



▼ VBBA member resources and business pages

Education & Interpretation Committee

Vintage Base Ball Association

BACK TO THE SOURCE: *19th century base-ball texts and guides.*

Wilkes' Spirit of the Times.

June 29, 1867, page 328, col. 1.

} THE NEW RULES.—The official organ of the National Association published the rule as ordered to be changed by President Gorman. The following is the copy of the order sent to all clubs:

“NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BASE-BALL PLAYERS,
WASHINGTON, JUNE 17, 1867,

“SIR : My attention has been called by Dr. J. B. Jones, Chairman of the Committee of Rules of the National Association, to an error in the printed rules for 1867.

“An examination of the original minutes of the Association satisfies me that such is the fact, and I therefore deem it my duty to inform you, and through you your club, that the correct reading of the rule in question is as follows:

“ ‘SEC. 10: If a batsman strikes a ball on which the ball has been called, no player can make a base on such a strike, nor can any player make a base if the batsman strikes a ball on which two balls have been called, nor if he strikes a ball on which three balls have been called can more than one base can be made by each player occupying bases ; in the latter event the batsman shall also be entitled to one base. If he strikes a ball on which a baulk has been called, sections eight and nine of the rules shall apply. In either case the ball shall be considered dead and not in play until settled in the hands of the pitcher ; in neither case shall it be considered a strike ; and if a batsman wilfully [sic] strikes at a ball out of the fair reach of the bat, for the purpose of striking out, it shall not be considered a

strike.’

“On and after receipt of this communication all play in which your club is concerned will be governed accordingly.

“Very respectfully ARTHUR P. GORMAN, President, N. A. B. B. P.

“To the corresponding secretary of the _____ B. B. Club,
_____.”

This rule goes into effect from the date of its appearance in the *Chronicle*, June 20th.

Wilkes’ Spirit of the Times.

June 29, 1867, page 328, col. 2.

THE NEW READING OF SECTION 10 OF THE RULES.—There never has been so many confused notions in regard to a correct interpretation of the amendments made to the rules each year by the annual Convention, as there has this season ; and yet, with the exception of the error occasioned by the marginal mistake in the report of the Chairman of the Committee of Rules, which led to the mistake made by the Printing Committee, which the President of the Association has lately ordered to be corrected, there has never been a series of amendments made to the rules more necessary or less difficult of interpretation.

For years to come, each season must necessarily see such amendments made. In the first place, it is requisite that the rules shall be as brief as a plain reading of them will admit of. Secondly, they should be classified into sections governing different departments of the game, such as base play, fielding, batting, and pitching. At present it requires considerable study to get at the true definition of some of the rules, and nearly all still have loop holes for conflicting interpretations.

Rule 10 is an instance of the blundering of a disorganized Convention, in which talkative youths and partizan delegates had the most to say. The rule, as recommended by the Committee, was simply one making called and baulked balls, dead balls when hit by the batsman ; and yet, because the framers of the law, in the noise and confusion of the Convention, could not have an opportunity to explain their meaning, but one-half of the law was adopted, and through an error in the marginal mark, the wrong half was marked as

adopted. This error has been partly remedied by the replacement of the first part of Rule 10 by the second portion, the latter being simply a rather lengthy definition of what the object of the rule was, viz, to make baulked or called balls dead if hit or struck at unfairly. We contend that there is no rule in the book of the Convention, expressly prohibiting running of bases on dead balls, as such, custom alone governing this point, and this defect ought to be remedied at the next Convention.

Rule 10, as it now stands, refers to *hitting* a called or baulked ball ; so that if a player is on a base and one or two balls be called, such player has a perfect right to run, but is liable to be put out by a ball thrown to the batsman by any field, *without* the ball first going to the pitcher, provided the called ball is not hit. In fact, the play is just the same as last year, except in the case of hit called balls.