entirely ignored last season; for there was scarcely a game played in which some one or other of the parties above named did not bet on the result. This year more care will be taken to observe the rule; for those who bet large sums on the leading contests of the season intend to dispute the loss of their bets in all cases wherein this rule is not observed; and they will have the right-according to the best sporting authority-to hold the stake holder responsible in every instance in which he pays over the stakes to the winner when this rule has been broken; for under such circumstances the wager is not fairly won, unless those who bet mutually agree beforehand to allow of such infringement of the rules of the game.

Section 33.

The umpire in any match shall determine when play shall be suspended; and if the game can not be concluded, it shall be decided 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 34.

Clubs may adopt such rules respecting balls knocked beyond or outside of the 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 35.

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 36.

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

- This rule has never been properly observed. Every club should appoint a regular scorer for the season, and he should be competent to record the fielding as well as batting score of the game. Until this is done a full analysis of the season's play of a club can not be obtained.

Section 37.

Whenever a match shall have been determined upon between 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 38.

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

Section 39.

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 if he had struck at three fair balls.

- Section 39 is a rule that should be strictly enforced, as it refers to a point of the game that is oft-times a very tedious and annoying feature. How often do we see the striker—the moment his predecessor has made his first base—stand still at the home base, and await the moment when the player on the first base can avail himself of the first failure of the pitcher and catcher to hold the ball, while tossing it backward and forward to each other. Some catchers—chiefly among boys however—actually stand to the right of the home base purposely for this style of game; and even when the pitcher and catcher are inclined to do their duty, the batsman is not, and the latter is frequently allowed to stop the progress and interest of the game, by his refusal to strike at good balls, under the plea that they do not suit him, when it is apparent to all that he simply wants to allow his partner to get to his second base. In every respect it is preferable to play the game manfully and without resorting to any such trickery as this, which not only tires the spectator, but detracts from the merit of the game itself. Even under the new rule of pitching, this unfair play was practiced last season. It is to be hoped that umpires will do their duty this year, and put an entire stop to it, which they have the power to do.

Section 40.

(Formerly Sec. 38.) Every match hereafter made shall be decided by a single game, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the contesting clubs.