

BASEBALL PART 2 – BASE BALL RULES OF 1860, CUSTOMS & A POEM

It was noted that the old rules of base ball were quite different than today's rules, but many of the Customs remained the same. These Rules and Customs came from the Rules and Regulations of the Game of Base Ball Adopted by the National Association of Base-Ball Players March 14, 1860:

The ball is pitched underhanded from anywhere behind the pitcher's line.

The batsman must stand on or straddle a line through home plate.

The pitcher must deliver the ball as requested by the batsman, who holds out the bat to indicate where the ball is to be sent.

Pitches are not judged as balls or strikes, but the umpire may call a strike if the batsman persists in not swinging at well-pitched balls.

The ball is judged fair or foul according to where it first touches the ground (people, structures, and trees don't count as the ground).

Articles of clothing such as a hat or mittens may not be used to catch a ball.

An out is declared if:

A hit ball is caught on the fly or the first bound, including foul ticks to the catcher.

A batsman misses swinging at three pitched balls and the third strike is caught by the catcher on the fly or first bound. If the catcher misses the pitch, the umpire will declare the ball to be fair and the batsman must make his run to first base.

A ball arrives in the hands of a baseman whose foot is upon the base prior to a base runner who is required to make that base.

A ball in the hands of an adversary touches a base runner not safely on his base.

A base runner does not return to his original base before a caught fly ball reaches the same base.

A base runner overruns any base and is touched by the ball in the hands of an adversary.

A base runner may not advance on any foul ball and must return to his original base. He may be tagged out if not there after the ball has been settled in the hands of the pitcher.

A base runner may advance at his own risk on a fair ball caught on the bound.

A base runner may advance after a fair fly ball is caught provided he has tagged his most recent base after the ball is in the hands of the fielder.

A base runner must run for the next base if the ball is hit, and the force remains on even if an out is made behind the advancing runner.

CUSTOMS OF THE GAME

There were also customs governing the game and according to the various reports, these Rules and Customs were faithfully observed by the Islanders:

Uncivil language, ungentlemanly behavior, spitting, or any actions that would offend a lady are not tolerated on pain of a fine of up to a week's wages.

After scoring an ace, a base runner must report to the tally keeper for the run to count.

Infielders should play several steps in front of their base. The shortstop plays inside the baseline but may play on either side of the second base. Outfielders play in the center of their field, shaded neither to left nor right; they may play in or out as required by a batsman's ability.

The first batsman called to the line in the following inning is the person in the striking order after the player who made the last out, even if the last out was made by an advancing base runner.

There is no bunting or sliding.

The fans cheer teams on with loud "huzzas" for a good play by either side. Running to first would be urged by, "Leg it, leg it, leg it." Hand shakes from opponents and a good word are earned by a ballist making an exceptional play.

A fine repast and sharing of good fellowship, cigars, and fine liquors follow a match.

BASE BALL: DESCRIBED BY A POET - February 1871

"On Saturday Eve the sun was low – And on the ground but little snow;

The boys from home and school did go – To have a game of Base Ball.

The school dismissed, away they flew – To meet the yet unvanquished crew;

N'or heeded they how hard it blew – Resolved were they on Base Ball.

The ball and bat were then displayed – As all the boys a promise made;

And each and all resolved to aid – To win the game of Base Ball.

There were 'Dan' and 'Raz' and 'Jim' and 'Jac' – and 'Colonel' at third base to take

The flies, so runners couldn't make – their tally, playing Base Ball.

And 'Titus' at the first base bold – Blowing his fingers that were cold;

So when the ball came he could hold – it and win the game of Base Ball

With 'Pete' and 'Lew' and 'Pete' again – And 'Ned' and 'Will' besides, and then

The Master, one of the tallest men - were all there playing Base Ball.

The Umpire shivering in the breeze - with score sheet resting on his knees,

To look at him would make you sneeze - as he watched the game of Base Ball.

The girls all wrapped in warmest clothes - were there to see, though almost froze;
Determined if they freeze a nose - they'd watch this game of Base Ball.
Well! After the game was through - of 20 to the 42;
In favor of the school boys crew - And so they won at Base Ball
MORAL: The boys all go to school each day - where we are well aware that they;
If Nothing Else have learned to play - the noble game of Base Ball.
So we who have the bills to pay - for readin, 'ritin, and Algebra;
Are glad our money isn't all thrown away - For the boys are learning Base Ball."