

Overview of 1867 Rules & Other Vintage Base Ball Customs

Overview

1. After a warning to a pitcher, the umpire will call balls, and after a warning to the hitter, he will call strikes. Three balls after the warning is a walk, three strikes after the warning is an out. (Sec. 6 & Sec. 42)
2. The fair-foul is still in effect. (Sec. 11)
3. Fair balls must be caught on the fly to be an out. Foul balls on the fly or first bound is an out. (Sec. 14 & 16)
4. A hitter is not allowed to stride into a pitch. (Sec. 21.)
5. A hitter may not be put out on a hit caught by a fan. (Sec. 26 & 27)
6. Position players may play where they wish. (Sec. 32)
7. Steals are always legal. No regulation disallows them, and 1867 tournament accounts show they were fairly common.

Complete Rules, From *Haney's Base Ball Player's Book of Reference (1867)*

The Ball

Sec. 1. The ball must weigh not less than five and one-half, nor more than five and three-fourths ounces, avoirdupois. It must measure not less than nine and one-half, nor more than nine and three-fourths inches in circumference. It must be composed of India rubber and yarn, and covered with leather, and, in all match games, shall be furnished by the challenging club, and becomes the property of the winning club as a trophy of victory.

The Bat

Sec. 2. The bat must be round, and must not exceed two and a half inches in diameter in the thickest part. It must be made of wood, and may be of any length to suit the striker.

The Bases.

Sec. 3. The bases must be four in number, placed at equal distances from each other, and securely fastened upon each corner of a square, whose sides are respectively thirty yards. They must be so constructed as to be distinctly seen by the umpire, and must cover a space equal to one square foot of surface. The first, second and third bases shall be canvas bags, painted white, and filled with some soft material, the home base and pitcher's point to be each marked by a flat, circular iron plate, painted or enameled white.

The Home Base.

Sec. 4. The base from which the ball is struck shall be designated the Home Base, and must be directly opposite the second base; the first base must always be that upon the right hand, and the third base that upon the left hand side of the striker, when occupying his position at the Home Base. And in all match games a line connecting the home and first base and the home and third base, shall be marked by the use of chalk, or other suitable material, so as to be distinctly seen by the umpire.

The Pitcher's Position

Sec. 5. The pitcher's position shall be designated by two lines, two yards in length, drawn at right angles to a line from home to second base, having their centres upon that line at two fixed iron plates, placed at points fifteen and sixteen and one-third yards distant from the home base. The pitcher must stand within the lines, and must deliver the ball as near as possible over the centre of the home base, and fairly for the striker.

Delivering Unfair Balls.

Sec. 6. Should the pitcher repeatedly fail to deliver to the striker fair balls, for the apparent purpose of delaying the game, or for any cause, the umpire, after warning him, shall call one ball, and if the pitcher persists in such action, two and three balls; when three balls shall have been called, the striker shall take the first base; and should any base be occupied at that time, each player occupying it or them shall take one base without being put out. All balls delivered by the pitcher, striking the ground before reaching the line of the home base, or pitched over the head of the batsman, or pitched to the side opposite to the to that which the batsman strikes from, shall be considered unfair balls.

Pitching—Balks

Sec. 7. The ball must be pitched, not jerked or thrown, to the bat ; and whenever the pitcher moves with the apparent purpose or pretensions to deliver the ball, he shall so deliver it; and must have neither foot in advance of the front line or off the ground at the time of delivering the ball ; and if he fails in either of these particulars, then it shall be declared a balk. The ball shall be considered as jerked, in the meaning of the rule, if the pitcher's arm touches his person when the arm is swung forward to deliver the ball and it shall be regarded as a throw if the arm be bent at the elbow, at an angle from the body or horizontally from the, shoulder when it is swung forward to deliver the ball. A pitched ball is one delivered with the arm straight, and swinging perpendicularly, and free from the body.

Rules for Players when a Balk is Made

Sec. 8. When a balk is made by the pitcher, every player running the bases is entitled to one base without being put out.

A Player Running the Bases

Sec. 9. The striker shall be considered a player running the bases as soon as he has struck a fair ball.

Balked and Called Balls are Dead

Sec. 10. Any ball delivered by the pitcher on which a balk or a ball has been called, shall be considered dead and not in the play until it has been settled in the hands of the pitcher, while he stands within the line of his position; and no such ball, if hit shall put the striker out.

Foul and Fair Balls

Sec. 11. If the ball, from the stroke of the bat, first touches the ground, the person of a player or any other object, behind the range of home and the first base, or home and the third base, it shall be termed foul, and must be so declared by the umpire, unasked. If the ball first touches the ground, the person of a player or any other object either upon, or in front of the range of those bases, it shall be considered fair.

Making the Home Base

Sec. 12. A player making the home base shall be entitled to score one run.

Balls Struck at and Missed

Sec. 13. If three balls are struck at, and missed, and the last one is not caught, either flying or upon the first bound, it shall be considered fair, and the striker must attempt to make his run.

A Foul Ball Caught puts the Striker Out

Sec. 14. The striker is out if a foul ball is caught, either before touching the ground or upon the first bound.

Striking Out

Sec. 15. Or, if three balls are struck at and missed, and the last is caught, either before touching the ground, or upon the first bound, provided the balls struck at are not those on which balls or balks have been called, or not those struck at for purpose of willfully striking out.

A Fair Ball on the Fly

Sec. 16. Or, if a fair ball is struck, and the ball is caught without having touched the, ground.

Ball Held, by Adversary

Sec. 17. Or, if a fair ball is struck, and the ball is held by an adversary on first base, before the striker touches that base.

Players touched by the Ball while Running

Sec. 18. Any player running the bases is out if at any time he is touched by the ball while in play in the hands of an adversary, without some part of his person being on the base.

No Base can be made on a Foul Ball

Sec. 19. No run or base can be made upon a foul ball; such a ball shall be considered dead, and not in play until it shall first have been settled in the hands of the pitcher. In such cases players running bases shall return to them, and may be, put out in so returning in the same manner as when running to the first base.

Running Bases

Sec. 20. No run or base can be made when a fair ball has been caught without having touched the ground, such a ball shall be considered alive and in play. In such cases players running bases shall return to them, and may be put out in so returning, in the same manner as the striker when running to first base; but players, when balls are so caught, may run their bases immediately after the ball has been settled in the hands of the player catching it.

Sec. 21. The striker, when in the act of striking, shall not step forward or backward, but must stand on a line drawn through the center of the home base, not exceeding in length three feet from either side thereof, and parallel with the line occupied by the pitcher. He shall be considered the striker until he has struck a fair ball. Players must strike in regular rotation, and, after the first innings is played, the turn commences with the, player who stands on the list next to the one who lost the third hand.

Vacating Bases—Putting Players Out

Sec. 22. Players must make their bases in the order of striking; and when a fair ball is struck, and not caught flying, the first base must be vacated, as also the second and third bases, if they are occupied at the same time. Players may be put out on any base, under these circumstances, in the same manner as when running to the first base.

Bases must be Touched—Order of Bases

Sec. 23. Players running bases must touch them; and, so far as possible, keep upon the direct line between them ; and must touch them in the following order first, second, third and home; and if returning must reverse this order; and should any player run three feet out of this line for the purpose of avoiding the ball in the hands of an adversary, he shall be declared out.

Preventing a Player Catching a Ball

Sec. 24. Any player, who shall intentionally prevent an adversary from catching or fielding the ball, shall be declared out.

Unfair Base Play

Sec. 25. If the player is prevented from making a base, by the intentional obstruction of an adversary, he shall be entitled to that base, and not be put out.

Stopping the Ball--Non-Players

Sec. 26. If an adversary stops the ball with his hat or cap, or if a ball be stopped by any person not engaged in the game, or if it be taken from the hands of any anyone not engaged in the game, no player can be put out unless the ball shall first have been settled in the hands of the pitcher when he is standing within the lines of his position.

Striker Out

Sec. 27. If a ball, from the stroke of a bat, is held under any other circumstances than as enumerated in Section 26, and without having touched the ground the striker is out.

Running Home after the Striker in Out

Sec. 28. If two hands are already out, no player running home at the time the ball is struck can make a run to count in the score of the game if the striker is put out by a fair catch, by being touched between home and the first base, or by the ball being held by an adversary at the first base; before the striker reaches it.

Innings Concluded when Third Hand in Out

Sec. 29. An Inning must be concluded at the time the third hand is put out.

What Concludes the Game

Sec. 30. The game shall consist of nine innings to each side, when should the number of runs be equal, the play shall be continued until a majority of runs, upon an equal number of innings, shall be declared, which shall conclude the game.

Regulations of Matches

Sec. 31. In playing all matches, nine players from each club shall constitute a full field, and they must have been regular members of the club which they represent and of no other club, either in or out of the National Association, for thirty days immediately prior to the match. Position of players and choice of innings shall be determined by captains, previously appointed for that purpose by the respective clubs.

Sec. 32. The umpire shall take care that the regulations respecting the balls, bats, bases, and the pitcher's and striker's position are strictly observed. He shall be the judge of fair and unfair play, and shall determine all disputes and differences which may occur during the game.

He shall take special care to declare all foul balls, balks, strikes and balls immediately upon their occurrence, and when a player is put out, in what position and manner, unasked, and in a distinct and audible manner. He shall, in every instance, before leaving the ground, declare the winning club, and shall record his decision in the book of the scorers.

Selection of Umpire and Scorers

Sec. 33. In all matches the umpire shall be selected by the captains of the respective sides, and shall perform all the duties enumerated in Section 32, except recording the game, which shall be done by two scorers, one of whom shall be appointed by each of the contending clubs.

Bets by Umpires and Players Illegal

Sec. 34. No person engaged in a match, either as umpire, scorer or player, shall be either directly or indirectly interested in any bet upon the game. Neither umpire, scorer or player shall he changed

during the match, unless with the consent of both parties, except for reason of illness or injury or for a violation of this law, and then the umpire may dismiss any transgressor.

When Play Shall be Suspended

Sec. 35. The umpire in any match shall determine when play shall be suspended; and if the game cannot be concluded, it shall be decided by the last even innings, provided five innings have been played; and the party having the greatest number of runs shall be declared the winner.

Balls Knocked Beyond Bounds

Sec. 36. Clubs may adopt such rules respecting balls knocked beyond or outside the bounds of the field, as the circumstances of the ground may demand; and these rules shall govern all matches played upon the ground, provided that they are distinctly made known to every player and the umpire previous to the commencement of the game.

Communicating with the Umpire

Sec. 37. No person shall be permitted to approach or to speak with the umpire, scorers, or players, or in any manner to interrupt or interfere during the progress of the game, unless by special request of the umpire.

Umpires and Scorers to be Members of a Club

Sec. 38. No person shall be permitted to act as umpire or scorer in any match unless he shall be a member of a Base Ball Club governed by these rules.

Play to be Called at the Time Appointed

Sec. 39. Whenever a match shall have been determined upon between two clubs, play shall be called at the exact hour appointed; and should either party fail to produce their players within thirty minutes thereafter, the party so failing shall admit a defeat, and shall deliver the ball before leaving the ground, which ball must be received by the club who are ready to play, and the game shall be considered as won, and so counted in the list of matches played and the winning club shall be entitled to a score of nine runs for any game so forfeited, unless the delinquent side fails to play on account of a recent death of one of its members, and sufficient time has not elapsed to enable them to give their opponents due notice before arriving on the ground.

Games Considered Null and Void

Sec. 40. Any match game played by any club in contravention of the rules adopted by this Association, shall be considered null and void, and shall not be counted in the list of match games won or lost, except a game be delayed by rain beyond the time appointed to commence the same. Any match game can be put off by mutual consent of the parties about engaging in the game. No match game shall be commenced in the rain.

What Professional Players Are

Sec. 41. No person who shall be in arrears to any other club, or shall at any time receive compensation for his services as a player, shall be competent to play in any match. All players who play base ball for place, emolument, or money, shall be regarded as professional players; and no professional player shall take part in any match game; and any club giving any compensation to a player, or having to their knowledge a player in their nine playing in a match for compensation, shall be debarred from membership in the National Association, and they shall not be considered by any

club belonging to this Association as a proper club to engage in a match with, and should any club so engage with them they shall forfeit membership.

Failure of the Striker to Strike

Sec. 42. Should the striker stand at the bat, without striking at good balls repeatedly pitched to him, for the apparent purpose of delaying the game, or of giving advantage to a player, the umpire, after warning him, shall call one strike, and if he persists in such action, two and three strikes; when three strikes are called, he shall be subject to the same rules as if he had stuck at three fair balls.

What Decides a Match

Sec. 43. Every match hereafter made shall be decided by the best two games out of three, unless a single game shall be mutually agreed upon by the contesting clubs.

