

Baseball Playing Rules Changes Year by Year Since 1950

Compiled by Stew Thornley

1950

The 1949 book had 69 rules with Rule 70 for The Rules of Scoring and 71 for The Summary, which had 17 sections on what the official scorer had to list and then a section on determining percentages. The 1950 rule book was reorganized into 10 rules.

The 1950 rule book Recodified, was “Recodified, Amended and Adopted at New York City, December 21, 1949.” The Rules Committee that overhauled the old regulations was George M. Trautman, president of the National Association, committee chairman; Branch Rickey, Sr., president-general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers; Joseph E. Cronin, general manager of the Boston Red Sox; James T. Gallagher, vice-president of the Chicago Cubs; Thomas H. Connolly, supervisor of American League umpires; William R. Summers, American League umpire; William Stewart, National League umpire; Commissioner Albert B. Chandler, ex-officio chairman of the committee and Walter W. Mulbry, secretary-treasurer of the Commissioner’s office, were ex-officio members. A special Sub-Committee, appointed to assist the Rules Committee consisted of Cronin, Warren C. Giles, president of the Cincinnati Reds, and Frank J. Shaughnessy, president of the International League. Robert L. Finch, relations public director of the National Association, acted as secretary of the Sub-Committee.

The 1949 rules:

- Rule 1 – The Ball Ground
- Rule 2 – To Lay Off the Field
 - Diamond or Infield
- Rule 3 – The Catcher’s Lines
- Rule 4 – The Foul Lines
- Rule 5 – The Player’s Lines
- Rule 6 – The Coacher’s Lines
- Rule 7 – The Three-Foot Lines
- Rule 8 – The Batsman’s Lines
- Rule 9 – The Pitchers Plate
- Rule 10 – The Bases
- Rule 11 – Home Base and Pitcher’s Plate Must Be of Rubber
- Rule 12 – Bases of White Canvas
- Rule 13 – White Lines to Designate Playing Field
- Rule 14 – The Ball
 - Discolored or Damaged Ball
 - Home Club to Provide Balls
 - Reserve Balls on Field
- Rule 15 – The Bat
- Rule 16 – Number of Players in a Game
- Rule 17 – Substitutes
- Rule 18 – Positions of the Players
- Rule 19 – Must Not Mingle with Spectators
- Rule 20 – Uniforms of Players
- Rule 21 – Size and Weight of Gloves
- Rule 22 – Players’ Benches
 - Penalty for Violation

- Rule 23 – A Regulation Game
- Rule 24 – Forfeited Games
- Rule 25 – No Game
- Rule 26 – Choice of Innings—Fitness of Field for Play

THE PITCHING RULES

- Rule 27 – Delivery of the Ball to the Bat
- Rule 28 – A Fairly Delivered Ball
- Rule 29 – An Unfairly Delivered Ball
- Rule 30 – Delaying the Game
- Rule 31 – Balks
- Rule 32 – Ball Dead Not in Play
- Rule 33 – Balls Handled by Spectators

THE RULES FOR BATTERS

- Rule 34 – The Batsman's Position
- Rule 35 – The Order of Batting
- Rule 36 – The First Batsman in an Inning
- Rule 37 – A Fair Hit
- Rule 38 – A Foul Hit
- Rule 39 – A Foul Tip
- Rule 40 – A Bunt Hit
- Rule 41 – Balls Batted Outside the Playing Field
- Rule 42 – Strikes
- Rule 43 – An Illegally Batted Ball
- Rule 44 – When Batsman Is Out

BASE-RUNNING RULES

- Rule 45 – Legal Order of Bases
- Rule 46 – When the Batsman Becomes a Base-Runner
- Rule 47 – Entitled to Bases
- Rule 48 – Returning to Bases
- Rule 49 – When Base-Runners are Out
- Rule 50 – When Umpire Shall Declare an Out
- Rule 51 – Coaching Rules

THE SCORING OF RUNS

- Rule 52 –
Definition of a Force Play

UMPIRES AND THEIR DUTIES

- Rule 53 – Power to Enforce Decisions
- Rule 54 – The Umpire-in-Chief [takes position behind the plate and, thus, is the plate umpire]
- Rule 55 – The Field Umpire
- Rule 56 – No Appeal From Decisions Based on Umpire's Judgment
- Rule 57 – Duties of a Single Umpire
- Rule 58 – Must Not Question Decisions
- Rule 59 – Clubs Can Not Change Umpire
- Rule 60 – Penalties for Violations of the Rules
- Rule 61 – Umpire to Report Violations of the Rules
- Rule 62 – League President to Notify Player Fined
- Rule 63 – A Flagrant Offense
- Rule 64 – Materials of the Game
- Rule 65 – Ground Rules
- Rule 66 – Official Announcements
- Rule 67 – Suspension of Play

FIELD RULES

Rule 68 –

Must Furnish Police Protection

Rule 69 – General Definitions

THE RULES OF SCORING

Rule 70 –

The Batsman's Record

The Scoring of Base Hits

Sacrifice Hits

Fielding Records

Errors

Stolen Bases

Definition of Wild Pitch and Passed Ball

Definition of Run Earned Off Pitcher

Definition of Runs Batted In

Rule 71 – The Summary

How to Determine Percentages

The 1950 rules:

1.00 Objectives of the Game

2.00 Baseball Definitions as Used in This Code

3.00 Game Preliminaries

4.00 Starting and Ending a Game

5.00 Putting the Ball in Play. Live Ball

6.00 Rules Governing the Offense, The Batter

7.00 Rules Governing the Offense, The Base Runner

8.00 Rules Governing the Defense, Pitching

9.00 Rules Governing the Umpire

10.00 The Scorer

A NOTES – CASE BOOK – COMMENT section following the main section provided additional information on some of the rules. And index followed this section.

Some of the 1950 rules were marked with an N to denote new wording or material. Some had numbers to refer to rules in the previous format, e.g., 24-1 meaning the former Rule 24, Sec. 1.

Significant changes/additions:

2.00 – Baseball Definitions as Used in this Code

None of the definitions in Rule 2 had an N to indicate a new rule nor a reference to the previous rule book although Rule 69 in 1949 had general definitions, with only five terms defined: "Play, Time, Game, Inning, and Time at Bat."

Rule 2 in 1950 had individual numbers for each definition, such as "2.01 ADJUDGED is a judgment decision by the umpire.

2.63 THE STRIKE ZONE is that space over home plate which is between the batter's arm-pits and the top of his knees when he assumes his natural stance.

Old rule 28 – Strike zone – over any portion of home base, before touching the ground, not lower than the batter's knees, nor higher than his shoulder.

2.61 SET POSITION mandated "coming to a complete stop of at least one second."

3.05 A player whose name is on his team's batting order MAY NOT BECOME A SUBSTITUTE RUNNER for another member of his team. Through 1949, "courtesy runners" were allowed. Rule 17, Section 3 had read, "A base-runner shall not have another player whose name appears in the batting order of his team run for him except by the consent of the manager or captain of the other team." The 1950 overhaul of the rules included a prohibition of such runners, even with the opposing team's consent.

4.00 – Starting and Ending a Game

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 proceed. (N)

Previous Rule 26: The choice of innings shall be given to the manager or captain of the home team. The 1950 rules were the first to mandate that the home team would take the field first.

4.10 IT IS A REGULATION GAME WHEN –

(d) Terminated by the umpire on account of rain, or darkness, or other cause which makes further play impossible, provided five or more innings have been played, or the home team has scored more runs in four innings, or before the completion of its fifth inning, than the visiting has scored in five completed innings; (23-3)

(e) The umpire terminates play after five full innings have been completed, and the score of such game shall be that at the end of the last completed inning. If, however, the home team shall have scored more total runs than the visiting team when the game is terminated while the home team is at bat, the score of such game shall be the total runs scored by each team. (23-2)

4.10(e) This relates to uncompleted innings of a regulation game. The issue of uncompleted innings and the reversion to the last full inning had been Rule 23, Sections 5 and 6 in the previous rule book, not (23-2) as indicated in the 1950 rule book. The 1949 rule had read, "If the team that went second to bat is at bat when the game is terminated, and has scored in the incomplete [*sic*] inning the same number of runs as the other team, the umpire shall declare the game drawn without regard to the score of the last equal inning.

4.11(d) regarding a game being called during an uncompleted inning, the rule became more specific on when the game would revert to the last previous completed inning. The reversion would occur only when "(1) The visiting team scores one or more runs to tie the score in the uncompleted inning, and the home team does not score; (2) The visiting team scores one or more runs to take the lead in the uncompleted inning, and the home team does not tie the score or re-take the lead."

The previous rule in some cases required reversion to the last previous completed inning even if any runs scored in the top of an uncompleted inning did not affect the outcome of the game. Prior to that, uncompleted innings were sometimes left alone and sometimes erased. In 1959 Mike McCormick of the Giants had a no-hitter resurrected by the reversion to the last completed inning, even though the run scored (along with a hit) in an uncompleted sixth inning did not affect the outcome.

Although the intent of the 1962 rule change may have been to not erase performances in uncompleted innings unless the outcome of the game was altered from the last previous completed inning, the rule created a situation in which the home team could preclude a reversion to the last previous completed inning, when it was ahead, by tying the game in the bottom of an uncompleted inning.

4.11 A REGULATION DRAWN GAME shall be declared by the umpire-in-chief if he terminates play because of rain, darkness, or any other cause that makes further play impossible –

(c) If the home team shall score, in its incomplete fifth inning, a run or runs equal to the visiting team's total score in its five complete innings. [This loops back to 4.10 that a regulation game is at least five innings, or 4½ innings if the home team is ahead, or if the home team ties the score in the last of the fifth. It is the same procedure, though cobbled together through different sections of Rule 23, as had existed in 1949. This procedure continued in ensuing years, although a rule change prior to 2007 dictated that tie games

would become suspended games and eventually, starting in the pandemic year of 2020, that games started would be suspended if they were called before becoming regulation games.]

Batting out of order was address in detail within 1950 Rule 6.06 (A batter is out for illegal action when –). Rule 35 in the pre-1950 rules was The Order of Batting.

8.02(c) regarding what the pitcher shall not be allowed to do, added, “PITCH AT A BATTERS HEAD, and if, in the umpire’s opinion, such violation occurs, he shall call ‘Time’ and warn the pitcher and the Manager of the defensive team that another such pitch will me the immediate expulsion from the game. If such pitch is repeated the umpire shall inflict the PENALTY: The pitcher shall be removed from the game and from the grounds. The President of the League shall impose such fine and suspension as his judgment warrants.”

8.02(c) in the NOTES – CASE BOOK – COMMENT section: To pitch at a batter’s head is unsportsmanlike and highly dangerous. It should be – and is – condemned by everybody. Umpires should act without hesitation in enforcement of this rule.

8.03 allowed eight preparatory pitches, not to consume more than one inning, at the beginning of each inning. 8.04 calls for a ball to be called if, with the bases unoccupied, the pitcher fails to deliver the ball within 20 seconds after assuming his pitching position. Rule 30-2 had read, “The umpire shall call a ball on the pitcher each time he delays the game by failing to deliver the ball to the batsman for a longer period than 20 seconds, excepting that at the commencement of each inning, or, when a pitcher relives another, the pitcher may occupy one minute in delivering not to exceed five balls to the catcher or an infielder, during which time play shall be suspended.”

9.07 covered the “umpire-in-chief” as the umpire designated as such whenever more than one umpire is assigned to the game. 9.08(b) included the duty of the umpire-in-chief to take his place behind the catcher and call balls and strikes, thus continuing the plate umpire as the umpire-in-chief. The term umpire-in-chief remained in the rule book each year although eventually crew chiefs were appointed.

1951

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Robert R. M. Carpenter Jr., William G. Evans, William O. DeWitt, Joseph E. Cronin, Branch Rickey, Frank J. Shaughnessy, Larry W. Gilbert, Frank M. Colby

2.40a was added to the definitions regarding interference.

4.09 added these sentences: 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 of 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.

Although a runner could still be forced out to nullify a run by not going to second in a game-ending situation, such as what happened to Fred Merkle September 23, 1908, the 1951 rule took away the ability to nullify a run with two forces if the bases were loaded.

5.11 was added to address when play is resumed following a dead ball: . . . play shall be resumed when the pitcher takes his place on the rubber with a new ball, or the same ball, in his possession and the umpire calls “play.”

8.03 added these sentences: If a sudden emergency causes a pitcher to be summoned into the game without any opportunity to warm up, the umpire-in-chief shall allow him as many pitches as the umpire deems necessary for him to be properly prepared to pitch.

1952

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Robert R. M. Carpenter Jr., Charles A. Comiskey, William O. DeWitt, Joseph E. Cronin, Branch Rickey, Frank J. Shaughnessy, Larry W. Gilbert, Frank M. Colby

1953

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Robert R. M. Carpenter Jr., Henry B. Greenberg, William O. DeWitt, Joseph E. Cronin, Fresco Thompson, Frank J. Shaughnessy, Larry W. Gilbert, Milton E. Price

1954

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Joseph E. Cronin, Henry B. Greenberg, George A. Fletcher, Vincent M. McNamara, Harold D. Ruel, Frank J. Shaughnessy, Larry W. Gilbert
Harold D. Ruel has replaced William O. DeWitt and Vincent M. McNamara has succeeded Milton E. Price for 1954.

Revisions for 1954 indicated by italics in the rule book.

1.14 – THE BAT shall be:

Added as an option to one piece of solid wood: (2) formed from a block of wood consisting of two or more pieces of wood bonded together with an adhesive in such a way that the grain direction of all pieces is essentially parallel to the length of the bat. Any such laminated bat shall contain only wood or adhesive, except for a clear finish. [Changed from: THE BAT shall be round, not over two and three-fourths inches in diameter at the thickest part, not more than 42 inches in length, and entirely of hard, solid wood in one pitch. Twine may be wound around it, or a granulated substance applied to it, for a distance of 18 inches from the end of the handle but note elsewhere. NOTE – Approval of the laminated bat is experimental and for the 1954 season.]

LAYING OUT A BASEBALL FIELD – More extensive description of Home Base: Shall be a five-sided slab of whitened rubber, 12-inch square with two of the corners filled in so that one edge is 17 inches long, two are 8 ½ inches and two are 12 inches.

2.41(d) added spectator interference to the definition of interference (reaching out onto the field or going onto the field and touching a live ball), and 3.18 directed the umpire, in the case of spectator interference of a thrown ball (except a pitch), to “impose such penalties as in his opinion will nullify the act of interference.”
6.05(o) was added that a batter is out when “Spectator interference clearly prevents a fielder from catching his fly ball.”

3.06 added the starting pitcher to a pitcher who replaces another pitcher for the requirement of facing one batter or having the inning completed.

3.16 added, “Members of the offensive team shall carry all gloves and other equipment off the field and to the dugout while their team is at bat. No equipment shall be left lying on the field, either in fair or foul territory.”

4.12 – SUSPENDED GAMES – A league may establish rules providing for completion on a future date of games terminated before nine innings have been completed, for any of the following reasons: light failure; a curfew imposed by law; a time limit legal under league rules; darkness in the second game of a Sunday doubleheader when the lights may not be turned on.

8.05 on the penalty for a balk being runner(s) advancing a base, added, “unless the batter hits the pitch on which the balk is made, in which case the manager of the offensive team may elect to accept either the balk penalty of the results of the batter’s action.”

1955

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Henry B. Greenberg, Harold D. Ruel, Joseph E. Cronin, Charles S. Feeney, Fresco Thompson, Frank J. Shaughnessy, William H. Terry, C. C. Hoffman

2.00 – DEFINITIONS – no longer has individual number references, such as 2.01, 2.02, etc. The individual definitions are still in alphabetical order but no longer with numbers in front of each entry.

8.05 was changed to have a play override a balk if all runners, including the batter-runner, advance at least one base. It contained no provision for the manager having a choice of accepting the play or the balk.

1956

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Henry B. Greenberg, Harold D. Ruel, Joseph E. Cronin, Charles S. Feeney, Fresco Thompson, Frank J. Shaughnessy, William H. Terry, C. C. Hoffman

1957

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Henry B. Greenberg, Harold D. Ruel, Joseph E. Cronin, Charles S. Feeney, Fresco Thompson, Frank J. Shaughnessy, William H. Terry, C. C. Hoffman

1.11(b) (c) and (e) addressed the uniforms for a team; (b) added that teams shall have two sets of uniforms, one for home games and a different color for road games; (c) allowed sleeve lengths to vary for different players but that the sleeves of individual players must be approximately the same length and that they could not be ragged, frayed, or slit; (e) prohibited any part of a uniform having a pattern that imitates or suggests the shape of a baseball.

On June 9, 1965 Cleveland manager Birdie Tebbetts challenged Minnesota pitcher Jim Kaat on part (c) of this rule, resulting in a ragged edge being trimmed and then the other sleeve being shortened to keep the sleeves the same length.

Although the rule in 1938 (then Rule 20, Uniforms of Players) did not address ragged sleeves, on June 7 of that year Boston manager Joe Cronin complained about the condition of the sleeves of Cleveland pitcher Johnny Allen at the end of the first inning. Still wearing the ragged shirt, Allen batted in the top of the second and then refused to change his shirt, as directed by umpire Bill McGowan, and also refused manager Oscar Vitt’s order to change and return to the mound.

2.00 – ILLEGAL PITCH, which had been only “a pitch delivered to the batter when the pitcher is not in pitching position,” was expanded to include a pitch on which the pitcher does not have his pivot foot in contact with the pitcher’s plate, a quick return pitch, or a pitch delivered in violation of Rule 8.02(a)(5) [The pitcher, while touching his plate, makes any motion naturally associated with a pitch and fails to make such delivery – with a runner or runners on – resulting in a balk. An illegal pitch when runners are on base is a balk.

2.00 – INFIELD FLY was reworded, and wording was added that if a declared infield fly fell untouched and bounced foul, it was a foul ball.

2.00 – STRIKE (f) added that a strike was a legal pitch that touches the batter in flight in the strike zone.

2.00 – TOUCH was added to the definitions that to touch a player or umpire is to touch any part of his body, clothing or his equipment.

3.05(b) called for a substitute pitcher to pitch to the batter, or a substitute, until such batter was put out or reaches first base or until the offensive team was put out. An exception was made for injury or illness. The change in 1957 was the addition of “or until the offensive team is put out.”

3.05(c) addressed what happens if an improper substitution is made for the pitcher.

3.09 An umpire will be assessed a fine not to exceed \$25 for failure to announce a substitution.

4.03(a) reworded the positioning of the catcher, particularly during an intentional walk, when the catcher must keep his feet within the lines of the catcher’s box until the ball leaves the pitcher’s hand. The penalty is a balk. [10.02(c)(15) mandates that balks be recorded by the official scorer for each pitcher. A violation by a catcher is not a “catcher’s balk.” Balks are charged only to pitchers. See below for 8.05(1).]

4.05 reworded the requirement for coaches stationed on the field for the offensive team.

4.09 – Penalty was added regarding game-ending situations in the bottom of the ninth or extra inning: If the runner on third refuses to advance 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 [*sic*] first base, the umpire shall disallow the run, call out the offending player, and order the game resumed. If, with less than two out, the batter-runner refuses to advance to and touch first base, the run shall count, but the offending player shall be called out.

4.10(a) – Note added: A league may adopt a rule providing that one game of a double-header shall be seven innings in length.

4.12 expanded the rule on suspended games.

4.13(c) addressed and reworded an exception for a longer interval than 20 minutes between games of a doubleheader.

6.02 covered issues related to a batter stepping out of a batters box after the pitcher comes to a set position or starts his windup and if the batter refuses to take his position in the batter’s box.

6.07 became a separate section regarding batting out of turn. It had been included in 6.06 regarding when a batter is out for illegal action.

6.08(b), which had previously been 6.07(b), added detail to a batter becoming a runner and entitled to first base without liability to be put out when touched by a pitched ball.

7.04(d) added a note regarding when a runner is entitled to advance one base without liability to be put out: in situations when the ball remains in play after the runner has reached the base to which he is entitled, the runner may continue but forfeits his exemption from liability to be put out.

8.02(a) – Penalty, regarding the pitcher applying a foreign substance to the ball, mandated a 10-day suspension. The rule previously called for the league president to impose “such fine and suspension as his judgment warrants.”

8.04, regarding the pitcher delivering the ball within 20 seconds, changed the beginning of the 20 seconds from taking his pitching position to receiving the ball.

8.05(e) added, for a balk, when the pitcher makes an illegal pitch

8.05(l) added, for a balk, “The pitcher, when giving an intentional base on balls, pitches when the catcher is not in the catcher’s box.” The rule previously did not specify intentional base on balls.

9.00, regarding umpires, was reorganized, and became more specific about the power of an umpire to disqualify a player, coach, or manager from a game for objecting to decisions or for unsportsmanlike conduct or language in Rules 9.01(d) and (e).

9.04(a)(8) included in the duties of the umpire-in-chief: Inform the official scorer of the official batting order, and any changes in the lineups and batting order, on request.

9.04(c) addressed different decisions made on a play by different umpires, with the umpire-in-chief having the authority to, after consultation, deciding which decision would prevail. [Umpire-in-chief remained in the rule book although eventually the designation was changed to crew chief.]

The rule book noted, “Certain deletions, and changes in the language of the 1957 rules, not listed above, do not affect the meaning or effect of the playing rules, but are merely designed as clarifications.”

1958

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, John D. Rigney, John J. McHale, Joseph E. Cronin, Charles S. Feeney, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, William H. Terry, C. C. Hoffman

7.10, regarding appeals, added: Any appeal under this rule must be made before the next legal pitch. If the appeal occurs during a play which ends a half-inning, the appeal must be made before the defensive team leaves the field. An added note addresses an apparent “fourth out, which allows a team to appeal for an out that will take precedence over an out made previously. For the purposes of this rule, the defensive team has “left the field” when the pitchers and all infielders have left fair territory on their way to the bench or clubhouse.

1959

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, John D. Rigney, John J. McHale, Joseph E. Cronin, Charles S. Feeney, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, William H. Terry, C. C. Hoffman

1.04 Note added: (a) Any Playing Field constructed by a professional club after June 1, 1958, shall provide a minimum distance of 325 feet from home base to the nearest fence, stand or other obstruction on the right and left field foul lines, and a minimum distance of 400 feet to the center field fence. (b) No existing playing fields shall be remodeled after June 1, 1958 in such manner to reduce the distance from home base to the foul poles and to the center field fence below the minimum specified in paragraph (a) above. [Numerous exemptions have been granted to these requirements.]

1960

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Hank Greenberg, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, Charles A. Hurth, Vincent M. McNamara

1961

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Hank Greenberg, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, C. C. Hoffman, Harold O. "Hal" Totten

1962

Playing Rules Committee: James T. Gallagher, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, C. C. Hoffman, Harold O. "Hal" Totten

1963

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, James F. Tobin, A. Rankin Johnson, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

2.00 – INTERFERENCE (a) has the underlined sentence added to the 1963 rules: Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat which interferes with, obstructs, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. If the umpire declares the batter, batter-runner, or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was, in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules.

2.00 – The STRIKE ZONE is that space over home plate which is between the top of the batter's shoulders and his knees when he assumes his natural stance. The umpire shall determine the strike zone according to the batter's usual stance when he swings at a pitch. [The strike zone had been between the batter's armpits and the top of his knees. The 1962 rules had another long sentence, deleted in 1963, outlining if a normal stance was in a crouch or erect or if a batter who was normally erect went into a crouch to narrow the strike zone. If the latter, the umpire would consider an erect stance to be the natural stance.]

7.01 and 7.01 Comment – A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when he touches it before he is out. He is then entitled to it until he is put out, or forced to vacate it for another runner. [The 1963 rule was shortened but not changed in a meaningful way.]

7.12 added the underlined phrase to the rule: Unless two are out, the status of a following runner is not affected by a preceding runner's failure to touch or retouch a base. If, upon appeal, the preceding runner is the third out, no runners following him shall score. If such third out is the result of a force play, neither preceding nor following runners shall score.

8.01(a) – The Windup Position added this note: When a pitcher holds the ball with both hands in front of his body, with his entire pivot foot on, or in front of and touching but not off the end of the pitcher plate, and the other foot free, he will be considered in a Windup Position.

8.03 deleted the clause that is struck through: When a pitcher takes his position at the beginning of each inning, ~~or when he relieves another pitcher~~, he shall be permitted to pitch not to exceed eight preparatory pitches to the catcher during which play shall be suspended. Such preparatory pitches shall not consume more than one minute of play.

8.05(j) – If there is a runner, or runners, it is a balk when (j) The pitcher, after coming to a legal pitching position, removes one hand from the ball other than in an actual pitch, or in throwing to a base.

Casebook 7.01 added: If a runner legally acquires title to a base, and the pitcher assumes his pitching position, the runner may not return to a previously occupied base.

1964

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, James F. Tobin, A. Rankin Johnson, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

Added 1.10(c) – No colored bat may be used in a professional game unless approved by the Rules Committee.

1.11(a)(2) – Any part of an undershirt exposed to view shall be of a uniform solid color for the players on a team. Any player other than the pitcher may have numbers, letters, insignia attached to the sleeve of the undershirt. [Underlined portion is new.]

Added 5.10 (b) Note – A league may adopt its own regulations governing games interrupted by light failure. [In 1963, an Approved Ruling after (b), instead of the note in 1964, read, “If a play is in progress when such light failure occurs, and if any further action is possible, the entire play shall be nullified. When the lights are restored, play shall resume with the same situation as existed at the start of the play which was interrupted by the light failure.”]

6.08(c) – This section, dealing with the manager of the offense having the choice of declining an interference penalty or accepting the play, added this sentence: “However, if the batter reaches first base on a hit, an error, a base on balls, a hit batsman, or otherwise, and all runners advance at least one base, the play proceeds without reference to the interference.”

7.09(g) added to the rule regarding interference by a batter or runner: “If, in the judgment of the umpire, a base runner wilfully [*sic*] and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball with the obvious intention to break up a double play, the ball is dead. The umpire shall call the runner out for interference and also call out the batter-runner because of the action of his teammate. In no event may bases be run or runs scored because of such action by a runner.”

7.09(h) added: “If a batter-runner wilfully [*sic*] and deliberately interferes with a batted ball or a fielder in the act of fielding a batted ball, with the obvious intention to break up a double play, the ball is dead; the umpire shall call the batter-runner out for interference and also call out the next preceding runner for the action of his teammate. In no event may bases be run or runs scored because of such action by a runner.

8.01(b) – The Set Position. The 1963 rule specified “of at least one second” after coming to a complete stop. The reference of a one-second stop was removed in 1964.

1965

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, A. Rankin Johnson, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1.12 added specifics to the existing rule that the catcher may wear a leather glove or mitt of any size, shape or weight. The 1965 rule set limits of no more than 38 inches in circumference nor more than 15½ inches from top to bottom.

7.09(h) changed the runner who will be called out, in addition to the batter-runner, from “the next preceding runner” to “the runner who had advanced closest to home plate regardless where the double play may have been possible.”

1966

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, A. Rankin Johnson, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1967

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, A. Rankin Johnson, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

Changes, in addition to being listed at the beginning of the rules, began being marked in bold and underlined type.

Clarifications (not significant changes) were made to 5.09(c), 7.01, 7.09(h), 7.11, and Casebook 4.09.

Added to 2.00 – Catch: “It is not a catch if a fielder touches a fly ball which then hits a member of the offensive team or an umpire and then is caught by another defensive player.”

6.09(c) added the phrase “including the pitcher” to the rule and section about a batter becoming a runner when a fair ball, after having passed a fielder other than the pitcher, or after having been touched by a fielder, including the pitcher, shall touch an umpire or runner on fair territory.

8.01 added “Pitchers shall take signs from the catcher while standing on the rubber.”

8.06 added regarding the limit on the trips a manager or coach may make to any one pitcher in any one inning. A second trip to the same pitcher in the same inning required a pitching change; A second trip to the mound was prohibited if it was the same batter, although a pinch-hitter would allow a second trip.

Casebook 7.08(b), regarding a runner hindering a fielder, whether intentional or not, attempting to field a batted ball, this sentence was added: “If, however, the runner has contact with a legally occupied base when he hinders the fielder, he shall not be called out unless, in the umpire’s judgment, such hindrance is intentional.”

1968

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, Fresco Thompson, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, Vincent McNamara, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

5.09(g), regarding a base coach intentionally interfering with a thrown ball, “to the base last legally touched” was added to the sentence of the effect of such interference being runners return.

8.02(a) added to “The pitcher shall not” is “(1) Bring his pitching hand in contact with his mouth or lips. PENALTY: For violating this part of this rule the umpire shall warn the pitcher and if this action is repeated the umpire shall immediately disqualify the pitcher.”

Casebook 7.08(b), regarding a runner hindering a fielder, extended a sentence that the runner would not be called out unless such hindrance, “whether it occurs on fair or foul territory, is intentional. If the umpire declares the hindrance intentional, the following penalty shall apply: with less than two out, the umpire shall declare both the runner and batter out. With two out, the umpire shall declare the batter out.”

1969

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Cal Hubbard, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Joe L. Brown, Frank J. Shaughnessy, Vincent McNamara, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1.04 lowered the height of the pitcher's mound from 15 to 10 inches and specified the slope: "The infield shall be graded so that the base lines and home plate are level. The pitcher's plate shall be ten inches above the level of home plate. The degree of slope from a point 6 inches in front of the pitcher's plate to a point 6 feet toward home plate shall be 1 inch to 1 foot, and such degree shall be uniform."

2.00 changed the strike zone to be between the batter's armpits and the top of his knees.

4.12(b) changed a line the note about weather and similar conditions taking precedence in determining whether a called call would be a suspended game. The final line in this note in 1968 read, "A game called at the end of a completed inning with the score tied after nine innings shall be a tie game, not a suspended game." In 1969 the sentence was changed to, "A game called at the end of a completed inning with the score tied after nine innings shall be a suspended game."

7.08(d) added a phrase regarding an appeal made after a runner fails to retouch his base after a fair or foul ball is caught. The rule had noted that he could not be called out on appeal after the first following pitch. The phrase added "or any play or attempted play" after the first following pitch.

During the 1969 season, the National League changed its rules regarding games stopped by darkness. Wrigley Field, home of the Chicago Cubs, was the only ballpark in baseball without lights. On June 29 that year the Cubs lost to the Montreal Expos 5-4 in the second game of a doubleheader that had been called by darkness. Within a few days, the National League held a vote of its teams to change the rule that if the second game of a doubleheader was stopped by darkness, it would be a suspended game. The vote was unanimous to make the change, which took effect June 27.

1970

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Joe L. Brown, George MacDonald, Vincent McNamara, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1971

Playing Rules Committee: Charles M. Segar, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Joe L. Brown, George MacDonald, Vincent McNamara, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1972

Playing Rules Committee: John H. Johnson, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Joe L. Brown, George MacDonald, Vincent McNamara, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1.16(b) added to the rule on players being required to use some type of protective helmet while at bat with "All players in Class AA, Class A, and rookie leagues shall wear ear-flap helmets while at bat starting in 1972 and in 1973 all Class AAA players shall wear ear-flap helmets while at bat."

4.12(a)(3) was added to the reasons for suspending a game: "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)." The rule in 1971 listed only light failure.

7.10(d) added two more paragraphs regarding appeals: “An appeal is not to be interpreted as a play or an attempted play.

“Successive appeals may not be made on a runner at the same base. If the defensive team on its first appeal errs, a request for a second appeal on the same runner at the same base shall not be allowed by the umpire.”

Casebook – Offensive Interference was added: “(a) In the event the batter-runner has not reached first base, all runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the pitch.”

1973

Playing Rules Committee: John H. Johnson, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Joe L. Brown, Bobby Bragan, Vincent McNamara, W. D. Ryan, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1.14 was expanded regarding gloves worn by other than the first baseman and catcher. Parts of the glove, such as the crotch opening, had maximum lengths. A detailed diagram of a glove was added.

1.15(a) added the underlined clause: The pitcher’s glove shall be uniform in color, including all stitching, lacing and webbing. The prohibition of a white or gray pitcher’s glove was put in a separate sentence.

1.16(b) was changed to “All players in National Association Leagues shall wear ear-flap helmets while at bat.” Previously, the rule specified different levels of the minor leagues.

4.19, regarding Protesting Games, added this sentence at the end: In all protested games, the decision of the League President shall be final.

5.08, regarding a coach or umpire accidentally touching a pitched or thrown ball, added this sentence at the end: However, if the coach interferes with a thrown ball

5.09(g) and (h) are underlined in the 1973 rules to indicate they are new or changed; however, the rules dictating a dead ball with runners advancing if a pitch lodges in the umpire’s mask or paraphernalia or if a legal pitch touches a runner trying to score are the same as what was in the 1972 rules.

7.09(i) deleted this sentence at the end regarding a runner being touched or assisted by a base coach: The runner, however, shall not be out if no play is being made on him.

7.10(d) added a sentence to the end of the paragraph regarding successive appeals: Intended meaning of the word “err” is that the defensive team in making an appeal threw the ball out of play. For example, if the pitcher threw to first base to appeal and threw the ball into the stands, no second appeal would be allowed.)

Casebook 9.02 (General Instructions to Umpires) deleted 9.02(a). It had been, “There shall be no appeal from the decision of the umpire-in-chief on a half-swing. His decision must and will be final, it being entirely a question of the umpire’s judgment as to whether the batter struck at the pitch.”

Although the designated hitter began as an experimental rule in 1973, it did not get into the rule book until 1976.

1974

Playing Rules Committee: John H. Johnson, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, John Allyn, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Joe L. Brown, Bobby Bragan, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler, Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1.16(b) added “and those players in the Major Leagues who played with a National Association club the previous year” to the list of players who were required to wear ear-flap helmet at bat. A final paragraph, “Also included are those players in the Major Leagues without previous professional experience.”

8.02(a) 2-6 added penalties for a pitcher using a foreign substance, expectorating, defacing, rubbing the ball in certain places, or delivering a shine, spit, mud, or emery ball. Previously, the penalty was immediate ejection. In 1974, the penalties varied depending on if it was a first offense or not. In addition, if a play took place when there was a violation, the offensive manager could accept the play unless the batter and all runners advanced at least one base. In that case, the play would prevail over the penalty of the violation although the penalty would still be enforced.

1975

Playing Rules Committee: John H. Johnson, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, John Allyn, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Joe L. Brown, Bobby Bragan, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr., Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

Clarifications (not significant changes) were made to 5.10(f) and 7.10(a).

1.09 added cowhide to white horsehide for the material on the ball.

1.10(3) was added to allow cupped bats with an indentation at the end of the bat.

4.12(a)(4) clarified that darkness, when lights may not be turned on because of any law, would be a cause for a suspended game. The rule had specified darkness in the second game of a Sunday doubleheader.

4.12(b) Note changed that a legal game called due to weather with the score tied is a tie game that must be replayed in its entirety. The rule had been that a game tied after nine innings would be a suspended game. The 1975 change returned to a pre-1969 rule calling for a tie game to be replayed in its entirety even after nine innings.

6.05(l) changed “fielder” to “infielder” regarding intentionally dropping a fair fly ball or line drive with fewer than two out with a runner at least on first base. It also added a line, “The ball is dead and runner or runners shall return to their original base or bases.

The rule had previously said that runners need not retouch and may advance at their own peril. Unlike with the infield-fly rule, runners didn’t immediately know if the batter was out or not and were left in a precarious position while momentarily not knowing if the force had been removed on them or not. By making the ball dead on such plays, it was necessary to change “fielder” to “infielder” to prevent an outfielder from intentionally dropping a long fly ball to create a dead ball rather one on which runners could tag up and advance.

6.06(d) was added to the rule about a batter being called out for illegal action. The addition of (d) contained this: He hits a fair ball with a filled, doctored, or flat-surfaced bat in which event he shall be immediately ejected from the game and suspended by his League President for three days.

An approved ruling was added to 7.05(h), regarding when a runner or batter-runner could advance without liability to be put out. The ruling called for a ball going out of play on a pitch to call for a one-base advancement (such as a wild pitch or passed ball, even if it deflects off the catcher, or an errant pickoff throw with the pitcher in contact with the rubber). If such a wild pitch or errant pickoff throw is subsequently kicked or deflected out of play, the award is two bases. The rule of “one from the rubber, two from the field” was already in place with the approved ruling adding detail and clarification.

7.10(a) added the underlined words: : After a fly ball is caught, he fails to return to his original base before he or his original base is tagged. [This apparently clarifies that tagging an intermediate base does not constitute an appeal. Example: Runner from first scores on a batted ball to the outfield but misses second base. Tagging third base will not result in the runner being called out. Second base, the one missed by the runner, must be tagged.]

8.02(b) was added to prohibit a pitcher have any foreign substance on his person or in his possession with immediate ejection being the penalty.

1976

Playing Rules Committee: John H. Johnson, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Joe L. Brown, Billy Hitchcock, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr., Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

Clarifications (not significant changes) were made to DOUBLE PLAY and ILLEGAL PITCH in 2.00, and 4.12(a)(4).

In addition to the changes made to the 1976 rules, the rule book says that the “Notes, Case Book and Comment section following the rules has been extensively expanded so as to be almost entirely new.”

Some of the additions to the Casebook:

3.03 – A pitcher may change to another position only once during the same inning; e.g. the pitcher will not be allowed to assume a position other than a pitcher more than once in the same inning. Any player other than a pitcher substituted for an injured played shall be allowed five warm-up tosses.

4.12(d) – 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 baserunner, 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 he will be considered as having been substituted for and may not be used in that game. [The comment in 1976 had a typo – noted with other typos below – that said “does start” instead of “does not start.”]

6.08(c) – If catcher’s interference is called with a play in progress the umpire will allow the play to continue because the manager may elect to take the play. If the batter-runner missed first base, or a runner misses his next base, he shall be considered as having reached the base.

7.08(d) rewritten – PLAY. Runner on first and three balls on batter. Runner steals on the next pitch, which is fourth ball, but after having touched second before he overslides or overruns the base. Catcher’s throw catches him before he can return. Ruling is that runner is out. (Force out is removed.)

7.10 – An appeal should be clearly intended as an appeal, either by a verbal request by the player or an act that unmistakably indicates an appeal to the umpire. A player, inadvertently stepping on the base with a ball in his hand, would not constitute an appeal. Time is not out when an appeal is being made.

9.02(c) – The manager or the catcher may request the plate umpire to ask his partner for help on a half swing when the plate umpire calls the pitch a ball, but not when the pitch is called a strike.

An insert with the 1976 rule book noted corrections of typographical errors in the Case Book Section: “Ball is deal” to “Ball is dead” in 3.16, “corected” to “corrected in 4.01, “oach” to “coach” in 4.05(b), insertion of “not” between “does” and “start” in 4.12(d), “catches” to “catcher” in 5.09(g), “orbitary” to “arbitrary” and “(L)” to “I” in 6.05(e), “on the base” to “on base” in 6.06(c), “runners” to “runner” in 6.08(c), “runner on first” to “The runner on first” in 7.08(a)(2), “coaches box” to “coach’s box” in 9.02(a), “the plate umpire” to the “home plate umpire” in 9.02(a), and “On half swing” to “On a half swing” in 9.02(c).

1.10(b) – The section on the bat treated with material added pine tar specifically. The rule reads (with new material underlined), reads, “The bat handle, for not more than 18 inches from the end, may be covered or treated with any material (including pine tar) to improve the grip. Any such material, including pine tar, which extends past the 18 inch limitation, in the umpire’s judgment, shall cause the bat to be removed from

the game. No such material shall improve the reaction or distance factor of the bat.” The citing of pine tar may have been a result of a July 19, 1975 New York at Minnesota game in which Thurman Munson was called out for having pine tar too far up the bat.

1.11(g) added “Shoes with pointed spikes similar to golf or track shoes shall not be worn.” The issue of shoes came up in May 1976 when officials at the new Aloha Stadium in Hawaii tried to ban all metal cleats or spikes on shoes.

4.06(4) added “Make intentional contact with the umpire in any manner” to think a manager, player, et al. cannot do.

6.06(d) was expanded to include a batter using or attempting to use a bat that has been altered or tampered with in such a way to improve the distance factor or cause an unusual reaction on the baseball. The rule also adds that no advancement on the bases will be allowed and any out or outs made during a play will stand.

6.10 added the designated hitter to the rule book, changing the rule from experimental to optional and reading, “Any League may elect to use the Designated Hitter Rule” and specified the rule in detail.

1977

Playing Rules Committee: John H. Johnson, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Bill Giles, Billy Hitchcock, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr., Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

1978

Playing Rules Committee: John H. Johnson, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Bill Giles, Billy Hitchcock, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr., Fred G. Fleig, Secretary

The NOTES – CASE BOOK – COMMENTS section, which followed the main portion of the rules, was eliminated in 1978 with the approved rulings in this area transferred to Comments to go with each rule in the main section of the rule book.

6.10 addressed inter-league competition regarding the designated hitter. For exhibition games the designated hitter would be used or not used as is the practice of the home team. In All-Star games, the designated hitter would be used if both teams and leagues agree. For the World Series, the designated would be used every other year. It had first been used in 1976 and then was used in even-numbered years and not used in odd-numbered years until the rule was changed in 1986 to have it be used or not used as is the practice of the home team.

8.02(d) expanded the prohibition of pitchers intentionally pitching at batters. When issuing a warning to the pitcher and his manager, the umpire will issue the same warning to the opposing manager. The umpire, if circumstances warrant it, may issue a warning to both teams before the game.

1979

Playing Rules Committee: Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Bill Giles, Billy Hitchcock, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Baseball Coach U.S.C.; David C. Arnold, Asst. Exec. Dir. High School Federation

1980

Playing Rules Committee: Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Bill Giles, Billy Hitchcock, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Baseball Coach U.S.C.; Ronald Tellefsen, U. S. Baseball Federation Rep.

Clarifications (not significant changes) were made to 3.08(a)(3) and the note in 4.12.

1.11(a)(1) added this clause, and all such players uniforms shall include minimal six-inch numbers on their backs” to the end of the opening sentence, which begins with, “All players on a team shall wear uniforms identical in color, trim and style,”.

1.17 was added to cover playing equipment in professional leagues and says equipment “shall not contain any undue commercialization of the product. Designations by the manufacturer on any such equipment must be in good taste as to the size and content of the manufacturer’s logo or the brand name of the item. . . .
NOTE: Manufacturers who plan innovative changes in baseball equipment for professional baseball leagues should submit same to the Official Playing Rules Committee prior to production.”

4.11(d) changed the effect of a game affected by the visiting team scoring in the top of an uncompleted inning from reverting to the “last previous completed inning to being a suspended game. The situations in which a game will be suspended in an uncompleted inning are, “(1) The visiting team has scored one or more runs to tie the game and the home team has not scored. (2) The visiting team has scored one or more runs to take the lead and the home team has not tied the score or retaken the lead.” The previous reversion rule had been quirky in that if the visiting team was behind and scored enough runs to take the lead in the top of an uncompleted inning, the game would revert unless the home team scored enough in the bottom of an inning to retake the lead or tie the game. However, the rule remained quirky because the visiting team could go from behind or ahead with the home team tying the score (not retaking the lead), which would cause the game to be a tie game that would have to be replayed in its entirety rather than a suspended game.

The rule change for 4.11(d) was adopted in December 1978 to suspend such games rather than revert to the last full inning but was not reflected in the official rule book until 1980. It required the approval of the Players Association, so it apparently did not take effect until the 1980 season.

4.19, regarding PROTESTING GAMES, added this line: 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.

Although this line did not appear in the rule book until 1980, it had been adopted by the Playing Rules Committee at the 1978 winter meetings and was in effect in 1979.

1981

Playing Rules Committee: Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Bill Giles, Joseph J. Buzas, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Baseball Coach U.S.C.; Ronald Tellefsen, U. S. Baseball Federation Rep.

A clarification (not significant change) was made to 3.15.

6.10(b) added this line: The designated hitter named in the starting lineup must come to bat at least one time, unless the opposing club changes pitchers.

1982

Playing Rules Committee: Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Bill Giles, Joseph J. Buzas, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Baseball Coach U.S.C.; Ronald Tellefsen, U. S. Baseball Federation Rep.

5.09(g) was modified to include the effect of a pitched ball lodging in the mask or paraphernalia of the catcher or the umpire. Previously the rule addressed only the umpire.

1983

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, Richard B. Ferrell, Dick Butler, Calvin Griffith, John J. McHale, Bill Giles, Joseph J. Buzas, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Baseball Coach U.S.C.; Ronald Tellefsen, U. S. Baseball Federation Rep.

1.16(b) was changed to “All players in National Association Leagues shall wear a double ear-flap helmet while at bat” and added 1.16(c) “All players entering the Major Leagues commencing with the 1973 championship season thereafter must wear a single ear-flap helmet (or at the player’s option, a double ear-flap helmet), except those players who were in the Major Leagues during the 1982 season, and who, as recorded in that season, objected to wearing a single ear-flap helmet.”

1984

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, John McHale, Bill Giles, Calvin Griffith, Pat Gillick, Dick Butler, Joseph J. Buzas, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Baseball Coach U.S.C.; Ronald Tellefsen, U. S. Baseball Federation Rep.

1.10(b) was changed to 1.10(c) and no longer called for a batter to be called out for using a material or substance (“substance” added to “material” in the rule. This note was added: If the umpire discovers that the bat does not conform to (c) above until a time during or after the bat has been used in play, it shall not be grounds for declaring the batter out, or ejected from the game. [The penalty was altered after the Pine Tar Controversy of 1983.]

1.11(h) was added: No part of the uniform shall include patches or design relating to commercial advertisements, and 1.11(h) was added, A league may provide that the uniforms of its member teams include the names of its players on their backs. Any name other than the last name of the player must be approved by the League President. If adopted, all uniforms for a team must have the names of its players.

4.10(f) was added: 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) [the definition of a regulation game]. It was also added and repeated in 4.12(e).

4.11(d) allowed National Association Leagues to adopt rules for suspended games for games that otherwise would have been declared no game (rained out before becoming a regulation game) or a tie game. The rule had an exception, that it would not apply during the last scheduled game between the two teams during the regular season or during the players and that any scheduled game not completed prior to the last scheduled game between the two teams during the regular season would become a called game.

6.06(a), regarding a batter being out for illegal action, changed from “He hits an illegally batted ball” to “He hits a ball with one or both feet on the ground entirely outside the batter’s box.”

1985

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, John McHale, Bill Giles, Calvin Griffith, Pat Gillick, Dick Butler, Joseph J. Buzas, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr.
Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1986

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Charles S. Feeney, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Dick Butler, Joseph J. Buzas, Vincent McNamara, George Sisler Jr.
Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

6.10(a)(1)(3), regarding the designated hitter, added, “In World Series or exhibition games, the rule will be used or not used as is the practice of the home team.” This was a change from having the designated hitter available in even-numbered years since 1976.

1987

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Dallas Green, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Dick Butler, Joseph J. Buzas, George MacDonald, George Sisler Jr.
Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1988

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, A. Bartlett Giamatti, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Robert Brown, M. D., Joseph J. Buzas, George MacDonald, George Sisler Jr.
Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

With the exception of 1.05 and 1.16(e), the changes require the approval of the Major League Players Association for implementation at the Major League level in 1988.

1.05 added wording to home base (new wording underlined): It shall be a ~~12-inch~~ 17-inch square with two of the corners ~~filled in~~ removed so that one edge is 17 inches long, two adjacent sides are 8 ½ inches and the remaining two sides are 12 inches and set at an angle to make a point, . . .

1.16(d) added, “All catchers shall wear a catcher’s protective helmet, while fielding their position.”

1.16(e) added, “All bat/ball boys or girls shall wear a protective helmet while performing their duties.”

STRIKE ZONE in 2.00 now reads (new wording underlined), “The STRIKE ZONE is that area over home plate the upper limit of which is a horizontal line at the midpoint between the top of the shoulders and the top of the uniform pants, and the lower level is a line at the top of the knees. The Strike Zone shall be determined from the batter’s stance as the batter is prepared to swing at a pitched ball.”

8.01(b) added language regarding the set position for pitchers, including that the pitcher must complete a “discernable stop before throwing the ball.”

8.02(d) gave an umpire the authority to immediately eject a pitcher and/or manager if, in the umpire’s judgement, the pitcher intentionally pitched at the batter. The umpire could also elect to warn the pitcher and manager of both teams that another such pitch would result in the ejection of that pitcher (or a replacement) and the manager. The umpire, if the circumstances warranted it, could continue to warn both teams before the game and also could issue such a warning at any time during the game.

1989

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, A. Bartlett Giamatti, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Robert Brown, M. D., Joseph J. Buzas, George MacDonald, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

“After discussion with the American and National League Presidents and the Player Relations Committee, and in accordance with the terms of the Basic Agreement, the Major League Baseball Players Association has elected to reject the 1988 change made to Official Playing Rule 8.01(b) Balk-Set Position.

“As a result, for the 1989 season, the Official Playing Rules will revert to the language used in 1987.”

1.10(a) added the underlined to a note: No laminated or experimental bats shall be used in a professional game (either championship season or exhibition games) until the manufacturer has secured approval from the Rules Committee of his design and methods of manufacture.

1990

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Bill White, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Robert Brown, M. D., Joseph J. Buzas, Carl Sawatski, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1991

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Bill White, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Robert Brown, M. D., Joseph J. Buzas, Carl Sawatski, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1992

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Bill White, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Robert Brown, M. D., Joseph J. Buzas, Jimmy Bragan, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1993

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Bill White, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Robert Brown, M. D., Joseph J. Buzas, Jimmy Bragan, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1994

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Bill White, John McHale, Bill Giles, Tom Grieve, Pat Gillick, Robert Brown, M. D., Joseph J. Buzas, Jimmy Bragan, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1995

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Leonard Coleman, John McHale, Bill Giles, Gene A. Budig, Sandy Alderson, Dan Duquette, Joseph J. Buzas, Bob Beban, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1996

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Leonard Coleman, John McHale, Bill Giles, Gene A. Budig, Sandy Alderson, Dan Duquette, Joseph J. Buzas, Bob Beban, George Sisler Jr.

Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

STRIKE ZONE in 2.00 changed the lower level of the strike zone to the “hollow beneath the kneecap.” Since 1988 it had been a line at the top of the knees.

1997

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Leonard Coleman, John McHale, Bill Giles, Gene A. Budig, Sandy Alderson, Dan Duquette, Joseph J. Buzas, Bob Beban, George Sisler Jr.
Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1998

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Leonard Coleman, John McHale, Bill Giles, Gene A. Budig, Sandy Alderson, Dan Duquette, Joseph J. Buzas, Bob Beban, George Sisler Jr.
Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

1999

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Leonard Coleman, John McHale, Bill Giles, Gene A. Budig, Sandy Alderson, Dan Duquette, Joseph J. Buzas, Bob Beban, George Sisler Jr.
Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

2000

Playing Rules Committee: William A. Murray, Chairman, Leonard Coleman, John McHale, Bill Giles, Gene A. Budig, Sandy Alderson, Dan Duquette, Joseph J. Buzas, Bob Beban, George Sisler Jr.
Advisory members: Raoul Dedeaux, Ronald Tellefsen

2001-2004

Playing Rules Committee not listed.

2005

Playing Rules Committee: Sandy Alderson, Chair, Bob Beban, Rod Carew, Andy MacPhail, John McHale Jr., Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Bill Stoneman, Larry Young

2006

Playing Rules Committee: Sandy Alderson, Chair, Bob Beban, Rod Carew, Andy MacPhail, John McHale Jr., Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Bill Stoneman, Larry Young with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member

The 2006 rule book began labeling casebook comments. In addition to listing the rules that were changed in the front of the book, it added a brief description of the change. Changes within the book were no longer bolded or underlined. In the list of changes, it marked with an asterisk those that required approval of the Major League Players Association for implementation at the major league level in the upcoming season.

*1.15(a) and 1.15(c) amended rules on pitchers wearing multi-colored gloves. (a) added that the glove cannot be, in the judgment of the umpire, “distracting in any manner.” (c) was added for the umpire-in-chief to remove a glove from the game if it violates the rules.

*2.00 amended definitions of League President and added new case comment for Major Leagues: With respect to the Major Leagues, the functions of the League President pursuant to these Rules shall be carried out by the designees of the Commissioner of Baseball. The Commissioner may designate different officials to carry out different functions of a League President pursuant to these Rules.

2.00 added gender-neutral reference: Any reference in these Official Baseball Rules to “he,” “him,” or “his” shall be deemed to be a reference to “she,” “her” or “hers,” as the case may be, when the person is female.

*3.01(c) amended rules regarding game baseballs. [Minor wording changes. Removed archaic references describing the preparation of baseballs for a game.]

*3.01(f) and 8.02(a) amended rules relating to rosin bags. (f) was added to 3.01 that the umpire-in-chief shall ensure that an official rosin bag is placed behind the pitcher's plate before the game. No mention of a rosin bag in 8.02(a) was in the 2005 or 2006 rules.

*Moved the penalty for a pitcher doctoring the ball from 3.02 to 8.02(a), which was reorganized. It also changed the standard for ejection from second to first offense, added a mandatory suspension in the 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 characteristic of the ball.

*4.10(d), 4.11(d), and 4.12 amended rules on regulation tie games and suspended games. 4.10(d) was changed from "If each team has the same number of runs when the game ends, the umpire shall declare it a 'Tie Game' to "If a game is called with the score tied, it shall become a suspended game. See Rule 4.12." 4.11(d) in 2006 was shortened from a lengthier section that covered an uncompleted inning in which the visiting team scored to effect the outcome and the home team did not retake the lead. 4.12(a)(6) added "a regulation game that is called with the score tied" to the list of suspended games.

Certain rules about suspended games were moved from 4.11(d) to 4.12(a), and rules to explain the result of a suspended game that is not completed and becomes a called game.

National Association leagues were allowed to adopt rules to suspend rather than call games that had not become a regulation game. An exception was this option would not apply to the last scheduled game between the two teams during the regular season or playoffs.

The upshot of the changes in these rules was to suspend and resume games that were tied rather than have them replayed in their entirety.

*4.19 amended case comment relating to protested games, clarifying that any appeal must be lodged before the next pitch, play, or attempted play.

*6.02(c) amended rule on consequences of batter refusing to enter batter's box, changing it 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.

6.02(d) added an experimental pace-of-game rule for National Association play. With certain exceptions (swinging at a pitch, being forced out of batter's box by a pitch, wild pitch or passed ball, et al.) the batter must keep at least one foot in the batter's box throughout the time at bat. If one of the exceptions occurs, the batter may leave the batter's box but not the dirt circle.

*6.05(a) and 7.04(c) revised case comments on catching ball in dugouts and other out-of-play areas. [Minor wording changes.]

6.05(k) and 7.09(k) eliminated redundant rules on the lane running to first base. 7.09(k) was deleted and the other sections reshuffled in 2006.

*6.06(d) added new case comment covering batter's use or attempted use of illegal bat. The comment is that the batter is deemed as using or attempting to use an illegal bat if he brings such a bat into the batter's box.

*6.08(c) amended case comment on consequences of catcher's interference to agree with 7.07.

*6.09(b) and 7.08(a) amended rules on batter-runner after third strike not caught. The rule had been that, after a strikeout with the ball not called cleanly by the catcher, a batter did not forfeit his right to run to first base unless he reached the dugout or dugout steps. In 2006, the rule changed to that a batter in such a situation would be called out once he left the dirt circle surrounding home plate. The change was prompted by an incident in the second game of the 2005 American League playoffs.

*7.05(j) added rule relating to pitched ball touched by detached equipment, calling for an award of “One base, if a fielder deliberately touches a pitched ball with his cap, mask, or any part of his uniform detached from its proper place on his person. The ball is in play, and the award is made from the position of the runner at the time the ball was touched.” The rules had already called for three bases on such touches on a batted ball and two bases on a thrown ball.

7.09(b) eliminated redundant rules on batter hitting the ball twice with the remainder of 7.09 reclassified.

*8.01(a) and 8.01(b) amended rules on positioning of pitcher’s pivot foot on the rubber and delivery.

*8.01(b) added case comment relating to pitcher failing to stop at set position with no runners on base, allowing an 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.

*8.02(b) amended penalties for possession of a foreign substance, adding an automatic 10-day suspension.

*8.04 amended time limit for pitcher to pitch. The time limit changed from 20 seconds after the pitcher received the ball to 12 seconds, although the timing would not start until the pitcher had the ball and the batter was in the box, alert to the pitcher. The rule continued to apply only when no runners were on base.

8.05(h) added case comment for penalties for pitcher delaying a game.

2007

Playing Rules Committee: Sandy Alderson, Chair, Bob Beban, Rod Carew, John McHale Jr., Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Jimmie Lee Solomon, Bill Stoneman, Larry Young with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member

The 2007 rule book noted changes made before 2006 that went into effect in the National Association in 2006 and will be in the major leagues in 2007. All of the 2006 rules marked with an asterisk above became effective in the major leagues in 2007.

- Made stylistic changes to 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)).
- 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)).
- Amended 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)).

2008

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Bob Beban, Rod Carew, John McHale Jr., Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Jimmie Lee Solomon, Bill Stoneman, Larry Young with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2008 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.

2009

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Bob Beban, Rod Carew, John McHale Jr., Charlie Reliford, Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Jimmie Lee Solomon, Bill Stoneman, with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2009 season:

- Revised definition of spectator interference to include a spectator touching a player and hindering an attempt to make a play on a live ball. (Rule 2.00 (Interference))
- Revised rules to clarify duties of umpire-in-chief (Rules 2.00 (Manager), 3.12, 3.18 (Penalty), 4.10(a), 4.10(e), 4.15(a), 4.15(c), 4.15(d), 4.18, 5.01, 5.09(e), and 9.03(a))
- Reorganized rules on authority to call or suspend games. (Rules 3.10, 4.01(d) and 4.01 Comment)
- Revised certain Comments to reflect decision to exempt post-season and certain tie-breaking championship games in regard to called and suspended games. (Rule 4.01 Comment, 4.10 Comment, 4.12(a) Comment and 4.12(b) Comment)

- Amended rules on rain checks to leave policies to leagues. (Rule 4.10(f); and 4.12(d) deleted)
- Revised language or rule when batter intentionally deflects a ball that is moving over foul territory. (Rule 6.05(i))
- Added rule in regard to ambidextrous pitchers. (Rule 8.01(f))
- Revised language of rule on removing pitcher from the game upon manager or coach's second trip to the mound to the same pitcher in the same inning. (Rule 8.06)
- Made stylistic revisions to Rules 2.00 (Interference), 3.18 (Penalty), 4.18, 5.09(e), and 6.05(b)

In addition, the index has been revised.

2010

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Bob Beban, Rod Carew, John McHale Jr., Charlie Reliford, Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Jimmie Lee Solomon, Bill Stoneman, with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2010 season:

- Revised rule on playing field layout to update practices on marking foul lines. (Rule 1.04)
- Revised rule on playing field layout to update base material. (Rule 1.06)
- Revised diagram of field layout to provide that front and back lines of coach's boxes may be a minimum of one foot in length and a maximum of 10 feet in length. (Diagram No. 1)
- Reduced maximum bat diameter to 2.61 inches. (Rule 1.10(a))
- Required cupped portion of bat, if any, to be free of right angles. (Rule 1.10(b))
- Added comment to address consequences of using bat with excessive pine tar. (Rule 1.10(c) Comment)
- Revised rule on the use of helmets to require helmets while running the bases; update the requirement for Major League batters to use at least a single ear-flap helmet; require base coaches to wear helmets while performing their duties; and require bat/ball boys and girls to wear double ear-flap helmets while performing their duties. (Rule 1.16) [Nothing in 1.16 addresses helmets on runners. 1.16(c) was shortened. It still required major leaguers to wear a single ear-flap, or a double ear-flap helmet at their option) without regard to whether it was at-bat or on the bases. Dropped from the 2009 rule book was the exception for players in the majors in 1982 and who objected to wearing a single ear-flap helmet.]
- Added rules on substituted-for player who improperly remains in game. (Rule 3.03 and 3.03 Comment)
- Revised rule on game preliminaries to provide that home team (rather than home team manager) determines whether a game shall be started because of unsuitable weather conditions or the unfit condition of the playing field. (Rule 3.10(a)).
- Revised line-up card rules to allow a manager's designee to present lineup card and provide that positions and substitutes should be listed as a courtesy. (Rule 4.01)
- Clarified that umpire interference may occur on a pick-off play or when a catcher returns the ball to the pitcher. (Rules 2.00 (Interference) (c), 2.00 (Interference) (c) Comment, 5.09(b) and 5.09(b) Comment)
- Clarified language in rule on interference by a runner (Rule 5.09(f))
- Clarified rules on a ball that deflects to hit a batter or a bat while the batter is in a legal position in the batter's box, and has not intended to interfere with the course of the ball. (Rules 6.05(g) and 6.05(h)).
- Revised Designated Hitter Rule to provide for remedies when a team lists 10 players on its lineup card but fails to indicate a Designated Hitter. (Rule 6.10(b)(1), 6.10(b)(1) Comment and 6.10(b)(11))
- Revised Designated Hitter Rule to provide that a team's Designated Hitter role terminates when a player on defense replaces the pitcher. (Rule 6.10(b)(14))
- Revised Designated Hitter Rule to restrict appearance of Designated Hitter in bullpen. (Rule 6.10(b)(15)) [Designated hitter may not sit in the bullpen unless serving as a catcher in the bullpen.]

- Reorganized rule on runner advancing when a fielder deliberately touches a pitched ball with his cap, mask, or any part of his uniform detached from its proper place on his person. (Rule 7.04(e))
- Revised language of rule on putting out forced runner. (Rule 7.08(e))
- Revised rule on pitchers to allow pitcher to touch his mouth or lips on mound, so long as he is not in contact with pitcher's plate when doing so and so long as he clearly wipes the fingers of his pitching hand dry before touching the pitcher's plate. (Rule 8.02(a)(1))
- Revised rule on reversing a call after umpire crew consultation to empower umpires explicitly to take whatever steps they may deem necessary, in their discretion, to eliminate the results and consequences of an earlier call that they are reversing. (Rule 9.02(c) and 9.02(c) Comment)
- Made stylistic revisions in Rules 1.10(c), 2.00 (Interference (a) Comment, 3.10(a), 6.10(a), 6.10(b), 8.01(a)(1))

The Playing Rules Committee made the following changes in 2009 that went into effect for the 2009 season in National Association leagues:

- Revised suspended game rules to permit a National Association League to adopt any of Rules 4.12(a)(7), 4.12(a)(8) or 4.12(a)(9) for its post-season games. (Rule 4.12(a))
- Added a cross-reference in Rule 4.12(a)(8).
- Made stylistic revisions in Rules 4.12(a)(8) and 4.12(a)(9).

In addition, the index has been revised.

2011

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Bob Beban, Rod Carew, Brian Gorman, John McHale Jr., Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Jimmie Lee Solomon, Bill Stoneman, with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2011 season:

- Reorganized the phrasing of Rule 2.00 (Catch).
- Clarified the definition of Tag (Rule 2.00 (Tag))
- Clarified the circumstances in which interference in Rule 3.15 applied, made stylistic revisions, moved a Note to the Rule 3.15 Comment and revised the Play in Rule 3.15 Comment.
- Corrected a cross-reference in Rule 4.01 Comment.
- Added interference with a batted ball to the list of circumstances causing a batter to be declared out. (Rule 6.05(o))
- Added interference with a thrown ball to the list of circumstances causing a runner to be declared out. (Rule 7.08(l))
- Clarified remedies for interference with a batted or thrown ball and made stylistic changes. (Rule 7.11)
- Clarified the rule allowing a pitcher to touch his mouth or lips on the mound. (Rule 8.02(a)(1))
- Made a stylistic revision in Rule 8.02(c).
- Revised comment on intentionally pitching at a batter to prohibit arguing a decision by the umpire to issue a warning. (Rule 8.02(d) Comment)

The first paragraph of Rule 8.02(d) Comment shall apply in the Major Leagues for the 2011 season only. [Paragraph to be in effect only in 2011, regarding a warning issued for intentionally pitching at a batter, was “Team personnel may not come onto the playing surface to argue or dispute a warning issued under rule 8.02(d). If a manager, coach or player leaves the dugout or his position to dispute a warning, he should be warned to stop. If HEn continues, he is subject to ejection.” However, this paragraph continued to be in the 2012 rule book.]

In addition, the index has been revised.

2012

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Sam Bernabe, Rod Carew, Brian Gorman, John McHale Jr., Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Bill Stoneman, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2012 season:

- Amended Rule 1.10(b) to permit an indentation in the end of the bat up to 1¼ inches in depth. All other conditions of OBR 1.10(b) remain unchanged.
- Added new Rule 3.05(d) to prohibit a manager from sending his current pitcher to the mound to warm-up at the start of an inning with no intention of having him pitch to the first batter of the inning.
- Amended Rules 7.08(a)(1) and (2), and the comment thereto, to replace the word “baseline” with the phrase “base path.”

In addition, the Index has been revised.

2013

Note: Rule changes for 2013 are underlined in this edition of the Official Baseball Rules.

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Sam Bernabe, Rod Carew, Brian Gorman, John McHale Jr., Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Bill Stoneman, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2013 season:

- Amended Rule 1.15(a) to clarify legal colors for fielding gloves. [No fielder, regardless of position, may use a fielding glove that falls within a PANTONE® color set lighter than the current 14-series.]
- Amended Rule 2.00 (INFIELD FLY) Comment to include the situation where interference occurs during an Infield Fly.
- Amended Rule 2.00 (INTERFERENCE (a) Comment) to include the situation where an intervening play occurs at home plate prior to the batter-runner being declared out for interference out of the three-foot lane.
- Amended Rule 2.00 (INTERFERENCE (d)) to clarify when a spectator is considered to have reached out of the stands. [Added “and over the playing field” to when a spectator reaches out of the stands.]
- Amended Rule 2.00 (INTERFERENCE) by deleting the last sentence, “On any interference the ball is dead” in order to account for cases where interference does not result in an immediate dead ball (e.g., batter’s interference, catcher’s interference, etc.)
- Amended Rule 3.05(d) regarding situations in which the pitcher is at bat or on base when an inning ends and requirements of such pitcher to resume pitching the next half-inning.
- Amended Rules 4.01(e) Comment, 4.10 Comment, 4.12 (a) Comment, and 4.12(b) Comment to include Wild Card games at the Major League level regarding non-application of certain portions of Rules 4.01, 4.10, and 4.12.
- Amended Rule 4.12(b)(4) to explain the result of a suspended game that is not completed prior to the last scheduled game between two clubs in a championship season. [With 15 teams in each league calling for more interleague play and more teams of either league playing other teams only once at home and on the road, 4.12(b)(4) was added to deal with a suspended game not completed prior to the last scheduled game between the two teams. The new rule made such games called games and could apply to tie games and/or games in which a visiting team scored one or more runs in the top of an inning of a regulation game and the home team not retaking the lead in an inning that is not completed because of weather. Instead of the game being suspended and resumed at the point of interruption, the game reverts to the last full inning. This also applies if the visiting team ties the game in the top of an uncompleted inning, and the home team does not retake the lead. A game that has not progressed far enough to become a regulation game shall be declared “No Game” and replayed in its entirety, unless the league president determines that playing the rescheduled game is not necessary to affect the league championship.]
- Amended Rule 6.05(h) to include foul territory in cases when a batter is called out for throwing his bat and interfering with a fielder attempting to make a play.

- Amended Rule 6.06(c) Comment by deleting the phrase, “before the catcher has securely held the ball” in cases when the batter’s swing (follow-through) unintentionally strikes the catcher.
- Amended Rule 7.09(a) to clarify situations when a batter is called out for hindering the catcher after a dropped third strike. Also added 7.09(a) Comment.
- Amended the PENALTY for violation of Rule 8.02(a)(1).
- Amended Rule 8.05(b) so that the pitcher, while in contact with the pitcher’s rubber, is prohibited from faking a throw to third base. Penalty: Balk when runners are on base. [This prohibited the fake to third/throw to first pickoff move: “A pitcher is to step directly toward a base before throwing to that base and is required to throw (except to second base) because he steps. It is a balk if, with runners on first and third, the pitcher steps toward third and does not throw, merely to bluff the runner back to third, then seeing the runner on first start for second, turn and step to first base. It is legal for a pitcher to feint a throw to second base.”]
- Amended Rule 8.05(c) Comment to agree with amended Rule 8.05(b) above
- Amended Rule 8.05(k) to include the ball slipping or falling out of the pitcher’s hand or glove, while the pitcher is in contact with the rubber, as a balk.

In addition, revisions have been made to the Index.

2014

Note: Rule changes for 2014 are underlined in this edition of the Official Baseball Rules.

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Sam Bernabe, Rod Carew, Brian Gorman, John McHale Jr., Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Bill Stoneman, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2014 season:

- Amended Rule 3.06 Comment regarding substitutions and double-switches.
- Amended Rule 4.05 Comment regarding base coaches touching runners on base.
- Amended Rule 6.02(b) Comment to nullify a balk caused by “inadvertent” actions by the batter. (Batter is no longer limited to stepping out of the batter’s box in order for the balk to be nullified.)
- Amended Rule 6.10(b)(10) to allow the game pitcher to pinch run only for the Designated Hitter.
- Added Experimental Rule 7.12 regarding collisions at home plate.
- Added Rule 8.02(b) Comment prohibiting pitchers from attaching anything to either hand, finger, or wrist.
- Added Rule 8.05(d) regarding the pitcher throwing to an unoccupied base when a runner, in the umpire’s judgment, creates the impression he is attempting to advance to that base.
- Amended 8.06 Comment to allow the manager or coach to leave the 18-foot circle without terminating a trip when the manager or coach does so temporarily to give the umpire a lineup change.
- Amended 9.02(c) Comment regarding how long the defense has to request a check-swing appeal, and, in particular, how long on a check-swing appeal that ends a half-inning.

In addition, revisions have been made to the Index.

2015

Major reorganization of the 2015 rule book from 2014 to 2015:

2014

- 1.00 Objectives of the Game
- 2.00 Definition of Terms
- 3.00 Game Preliminaries
- 4.00 Starting and Ending a Game
- 5.00 Putting the Ball in Play. Live Ball
- 6.00 The Batter
- 7.00 The Runner

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

2015

- 1.00 Objectives of the Game
- 2.00 The Playing Field
- 3.00 Equipment and Uniforms
- 4.00 Game Preliminaries
- 5.00 Playing the Game
- 6.00 Improper Play, Illegal Action, and Misconduct
- 7.00 Ending the Game
- 8.00 The Umpire
- 9.00 The Official Scorer

Definition of Terms

Appendices – Diagram and layout of the playing field, gloves, and strike zone

Rule 5.00 became the longest of the rules, encompassing many of the rules that had separate sections until 2014. It covers Starting the Game, Fielding Positions, Base Coaches, Batting (Batting Order, The Batter’s Box, Completing Time at Bat), When the Batter Becomes a Runner, Running the Bases (Occupying the Base, Advancing Bases, Dead Balls) , Pitching (Legal Pitching Delivery – The Windup and The Set Position, Warm-Up Pitches, Pitcher Delays, Throwing to the Bases, Effect of Removing Pivot Foot From Plate, Ambidextrous Pitchers), How a Team Scores, Making an Out (Retiring the Batter, Retiring a Runner, Appeal Plays, Effect of Preceding Runner’s Failure to Touch a Base, Retiring the Side), Substitutions and Pitching Changes Including Visits to the Mound, Designated Hitter Rule, Calling “Time” and Dead Balls.

From the 2015 rule book: The Playing Rules Committee [Sandy Alderson (Chair), Chris Antonetti, Sam Bernabe, Jerry Dipito, Brian Gorman, John Mozeliak, Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member, Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary, and Tom Lepperd as the editor] at its December 2014 meeting, voted to reorganize and recodify the Official Baseball rules into a more logical and more organized manner. No wording or language was changed (other than the 2015 amendments); only the order and placement of the rules were modified. **Throughout the text of this 2015 edition, each rule number and Comment is followed by, in parentheses, the corresponding 2014 rule number from which the “new” rule originated. . . . at the end of the book is a cross-reference table that shows each 2015 rule and the corresponding rule number from the 2014 edition (and vice versa).**

RULE CROSS-REFERENCE TABLE

This Cross-Reference Table allows the reader to search for a rule in the new Official Rules based on knowledge of the organization of prior versions of the Official Rules. The number of the left of each column, included in parentheses, designates the 2014 rule number. The number on the right designated the 2015 rule number.

<u>(2014)</u>	<u>2015</u>	(1.10)	3.02	(3.02)	3.01
(1.01)	1.01	(1.11)	3.03	(3.03).....	5.10
(1.02)	1.05	(1.12)	3.04	(3.04).....	5.10
(1.03)	1.06	(1.13)	3.05	(3.05).....	5.10
(1.04)	2.01	(1.14)	3.06	(3.06).....	5.10
(1.05)	2.02	(1.15)	3.07	(3.07).....	5.10
(1.06)	2.03	(1.16)	3.08	(3.08).....	5.10
(1.07)	2.04	(1.17)	3.09	(3.09).....	4.06
(1.08)	2.05	(2.00)	Def. of Terms	(3.10).....	4.04
(1.09)	3.01	(3.01)	4.01	(3.11).....	4.08

(3.12)	5.12	(4.16)	7.03	(6.08).....	5.05
(3.13)	4.05	(4.17)	7.03	(6.09).....	5.05
(3.14)	3.10	(4.18)	7.03	(6.10).....	5.11
(3.15)	6.01	(4.19)	7.04	(7.01).....	5.06
(3.16)	6.01	(5.01)	5.01	(7.02).....	5.06
(3.17)	5.10	(5.02)	5.01, 5.06	(7.03).....	5.06
(3.18)	4.07	(5.03)	5.01	(7.04).....	5.06
(4.01)	4.03	(5.04)	1.02	(7.05).....	5.06
(4.02)	5.01	(5.05)	1.03	(7.06).....	6.01
(4.03)	5.02	(5.06)	1.04	(7.07).....	6.01
(4.04)	5.04	(5.07)	6.02	(7.08).....	5.09
(4.05)	5.03	(5.08)	6.01	(7.09).....	6.01
(4.06)	6.04	(5.09)	6.03	(7.10).....	5.09
(4.07)	6.04	(5.10)	5.12	(7.11).....	6.01
(4.08)	6.04	(5.11)	5.12	(7.12).....	5.09
(4.09)	5.08	(6.01)	5.04	(7.13).....	6.01
(4.10)	7.01	(6.02)	5.04	(8.01).....	6.02
(4.11)	7.01	(6.03)	5.04	(8.02).....	6.02
(4.12)	7.02	(6.04)	5.04	(8.03).....	5.07
(4.13)	4.08	(6.05)	5.09	(8.04).....	5.07
(4.14)	4.01	(6.06)	5.09	(8.05).....	6.02
(4.15)	7.03	(6.07)	6.03	(8.06).....	5.10

Rule 9 (The Umpire) was changed from 9.00 to 8.00, and Rule 10 (The Official Scorer) was changed from 10.00 to 9.00. Within these rules, the section numbers (0.1, 0.2, etc.) remained the same.

The Playing Rules Committee made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2015 season (with the corresponding 2014 indicated in parentheses following each rule change):

- Amended Rule. 3.06 to clarify that the first baseman has the choice of wearing a glove or a mitt. (2014 Rule 1.14)
- Amended Rule 3.08(d) to require the catcher to wear a face mask while receiving a pitch. (2014 Rule 1.16(d))
- Amended Rule 5.04(b)(4) regarding the Batter’s Box Rule. (2014 Rule 6.02(d))
- Amended Rule 6.01(a)(10) to clarify that the batter-runner is awarded first base when a baserunner commits non-willful or unintentional interference (2014 Rule 7.09(j))
- Amended Rule 6.01(a)(10) Comment to clarify that obstruction be called when any fielder who is not fielding the ball obstructs the batter-runner advancing to first base. (2014 Rule 7.09(j) Comment)
- Amended Rule 6.01(i) regarding Collisions at Home Plate (2014 Rule 7.13)
- Amended Rule 6.03(a)(4) to allow certain advancements by runners during situations when the batter is using an illegal bat. Such advancements are now consistent with those made during a batting-out-of-order situation. (2014 Rule 6.06(d))
- Amended Rule 7.02(a)(3) regarding suspended games (unintentional operator error). (2014 Rule 4.12(a)(3))
- Amended Rule 7.03(c) regarding forfeited games (groundskeeper intentionally or willfully not complying with umpire’s order in preparation of field after suspension of play). (2014 Rule 4.16)

In addition, the diagram of the Strike Zone has been revised in Appendix 5. [The diagrams in the 2014 and 2015 rule books are identical.]

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Chris Antonetti, Sam Bernabe, Jerry Dipito, Brian Gorman, John Mozeliak, Terry Ryan, John Schuerholz, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member, Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary, and Tom Lepperd as the editor – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2016 season:

- Amended Rule 3.05 to increase the length of the first baseman’s glove or mitt to a maximum of 13 inches.
- Amended Rule 3.06 to increase the measurement of a fielder’s glove to a maximum of 13 inches from top to bottom.
- Added new Rule 4.04(c) regarding postponed games and “No Games.”
- Amended Rules 5.04(b)(4)(A) and 5.04(b)(4)(B), the Batter’s Box Rule, to include additional situations when the batter may legally step out of the batter’s box.
- Amended Rule 5.06(b)(3)(C) and 5.06(b)(3)(C) Comment regarding a fielder stepping or falling into an out-of-play area.
- Amended Rule 5.08(b) regarding game-ending plays.
- Amended Rule 5.09(a)(1) Comment to include that a fielder stepping into any out-of-play area will render the ball dead, and all runners shall be awarded one base.
- Amended Rule 5.09(b)(9), passing of runners, by adding Comment and Play.
- Amended Rule 5.09(c)(3) regarding the batter-runner overrunning or oversliding first base.
- Amended Rule 5.12(b)(6) regarding a fielder stepping or falling into an out-of-play area after catching a fly ball.
- Amended Rule 6.02(a)(1) regarding interference by the batter-runner when he hinders the catcher attempting to field the ball after a third strike not caught.
- Added new Rule 6.01(j) regarding a runner sliding to bases on double play attempts. Cross-references to this rule added to appropriate rules as necessary.
- Added new Rule 6.03(a)(4) regarding a batter who throws his bat and hits the catcher. Exception now applies to Rules 6.03(a)(3) and 6.06(a)(4).
- Renumbered previous Rule 6.03(a)(4) to Rule 6.03(a)(5) and renumbered previous Rule 6.03(a)(3) Comment to Rule 6.03(a)(5) Comment.
- Amended Rule 7.01(e) regarding postponed, suspended, and “No Games.”
- Changed the title of Rule 7.02 to “Suspended, Postponed, and Tie Games.”
- Amended Rules 7.02(b)(4), 7.02(b)(4)(A), and 7.02(b)(4)(B), and 7.02(b)(5) and 7.02(b) Comment regarding regulation, suspended, or tie games not completed prior to the last scheduled game between the two Clubs.
- Changed the numbering of 7.02(b)(4)(C) to 7.02(b)(5) and amended that section regarding postponed, suspended, or tie games that have not been completed prior to the last scheduled game between two Clubs.
- Amended the definitions of “Touch” and “Tag” (Definitions follow
- Rule 9.00, The Rules of Scoring). Added new Comment to the definition of “Touch.”
- Revised Diagram #4 (Appendix 4) to reflect new maximum length of fielder’s glove.

In addition, minor typographical errors were corrected from the 2015 Edition.

2017

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Chris Antonetti, Sam Bernabe, Jon Daniels, Jerry Dipito, Brian Gorman, John Mozeliak, John Schuerholz, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member, Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary, and Tom Lepperd as the editor – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2017 season:

- Retitled Rule 3.10 and added Rule 3.10(b) to prohibit the use of certain on-field markers on the field.

- Amended Rules 4.04(a) and 4.04(b) to clarify that, for the purposes of this Rule, the second game of a doubleheader includes conventional or split doubleheaders.
- *For National Association Leagues:* Amended Rule 4.08(1) so that completion of a suspended game may not be played prior to the start of a scheduled doubleheader. (See also additional Rule 7.02(b) Comment.)
- Amended Rule 4.08(b) to clarify that the first game of a conventional or split doubleheader must be completed before the second game of such doubleheader begins.
- Amended Rule 5.03(b), added Rule 5.05(c), and amended 5.03(c) PENALTY regarding positioning of base coaches withing the coaching boxes. Also deleted Rule 5.03 Comment.
- Deleted the fifth paragraph of Rule 5.04(b)(2) Comment.
- *For National Association Leagues:* Amended Rule 5.04(b)(2) Comment regarding a batter who steps out of the batter’s box after the pitcher has begun his windup or has come to a Set Position with a runner(s) on base.
- *For National Association Leagues:* Amended Rule 5.04(b)(4)(A) regarding multiple violations of The Batter’s Box Rule.
- Amended Rule 5.05(b)(1) Comment regarding the responsibilities of the batter-runner when the defensive manager signals his intent to intentionally walk the batter. (See also the amended definition of “Base on Balls” in Definition of Terms.)
- Amended Rule 5.07(a) Comment specifying that a pitcher may not take a second step towards home plate with either foot or reset his pivot foot in his delivery of the pitch. Specified penalty for such violation.
- Amended Rule 5.07(a)(2) Comment regarding the positioning of the pitcher’s pivot and free foot and whether he will pitch from the Windup or Set Position. Specifies that the pitcher shall notify the umpire if he (the pitcher) is going to pitch from the Windup Position when his pivot foot and free foot are in a particular position.
- *For National Association Leagues:* Added Rule 7.02(b) Comment regarding resuming a suspended game when no single game remains on the schedule (i.e., only a doubleheader(s) remain on the schedule). In such cases, only a single game may be played following completion of the suspended game. (See also amended Rule 4.08(a)(1).)
- Amended Rule 7.02(b)(4) regarding the League President determining when an incomplete game be played to a completed regulation game with respect to eligibility for the post-season and/or home-field advantage for any Wild Card or Division Series game.
- Amended Definition of Terms (“Base on Balls”) to permit the manager to elect to intentionally walk a batter by notifying the umpire without the pitcher being required to pitch to the batter. (See also amended Rule 5.05(b)(1) Comment.)

In addition, minor revisions were made to Diagrams 1 and 3; and minor typographical errors were corrected.

2018

The Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Chris Antonetti, Sam Bernabe, Jon Daniels, Jerry Dipito, Brian Gorman, John Mozeliak, John Schuerholz, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member, Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary, and Tom Lepperd as the editor – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2018 season:

- Amended Rule 4.08(c) to change the length of time between doubleheaders.
- Amended Rule 5.07(b) regarding warm-up pitches that a pitcher may throw.
- Amended Rule 5.09(c)(1) Comment regarding a runner who takes a “flying start” behind a base when tagging up; namely, such violation is considered an appeal play.
- Re-titled Rule 5.10(l) and amended Rule 5.10(l) regarding warm-up pitches when a substitute pitcher enters a game in the situation described in the last paragraph of Rule 5.10(l) Comment.

- Established new Rule 5.10(m) limiting the number of mound visits per game.
- Amended Rule 6.01(a)(5) Comment to clarify that a runner who is returning to his last legally touched base after being put out is considered the same as a runner who continued to advance after being put out relative to interfering with a subsequent play.
- Amended Rule 8.02(c) to set limits on when a ball/strike count may be corrected.
- Amended Definition of Terms – Spectator Interference (“Interference,” Part (d)) – to include additional situations when Spectator Interference may be invoked.

In addition, an Index has been compiled and is located at the end of this book. [The index was last in the 2014 rule book.] Minor revisions were made to Diagrams #1, #2, and #3.

2019

The Official Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Chris Antonetti, Sam Bernabe, Jon Daniels, Jerry Dipito, Brian Gorman, John Mozeliak, John Schuerholz, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member, Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary, and Tom Lepperd as the editor – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2019 season:

- Amended Rule 4.03(e) to clarify Clubs’ rights regarding weather conditions.
- Amended Rule 4.04(a) to be consistent with Rule 4.03(e) concerning Clubs’ rights during weather situations.
- Amended Rule 5.05(b)(2) Comment regarding a pitched ball touching jewelry worn by a batter. [A batter shall not be considered touched by a pitched ball if the ball only touches jewelry worn by a player (e.g., necklaces, bracelets, etc.)]
- Amended Rule 5.06(c)(7) to clarify situations when a pitched ball lodges in or against the umpire’s body, mask, or paraphernalia.
- Amended Rule 5.06(c)(7) Comment regarding a player who intentionally places the baseball inside his uniform for the purpose of deceiving the runner(s).
- Amended Rule 5.09(b)(7) regarding a runner who is struck by a batted ball before it has gone through or by an infielder.
- Amended Rule 5.09(b)(7) (second paragraph) to clarify situations when a runner is struck by an Infield Fly.
- Amended Rule 5.10(g) **only** for National Association Leagues that requires a starting pitcher, or any substitute pitcher, to face at least three batters (or retire the side) unless the pitcher is incapacitated.
- Amended Rule 5.10(l) Comment regarding trips to the mound (final paragraph is new).
- Amended Rule 5.10(m)(1) limiting the number of mound visits without a pitching change to five per nine innings.
- Made several amendments to Rule 5.10(m)(2) regarding trips to the mound: Additional language added to Rules 5.10(m)(2), 5.10(m)(2)(B), 5.10(m)(2)(D), and established new Rules 5.10(m)(2)(E), (F), and (G).
- Established new Rule 5.10(m)(4) regarding enforcement of mound visits.
- Amended Rule 6.01(i)(a) regarding collisions with the catcher at home plate.
- Added a sentence at the end of Rule 6.01(i) stating that reference to “the catcher” in Rule 6.01(i) also applies to other players covering home plate.
- Amended Rule 7.02(a)(7) regarding forfeits when the team “fails to appear . . .” following the first game of a doubleheader to thirty minutes in order to agree with Rule 4.08(c).
- Amended Definition of Terms (“TAG”) with a new sentence at the end of the definition regarding jewelry worn by a player.
- Amended Definition of Terms (“TOUCH”) regarding jewelry worn by a player or umpire. [Jewelry worn by a player does not constitute a part of the player’s body for purposes of a tag or touch.]

Additional entries were also made to the Index.

2020

The 2020 Official Baseball Rules do not include any of the rules that were adopted for the shorted 2020 Major League season, which are contained in Section 5.1 of the MLB 2021 Operations Manual. To the extent of a conflict between the Official Baseball Rules and Section 5.1 of the Operations Manual, the Operations Manual shall control for Major League play.

The Official Playing Rules Committee – Sandy Alderson (Chair), Chris Antonetti, Sam Bernabe, Jon Daniels, Jerry Dipito, Brian Gorman, Matt Klentak, John Mozeliak, Joe Torre with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member and Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2020 season:

- Amended Rule 3.03(e) to prohibit pitchers from wearing sleeves that are white, gray, or in the judgment of the umpire, distracting in any manner.
- Amended Rule 4.03(c) to require that, in advance of each game, each Major League Club designate each player on its lineup card as a position player, pitcher, or “Two-Way Player,” as well as to outline the roster limits and the guidelines regarding when each is allowed to pitch in a game.
- Amended Rule 5.07(a)(2) Comment to indicate that a second step towards home plate by the pitcher should be treated as an illegal pitch when there are no runners on base.
- Amended Rule 5.09(a)(2) Comment to state that a foul tip can be caught after striking any part of the catcher’s body or paraphernalia.
- Amended Rule 5.10(g) to specify that the Three-Batter Minimum has been adopted for use at the Major League level.
- Added Rule 5.10(g) Comment to illustrate the qualifications required for a batter’s plate appearance to count towards the Three-Batter Minimum. [If the offensive team is put out prior to any substitute pitcher completing his first three consecutive batters, the pitcher may be removed from the game between innings; but, if he returned for the subsequent inning, he must complete pitching to as many batters as necessary to satisfy the three consecutive batters requirement, which total would include any batters that completed a plate appearance with the pitcher the prior inning . . . Picking off a runner does not fulfill the minimum batter requirement, but would permit the early removal of the pitcher if the out recorded by the pickoff ends the inning.]
- Added 5.10(i) Note to specify that the substitute batter exception does not apply to substitute pitchers who return for subsequent innings without having satisfied the Three-Batter Minimum.
- Amended Rule 5.10(m) to clarify that the pitcher must come out of the game as a result of an illegal Mound Visit upon the completion of three batters or at the end of an inning, whichever comes first.
- Amended Rule 6.01(a) dictating who the next batter is following a runner being declared out for interference on a foul batted ball.
- Amended Rule 6.01(d) Comment defining the actions that would be considered intentional interference.
- Amended Rule 6.02(d)(4) to clarify the penalty for a pitcher engaging in prohibited actions listed in Rule 6.02(c)(2) through (7) if the offensive manager chooses not to accept the result of the play after which the violation was noted.
- Amended Rule 6.04(d) Comment dictating where a suspended manager, coach, or player may be both before and during a game.
- Amended Rule 7.02(c) Comment outlining pitchers resuming suspended games and their Three-Batter Minimum requirements.
- Amended Rule 7.04 dictating that game protests are no longer permitted.
- References to game protests were removed from Rule 3.02(c) Comment, Rule 9.01(b)(3), Rule 9.01(b)(3) Comment, and General Instructions to Umpires.
- Amended Definition of Terms (“FOUL TIP”) to reflect the changes made to Rule 5.09(2) Comment.

Additional entries were also made to the Index.

Pandemic Rules

The 2020 season didn't start until July because of the pandemic, which created temporary changes, some of which became permanent:

Seven-inning doubleheaders/twin bills (used in 2020 and 2021)

Start-of-inning runner in extra innings during the regular season (ongoing, becoming permanent in 2024)

Suspended games rather than “no games” for games called by weather before they became regulation games (ongoing, becoming permanent in 2024)

2021

The 2021 Official Baseball Rules do not include any of the rules that were adopted exclusively for the 2021 Major League season, which are contained in Section 5.1 of the MLB 2021 Operations Manual. To the extent of a conflict between the Official Baseball Rules and Section 5.1 of the Operations Manual, the Operations Manual shall control for Major League play.

The Playing Rules Committee – Alex Anthopoulos, Chris Antonetti, Jon Daniels, Jerry Dipito, Joe Finley, Brian Gorman, Michael Hill (Chair), John Mozeliak, David Stearns with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member and Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2021 season:

- Amended Rule 6.01(a)(1) to include situations where a dropped pitch (not on a third strike) is inadvertently deflected.

Additional Changes for 2021: All references to the National Association, Minor League Presidents, and any associated terms have been changed to reflect the new relationships between Major League Baseball and any league within the professional development league system operated by Major League Baseball in which Minor League Clubs are assigned to compete.

2022

The 2022 Official Baseball Rules do not include details regarding the Extra Innings Rule that was agreed upon by Major League Baseball and the Players Association.

The Playing Rules Committee – Alex Anthopoulos, Chris Antonetti, Jon Daniels, Jerry Dipito, Joe Finley, Brian Gorman, Michael Hill (Chair), John Mozeliak, David Stearns with Mike Gaski as the amateur baseball advisory member and Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2022 season:

- Amended Rule 5.11 to reflect that the Designated Hitter will be in place for both Leagues and to permit starting pitchers to serve as the Designated Hitter.
- Amended 7.01(e) and 7.02(a) to permit the continuation of nonregulation games (i.e., less than five complete innings) that are suspended and must be completed at a future date under Rule 7.02(a). [7.01(e) regarding a game called before it is a regulation game, “in the discretion of the Office of the Commissioner, it shall be a suspended game.” Games postponed before becoming regulation games had become suspended games starting in the pandemic year of 2020 even before the rule became part of the rule book.]

2023

With the 2022 collective bargaining agreement, a Joint Competition Committee replaced the Playing Rules Committee. The new committee – noted for the first time in the 2023 rules – includes players, streamlining the process for rule changes.

The Joint Competition Committee – Bill DeWitt, Jack Flaherty, Tyler Glasnow, Greg Johnson, Whit Merrifield, Bill Miller, Dick Monfort, Mark Shapiro, Austin Slater, John Stanton (Chair), Tom Werner with Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2023 season:

- Amended field dimensions in Rule 2.01 to ensure a uniform and consistent outer boundary for all infielders across all 30 Major League ballparks.
- Amended Rule 2.03 to reflect the new measurements of first, second and third bases.
- Amended Rule 4.03(c)(4) to specify that a position player may only pitch when their team is losing by equal to or more than eight (8) runs, when their team is winning by equal to or more than ten (10) runs in the ninth inning, or in extra innings.
- Amended Rule 5.02(c) to reflect the new parameters that govern defensive restrictions.
- Amended Rule 5.10(k) to reflect the updated policies regarding who is allowed to occupy the bench and when those individuals are allowed to enter the field of play.
- Amended Rule 7.01(b) to incorporate the parameters of the Extra Innings Rule, which includes starting each half-inning following the ninth inning with a runner on second base.
- Amended Rule 8.04 to reflect the Office of the Commissioner’s current practices for handling game violations and issuing appropriate discipline.
- Amended Appendix 2 to reflect the new measurements of first, second and third bases.

2024

The Joint Competition Committee – Corbin Burnes, Bill DeWitt, Zac Gallen, Greg Johnson, Whit Merrifield, Bill Miller, Dick Monfort, Mark Shapiro, Austin Slater, John Stanton (Chair), Tom Werner with Paul V. Mifsud Jr. as the committee secretary, and editors Vanish Grover and Raquel Wagner – made the following changes that will be in effect for the 2024 season:

- Amended Rule 2.01 to reflect the updated dimensions of the grass line of the infield dirt in fair territory along the first base line.
- Amended Rule 5.09(a)(11) to reflect the updated dimensions governing certain interference calls for throw at first base.
- Amended Rule 5.10(g) to reflect that a pitcher who warms up on the field at the start of the inning is required to pitch to at least the first batter of the inning until such batter is put out or reaches first base.
- Amended Rule 5.10(m) to update the number of mound visits each team is allowed through nine innings.
- Amended the *Penalty for Interference* in Rule 6.01(a) to reflect the updated dimensions governing certain interference calls for throws at first base.
- Amended Rule 7.01 to clarify the policies surrounding regulation games.
- Amended Rule 7.02 to clarify the policies surrounding suspended games.
- Amended “A Called Game” in the Definition of Terms to clarify the Office of the Commissioner’s role in terminating play.
- Added “A Postponed Game” to the Definition of Terms.

In December 2023 Major League Baseball’s joint Competition Committee approved a widening of the runner’s lane to include the dirt between the foul line and the infield grass. Rule 5.09 (a)(11) had required a batter to run the last half of the distance between home plate and first base between the foul line and a three-foot line drawn on the right-hand side of the dirt. The rule was in effect in 2024 even though it was not yet in the rule book.