

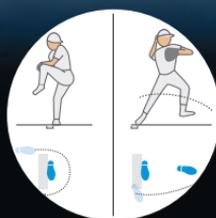
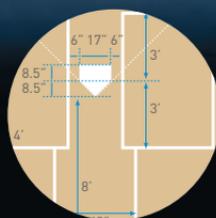
REVISED & UPDATED THIRD EDITION

"Splendidly clear and concise." — *Boston Globe*

BASEBALL

FIELD GUIDE

An In-Depth Illustrated Guide to the Complete Rules of Baseball



LEARN ABOUT: Every inch of the baseball (from the core to the stitches!)

- The roles of umpire, manager, coach, and spectator
- All-new rules on legal slides, interference, and intentional walks
- And more!

Dan Formosa & Paul Hamburger

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Third Edition

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BASEBALL FIELD GUIDE: *An In-Depth Illustrated Guide to
the Complete Rules of Baseball*—Third Edition

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1. Basic Rules of Baseball

This chapter provides preliminary insight into the rules of the game. The first two pages show the basic rules at a glance. Subsequent pages go a bit further — but not much. This chapter is intended to get new fans started.

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2. Teams and Leagues

Major League Baseball oversees two leagues — the American League and the National League. This chapter discusses how teams play their games throughout the regular season, the postseason championships, and the World Series.

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A number of things need to happen before the first pitch is thrown, including checking the baseballs and exchanging batting orders at home plate.

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4. Equipment

Baseball equipment is strictly regulated. This chapter discusses the official specifications for balls, bats, gloves, and other equipment.

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5. Field Specifications

This chapter shows the specifications of the infield, the pitcher's mound, and the entire field. It also highlights differences in the sizes and shapes of Major League fields.

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6. Pitching

The rules strictly specify the movements a pitcher is and is not allowed to make when throwing the ball from the pitcher's mound. This chapter covers a wide range of topics, such as balks, ball tampering (it's frowned upon), and visits to the pitcher's mound by a coach or manager.

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This chapter covers the rules concerning the batter, from the time he steps up to the plate, to the point when his turn at bat ends with a hit or an out. Included is a detailed description of the strike zone, the batter's box, and a list of every way a batter can get on base or be put out.

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Many things can happen as a runner makes his way around the bases. This chapter is about the complicated rules concerning base running. It includes topics such as force plays, obstruction, missing a base, and many others.

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9. Fielding

This chapter discusses the ways a fielder can put out a batter or a runner. It also discusses violations of rules by fielders that can have the opposite effect — runners can be awarded bases.

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When a member of the offensive team, an umpire, or a spectator gets in the way of a fielder, it's interference. When a fielder gets in the way of a runner, it's obstruction. Sometimes it's serious. Other times, it's nothing.

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11. Umpires

As the official representatives of Major League Baseball, umpires do more than uphold the rules. They uphold the dignity of the sport. Umpires have tasks to perform before, during, and after the game. Their responsibilities range from preparing the baseballs to ejecting players after a brawl.

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A team will have one manager and many coaches. The manager represents the team when dealing with umpires. First and third base coaches are required to be on the field during the game.

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This chapter explains what the rules say about various types of misconduct. Each umpire will interpret the rules differently and will determine, individually, when someone has crossed into an area of unsportsmanlike conduct.

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14. Spectators

A handful of rules in Major League Baseball pertain to spectators. They are discussed here, and include two points that have caused havoc in past games: 1) fielders are allowed to jump or reach into the stands to catch a ball, and 2) spectators are under no obligation to get out of their way.

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15. Suspended and Terminated Games

An umpire's goal is to see that a game is completed. Sometimes this is not possible. This chapter discusses the effect of weather delays and the rules in place for suspending play, resuming play, and terminating a game. In the process, the rules define what exactly constitutes a "regulation" baseball game.

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16. The Official Scorer

An official scorer is required at every game. The scorer is responsible for recording virtually everything that happens on the field. The scorer's report is entered into the permanent record books of Major League Baseball.

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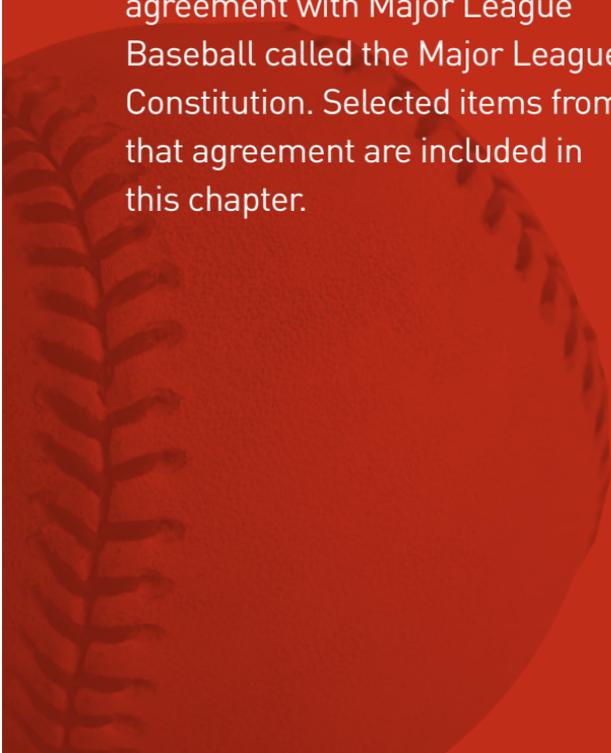
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2 | Teams and Leagues

Major League Baseball oversees two leagues — the American League and the National League. This chapter discusses how teams play their many games throughout the regular season, and goes into the Wild Card Games, Division Championships, League Championships, and the World Series.

The leagues abide by an agreement with Major League Baseball called the Major League Constitution. Selected items from that agreement are included in this chapter.





Teams and Leagues: contents

Teams and Leagues: Basics

Major League Baseball consists of two leagues: the American League and the National League. The leagues play under an agreement called the Major League Constitution.

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The Regular Season

The regular season lasts six months, beginning late March or early April, and ending early October.

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The All-Star Game

A midseason All-Star Game is played between the American League and the National League, with players chosen from each Major League Baseball team.

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Postseason Championships

In each league, the teams with the most wins in each of the three divisions advance to the playoffs, along with the winner of a Wild Card Game. Those four teams enter the Division Series, two advance to the League Championships (the "Pennant"), and one team from each league advances to play in the World Series.

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Teams and Leagues: Basics

Overview: Major League Baseball is the organization that controls the two professional baseball leagues in North America — the American League and the National League. The two leagues encompass thirty teams — fifteen in each. Both leagues divide their teams into three divisions: East, Central, and West.

Established in 1876, the National League predates the American League by twenty-four years. At its founding it included eight teams. The American League also consisted of eight teams when it was established in 1900. Major League Baseball brought the two leagues together in 1920.

The American League

East

Baltimore Orioles
Boston Red Sox
New York Yankees
Tampa Bay Rays
Toronto Blue Jays

Central

Chicago White Sox
Cleveland Indians
Detroit Tigers
Kansas City Royals
Minnesota Twins

West

Houston Astros
Los Angeles Angels
Oakland Athletics
Seattle Mariners
Texas Rangers

The National League

East

Atlanta Braves
Miami Marlins
New York Mets
Philadelphia Phillies
Washington Nationals

Central

Chicago Cubs
Cincinnati Reds
Milwaukee Brewers
Pittsburgh Pirates
St. Louis Cardinals

West

Arizona Diamondbacks
Colorado Rockies
Los Angeles Dodgers
San Diego Padres
San Francisco Giants

Basics

The Major League Constitution

Major League Baseball's agreement with the two leagues is called the Major League Constitution. This agreement covers topics ranging from the

number of games played, to minimum salaries for players, to treatment programs and penalties for the use of steroids and other drugs.

Many of the items discussed in this chapter come from the Major League Constitution, not the Official Baseball Rules.

The team's roster

Major League Baseball requires that each team maintain an active roster that includes a minimum of twenty-four and a maximum of twenty-five players from opening day through August 31. If that number drops below twenty-four, due to unforeseen events, the team is required to bring that number back up to twenty-four within forty-eight hours.



The Regular Season

Overview: Baseball starts the year with spring training and preseason games. The regular season runs from late March or early April to October. Postseason championship games take place in October: the Wild Card Games, the Division Series, the League Championships (the “Pennant”), and the World Series. The regular season is discussed here.

162 games

The “regular season” (also called the championship season) is Major League Baseball’s term for the games that lead to the Wild Card Games and the Division Series Championships in October. During the regular season each team plays 162 games. The season lasts from 178 to 183 days — up to half of a year. Opening day typically takes place in early April. The final game of the regular

season takes place in early October, when the postseason playoff games begin.

As an effort to spur interest in baseball worldwide, since 1996 some regular season games have been scheduled to take place outside the United States and Canada. Venues have included Puerto Rico, Mexico, and Japan. When an opening-day game is scheduled as an “international opener,”

in Japan for instance, the opening game may be scheduled earlier in the season — possibly in late March. When this is the case, the 183-day limit may be extended.

2,430 games

An incredible number of games take place in the regular season. Each of the thirty Major League teams plays 162 games, not including preseason or postseason games, or the All-Star Game.

162 games played by 30 teams = 2,430 games in the regular season

Games between American League and National League teams

Historically, American and National League teams would not face each other until the World Series championship at the end of the season, when the pennant-winning teams from each of the leagues

vie for the World Series title. That changed in 1997, when games in the regular season were scheduled between teams from the two leagues. Of 162 games scheduled for

each team in the regular season, up to 20 may be interleague games. When an interleague game takes place, the rules of the home team’s league will be followed.

Spring training and preseason games

Baseball activities begin in February and March with the start of spring training. Preseason exhibition games take place throughout March and lead right up to opening day.

The All-Star Game

Overview: The All-Star Game is an exhibition game played in the middle of the regular season. The American League plays the National League, with players chosen from every team.

The American League vs. The National League

At approximately midseason, sometime in mid-July, Major League Baseball stages the All-Star Game. This is an exhibition game between American League and National League teams composed of players selected by fans. Starting players

are selected by vote. At least one player from each team will be included in the game.

The “fan vote” process, of course, raises the question as to whether the selected players are the best in baseball, or simply the most popular.

Postseason Championships

Overview: Three postseason playoffs take place prior to the World Series: the Wild Card Games, the Division Series, and the League Championship Series (the “Pennant”).

Postseason | Wild Card Games

A single game determines the Wild Card team.

In each league, after choosing the highest-ranking team in each of the three divisions, a fourth and fifth team still have a shot. From the remaining twelve teams, the two with the highest win-loss records participate in a single Wild Card Game. One will advance. Overall this means ten teams enter the playoffs each year, five in each league.

Postseason | Division Series

Three winning teams, and the Wild Card

Each Division Series is a best-of-five-game event. It puts a league’s three division-winning teams in competition. A fourth Wild Card team also joins in.

Four teams will enter the Division Series

Within each league the four teams pair off to compete in two separate Division Series. The Wild Card team pairs with the team having the highest win-loss record.

Two teams will advance in each league

The two winning teams will advance to play each other for their League Championship.

Note: The win-loss percentage is simply the number of games won divided by the total number of games played (the total number of games played is 162 at the end of the regular season). If two teams are tied at the end of the regular season, a 163rd game will be scheduled to break the tie.



Division Series: The selection process is the same for the American and the National leagues. Using the National League as an example, here are the win-loss standings for the leading teams in each of the three geographic divisions at the end of the regular season. All three will participate. Of the remaining twelve teams, the two with the highest win-loss records hold a single Wild Card Game. That game will determine the fourth team to enter the Division Series.

National League		Wins	Losses	Win-Loss Percentage
Highest-ranking teams, one chosen from each division				
East	New York Mets	90	72	.556
Central	St. Louis Cardinals	100	62	.617
West	Los Angeles Dodgers	92	70	.568
A fourth and fifth team participate in a Wild Card Game				
	Pittsburgh Pirates	98	64	.605
	Chicago Cubs	97	65	.599

Example: The New York Mets, St. Louis Cardinals, and Los Angeles Dodgers ended the regular season with the best records in their divisions, so they will play in the Division Series. Of the remaining twelve teams, the Pittsburgh Pirates and Chicago Cubs have the highest win-loss records. Pittsburgh, with the higher win-loss percentage, will host the Wild Card Game. That winner will advance.

Home-field advantage

Since the Division Series is a best-of-five-game set, the series ends as soon as one team wins three games. Games

one, two, and five will be scheduled to take place at the home of the team with the highest win-loss percentage, giving that team the home-field advantage. However, a

team that entered the playoffs as a Wild Card team will not be awarded home-field advantage, regardless of their regular season win-loss record.

Postseason

League Championship Series (Pennant)

Each league next holds a League Championship Series (the "Pennant"), to be played by the two winning teams from the Division Series. This is a best-of-seven-game series. Games one, two,

six, and seven will take place at the home of the team with the highest win-loss percentage in the regular season. However, a team that entered the playoffs as a Wild Card team will not be awarded

home-field advantage, regardless of their regular season win-loss record.

In each League Championship Series, the first team to win four games will win the pennant.

Postseason

The World Series

The World Series places the winners of the American League Championship Series and the National League Championship Series in competition. It's a best-of-seven-game series — the team winning four games takes the title.

The home-field advantage for the World Series goes to the team with the better win-loss record in the regular season, regardless of whether they entered the playoffs as a Wild Card team. That team will host games one, two, six, and seven.

In addition to the notoriety of becoming World Series champions, the winning team receives a World Series trophy (called the "Commissioner's Trophy") and its players receive World Series rings.

Postseason

Steps to the World Series: Example

The Regular Season**Best of 162 games**

In the regular season, each team plays 162 games, vying for a place in their league's Division Series.

The Wild Card Games**One-game playoff**

Within each league, the team with the highest win-loss percentage in each of the three divisions will advance. Of the remaining twelve teams, the two with the highest win-loss percentages will compete

in a Wild Card Game to become the fourth team.

The Division Series**Best of five games**

Within each league, the four teams will pair off, creating two different Division Series. A team needs to win three out of five games.

The League Championship**Best of seven games**

Also known as "the Pennant," the two winning

teams from the Division Series will play each other. A team needs to win four out of seven games.

The World Series**Best of seven games**

The team that wins the National League pennant will play the American League's pennant winner in the World Series. Four out of seven World Series games must be won to become the World Series champions.

Example: This diagram shows steps to the World Series, using the National League as an example. The American League's process is identical.

The National League