

OFFICIAL BASEBALL RULES

2023 Edition



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Official Baseball Rules
2023 Edition

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FOREWORD

This code of rules governs the playing of baseball games by professional teams of 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.

We recognize that many amateur and non-professional organizations play their games under professional rules and we are happy to make our rules available as widely as possible. It is well to remember that specifications as to fields, equipment, etc., may be modified to meet the needs of each group.

Money fines, long-term suspensions and similar penalties imposed by this code are not practicable for amateur groups, but officers and umpires of such organizations should insist on strict observance of all the rules governing the playing of the game.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- (1) The Playing Rules Committee, at its December 2014 meeting, voted to reorganize and recodify the Official Baseball Rules into a more logical and organized manner. No wording or language was changed (other than the amendments made for that year); only the order and placement of the rules were modified. In this edition Comments to the Official Rules are highlighted in a shaded box rather than being printed in smaller typeface as had been the case prior to 2015.
- (2) The Playing Rules Committee, at its December 1977 meeting, voted to incorporate the Notes/Case Book/Comments section directly into the Official Baseball Rules at the appropriate places. Basically, the Case Book interprets or elaborates on the basic rules and in essence have the same effect as rules when applied to particular sections for which they are intended.

This arrangement is designed to give quicker access to any written language pertaining to an Official Rule and does not require a reader to refer to different sections of the Official Baseball Rules book in considering the application of a particular rule.

Case Book material in this edition are in shaded boxes and are labeled as “Comment.”

Summary of Rule Changes for 2023

- 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.