



PLAYING RULES.

RULE I.—THE MATERIALS OF THE GAME.

SECTION 1. The ball must weigh not less than five, nor more than five and one-quarter ounces, avoirdupois. It must measure not less than nine, nor more than nine and one-quarter inches in circumference. It must be composed of woollen yarn, and shall not contain more than one ounce of vulcanized rubber in mould form, and shall be covered with leather. The ball.

SEC. 2. In all games the ball or balls played with shall be furnished by the home club, and shall become the property of the winning club. Furnishing the ball.

SEC. 3. No ball shall be played with in any regular match game, unless it is of the regulation size, weight, and materials, and also have the name of its maker and the figures indicating its weight and circumference plainly stamped on its cover. Should any ball used in a regular match game prove, on examination by the umpire, to be illegal in size, weight or materials, balls of the same manufacture shall not be used thereafter in regular match games. A legal ball.

SEC. 4. When the ball becomes out of shape, or cut or ripped so as to expose the yarn, or in any way so injured as to be unfit for fair use, a new ball shall be called for by the umpire at the end of an even innings, at the request of Changing the ball.

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either captain. Should the ball be lost during a game, the umpire shall, at the expiration of five minutes, call for a new ball.

The bat. SEC. 5. The bat must be round, and must not exceed two and one-half inches in diameter in the thickest part. It must be made wholly of wood, and shall not exceed forty-two inches in length.

The bases. SEC. 6. The bases must be four in number, and they must be placed and securely fastened upon each corner of a square the sides of which are respectively thirty yards. The bases must be so constructed and placed 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 shall be of white marble or stone, so fixed in the ground as to be even with the surface, and with one corner facing the pitcher's position, said corner touching the intersection of the foul lines.

Position of the bases. SEC. 7. 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. In all match games lines connecting the home and first bases, and the home and third bases, and also the lines of the striker's and pitcher's positions, shall be marked by the use of chalk or other suitable material, so as to be distinctly seen by the umpire. The line of the home base shall extend four feet on each side of the base, and shall be drawn through its centre and par-

OF PROFESSIONAL BASE BALL CLUBS.

allel with a line extending from first to third base.

RULE II.—THE GAME.

SECTION 1. The game shall consist of nine The innings. innings to each side, but should the score then be a tie, play shall be continued until a majority of runs for one side, upon an equal number of innings, shall be declared, when the game shall end. All innings shall be concluded when the third hand is put out.

SEC. 2. Positions of players and choice of Positions of players. first innings shall be determined by the two captains. The fielders of each club shall take any position in the field their captain may assign them, with the exception of pitcher, who must deliver the ball from his appointed position.

SEC. 3. No player taking part in a game shall Substitutes. be replaced by another after the commencement of the fourth innings, except as provided in Section 14 of Rule VI.

SEC. 4. No game shall be considered as Five innings necessary. played unless five innings on each side shall be completed. Should darkness or rain intervene before the third hand is put out in the closing part of the fifth innings of a game, the umpire shall declare "No game."

SEC. 5. Whenever a game of five or more Drawn games. innings is stopped by rain or darkness, and the score at the time is equal on the even innings played, the game shall be declared drawn, but, under no other circumstances, shall a drawn game be declared.

SEC. 6. Should rain commence to fall during Rain. the progress of a match game, the umpire must note the time it began, and should it continue for five minutes, he shall, at the request of either

captain, suspend play. Such suspended game shall not be resumed until, in the opinion of the umpire, the ground is in fit condition for fair fielding.

**Calling play and time.** SEC. 7. When the umpire calls "play," the game must at once be proceeded with. Should either party fail to take their appointed positions in the game, or to commence play as requested, the umpire shall, at the expiration of five minutes, declare the game forfeited by the nine that refuses to play. When the umpire calls "time," play shall be suspended until he call "play" again, and during the interim no player shall be put out, base be run or run be scored.

**Suspending play.** SEC. 8. The umpire, in any match game, shall determine when play shall be suspended, and, if the game cannot be fairly concluded, it shall be decided by the score of the last equal innings played, unless one nine shall have completed their innings, and the other nine shall have equalled or exceeded the score of their opponents in their incompleting innings, in which case the game shall be decided by the total score obtained, which score shall be recorded as the score of the game.

**Ending a game.** SEC. 9. When the umpire calls a game it shall end, but when he merely suspends play for any stated period, it may be resumed at the point at which it was suspended; provided such suspension does not extend beyond the day of the match.

### RULE III.—THE PLAYERS.

**Regular match.** SECTION 1. Every player taking part in a regular match game, no matter what number of innings be played, shall be considered a

member of the club with which he plays. All matches shall be considered regular in the meaning of this rule in which nines of two contesting clubs of this League take part.

**Betting prohibited.** SEC. 2. Any player who shall, in any way, be interested in any bet or wager on the game in which he takes part, either as umpire, player, or scorer, or who shall purchase or have purchased for him any "pool" or chance—sold or given away—on the game he plays in, shall be dishonorably expelled, both from the club of which he is a member and from the League.

A player who shall be similarly interested in any regular match game between two clubs of the League, shall be suspended from legal service as a member for the season during which he shall have violated this rule.

### RULE IV.—PITCHING.

**The pitcher's position.** SECTION 1. The pitcher's position shall be within a space of ground six feet square, the front line of which shall be distant forty-five feet from the centre of the home base, and the centre of the square shall be equidistant from the first and the third bases. Each corner of the square shall be marked by a flat iron plate or stone six inches square fixed in the ground even with the surface.

**Delivering the ball.** SEC. 2. The player who delivers the ball to the bat must do so while within the lines of the pitcher's position. He must remain within them until the ball has left his hand, and he shall not make any motion to deliver the ball to the bat while any part of his person is outside the lines of the pitcher's position. The ball must be delivered to the bat with the arm

swinging nearly perpendicular at the side of the body, and the hand in swinging forward must pass below the hip.

**A foul delivery.** SEC. 3. Should the pitcher deliver the ball by an overhand throw, a "foul balk" shall be declared. Any outward swing of the arm, or any other swing save that of the perpendicular movement referred to in Section 2 of this rule, shall be considered an overhand throw.

**Foul balk.** SEC. 4. When a "foul balk" is called, the umpire shall warn the pitcher of the penalty incurred by such unfair delivery, and should such delivery be continued until *three foul balks* have been called in one innings, the umpire shall declare the game forfeited.

**Balking.** SEC. 5. Should the pitcher make any motion to deliver the ball to the bat and fail so to deliver it—except the ball be accidentally dropped—or should he unnecessarily delay the game by not delivering the ball to the bat, or should he, when in the act of delivering the ball, have any part of his person outside the lines of his position, the umpire shall call a "balk," and players occupying the bases shall take one base each.

**Good balls.** SEC. 6. Every ball fairly delivered and sent in to the bat over the home base and at the height called for by the batsman, shall be considered a good ball.

**Called balls.** SEC. 7. All balls delivered to the bat which are not sent in over the home base and at the height called for by the batsman, shall be considered unfair balls, and every third ball so delivered must be called. When "three balls" have been called, the striker shall take first base, and all players who are thereby forced to leave a base shall take one base. No "ball"

shall be called until the ball has passed the home base.

**Hitting at called balls.** SEC. 8. Should the batsman strike at a ball on which a "ball" has been called, such call shall be considered void, and the ball be regarded as fairly delivered.

**Dead balls.** SEC. 9. All balls delivered to the bat which shall touch the striker's bat without being struck at, or his (the batsman's) person while standing in his position, or which shall hit the person of the umpire—unless it be a passed ball—shall be considered *dead* balls and shall be so called by the umpire, and no players shall be put out, base be run, or run be scored on any such ball.

### RULE V.—BATTING DEPARTMENT.

**The batsman's position.** SECTION 1. The batsman's or striker's position shall be within a space of ground located on either side of the home base, six feet long by three feet wide, extending two feet in front of and four feet behind the line of the home base, and with its nearest line distant one foot from the home base.

**The order of striking.** SEC. 2. The batsmen must take their positions in the order in which they are named on the score-book. After the first innings, the first striker in each innings shall be the batsman whose name follows that of the third man out in the preceding innings.

**Failing to take position.** SEC. 3. Any batsman failing to take his position at the bat in his order of striking—unless by reason of illness or injury, or by consent of the captains of the contesting nines—shall be declared out, unless the error be discovered before a fair ball has been struck, or the striker put out.

**Refusing to strike.** SEC. 4. Any batsman failing to take his position at the bat within *three minutes* after the umpire has called for the striker, shall be declared out.

**Specifying balls.** SEC. 5. The batsman, on taking his position, must call for either a "*high ball*," a "*low ball*," or a "*fair ball*," and the umpire shall notify the pitcher to deliver the ball as required; such call shall not be changed after the first ball delivered.

**Good balls to the bat.** SEC. 6. A "*high ball*" shall be one sent in above the waist of the batsman but not higher than his shoulder. A "*low ball*" shall be one sent in *not lower* than within *one foot* of the ground, but *not higher* than his waist. A "*fair ball*" shall be one between the range of *shoulder high* and *one foot* from the ground. All the above must be *over the home base*, and when fairly delivered, shall be considered good balls to the bat.

**Calling strikes.** SEC. 7. Should the batsman fail to strike at a "*good ball*," or should he strike and fail to hit the ball, the umpire shall call "*one strike*," and "*two strikes*," should he again fail. When two strikes have been called, should the batsman not strike at the next "*good ball*" the umpire shall warn him by calling "*good ball*." But should he strike at and fail to hit the ball, or should he fail to strike at or to hit the next good ball, "*three strikes*" must be called, and the batsman must run to first base as in the case of hitting a fair ball.

**A fair strike.** SEC. 8. The batsman, when in the act of striking at the ball, must stand within the lines of his position.

**A foul strike.** SEC. 9. Should the batsman step outside the lines of his position when he strikes the ball,

the umpire shall call "*foul strike and out*," and base-runners shall return to the bases they occupied when the ball was hit.

SEC. 10. The foul ball lines shall be unlimited in length, and shall run from the front corner of the home base through the centre of first and third bases to the foul posts, which shall be located at the boundary of the field and within the range of home and first base, and home and third base. Said lines shall be marked, and on the inside, from base to base, with chalk, or some other white substance, so as to be plainly seen by the umpire.

SEC. 11. If the ball from a fair stroke of the bat first touches the ground, the person of a player, or any other object, either in front of, or on the foul ball lines, it shall be considered fair.

SEC. 12. If the ball from a fair stroke of the bat first touches the ground, the person of a player, or any other object behind the foul ball lines, it shall be declared foul, and the ball so hit shall be called foul by the umpire even before touching the ground, if it be seen falling foul.

SEC. 13. Should the batsman strike at or hit any ball on which a "*ball*" has been called, the umpire shall disregard the call of such "*ball*," and render his decision simply on the strike or hit made.

SEC. 14. When the batsman has fairly struck a fair ball, he shall vacate his position, and he shall then be considered a base-runner until he is put out or scores his run.

SEC. 15. The batsman shall be declared out by the umpire as follows:  
If a fair or foul ball be caught before touch-

The foul ball lines.

A fair hit ball.

A foul hit ball.

Hitting called balls.

When batsman become base-runners

How batsmen are put out. On the fly.

ing the ground, provided it be not caught in a player's hat or cap.

**On the bound.** If a foul ball be similarly held, or after touching the ground but once.

**At first base.** If a fair ball be securely held by a fielder while touching first base with any part of his person before the base-runner touches said base.

**On three strikes.** If after three strikes have been called, he fails to touch first base before the ball is legally held there.

If after three strikes have been called, the ball be caught before touching the ground or after touching the ground but once.

**Balking the catcher.** If he wilfully strikes at the ball to hinder the ball from being caught, or makes a "*foul strike*."

**RULE VI.—RUNNING THE BASES.**

**Touching the bases.** SECTION 1. Players running bases must touch each base in regular order, viz.: first, second, third, and home base; and when obliged to return to bases they have occupied they must retouch them in reverse order. No base shall be considered as having been occupied or held until it has been touched.

**Forced off a base.** SEC. 2. No player running the bases shall be forced to vacate the base he occupies unless by the act of the batsman in striking a fair ball. Should the first base be occupied by a base-runner when a fair ball is struck, the base-runner shall cease to be entitled to hold said base until the player running to first base shall be put out. The same rule shall apply in the case of the occupancy of the other bases under similar circumstances. No base-runner shall be forced to vacate the base he occupies if the

base-runner succeeding him is not thus obliged to vacate his base.

SEC. 3. Players forced to vacate their bases may be put out by any fielders in the same manner as when running to first base.

SEC. 4. The player running to first base shall be at liberty to overrun said base without his being put out for being off the base after first touching it, provided that in so overrunning the base he make no attempt to run to second base. In such case he must return at once and retouch first base, and after retouching said base he can be put out as at any other base. If, in so overrunning first base, he also attempts to run to second base, he shall forfeit such exemption from being put out.

SEC. 5. Any player running a base who shall run beyond three feet from the line from base to base in order to avoid being touched by the ball in the hands of a fielder shall be declared out by the umpire with or without appeal.

SEC. 6. One run shall be scored every time a base-runner, after having regularly touched the first three bases, shall touch the home base before three hands are out. If the third hand out is forced out, or is put out before reaching first base, a run shall not be scored.

SEC. 7. When a "*balk*" is called by the umpire, every player running the bases shall take one base without being put out.

SEC. 8. When three "*balls*" have been called by the umpire, the batsman shall take one base without being put out, and should any base-runner be forced thereby to vacate his base, he also shall take one base. Each base-runner thus given a base shall be at liberty to run to other bases besides the base given, but only at the risk of being put out in so running.

How put out when forced.

Overrunning first base.

Running out of the line of bases.

When a run is scored.

Taking bases on balks.

Taking bases on called balls.

**Holding a base.** SEC. 9. A player running bases shall be considered as holding a base, viz., entitled to occupy it, until he shall have regularly touched the next base in order.

**Running bases on fair and foul fly balls.** SEC. 10. No base shall be run or run be scored when a fair or foul ball has been caught or momentarily held before touching the ground, unless the base held when the ball was hit is retouched by the base-runner after the ball has been so caught or held by the fielder.

**Returning to bases on foul ground balls.** SEC. 11. No run or base can be made upon a foul ball that shall touch the ground before being caught or held by a fielder, and any player running bases shall return, without being put out, to the base he occupied when the ball was struck, and remain on such base until the ball is held by the pitcher.

SEC. 12. Any player running the bases on fair or foul balls caught before touching the ground must return to the base he occupied when the ball was struck, and retouch such base before attempting to make another or score a run, and said player shall be liable to be put out in so returning, as in the case of running to first base when a fair ball is hit and not caught flying.

**Obstructing base-runners.** SEC. 13. If the player running the bases is prevented from making a base by the obstruction of an adversary, he shall be entitled to that base and shall not be put out.

**Substitutes in running bases.** SEC. 14. No player shall be allowed a substitute in running the bases, except for illness or injury, unless by special consent of the captain of the opposing nine; in such case the latter shall select the player to run as substitute. The substitute in question shall take his position so as to cross the batsman's position, and

in front of the home base, and he shall not start to run until the ball is struck at or hit. The substitute shall be the player running the bases.

SEC. 15. Any player running the bases shall be declared out if, at any time, while the ball is in play, he be touched by a fielder, with the ball in hand, without some part of his person is touching a base. Should the said fielder, while in the act of touching the base-runner, have the ball knocked out of his hand, the player so touched shall be declared out.

If a ball be held by a fielder on the first base before the base-runner, after hitting a fair ball, touches that base, he shall be declared out.

Any base-runner failing to touch the base he runs for, shall be declared out if the ball be held by a fielder, while touching said base, before the base-runner returns and touches it.

Any base-runner who shall in any way interfere with or obstruct a fielder while attempting to catch a fair fly ball, or a foul ball, shall be declared out by the umpire with or without appeal. If he wilfully obstructs a fielder from fielding a ball, he shall be similarly declared out, and, if he intentionally kick, or let the ball strike him, he shall be declared out.

## RULE VII.—THE UMPIRE AND HIS DUTIES.

SECTION 1. In selecting an umpire for a match game the visiting club shall submit the names of five persons, competent to act, who are not members of the visiting club. From this list the local club shall select two or more names, and answer not later than the following day. Should the visiting club be unable to

secure the services of either of the two persons selected, then two more names shall be submitted to the local club to complete the list for them to select from. In case of the failure of the local club to select two of the names within forty-eight hours after said names have been telegraphed by the visiting club—if within five days of the day of the game—then the visiting club shall be at liberty to select one from the list of names sent, who shall act as umpire. All correspondence in relation to above shall be by telegraph.

**Changing an umpire.** SEC. 2. The umpire shall not be changed during the progress of a match game, except for reason of illness or injury, or by the consent of the captains of the two contesting nines, in case he shall have wilfully violated the rules of the game.

**Special duties.** SEC. 3. Before the commencement of a match, the umpire shall see that the rules governing the materials of the game, and also those applicable to the positions of batsman and pitcher, are strictly observed. Also that the fence in the rear of the catcher's position is distant not less than ninety feet from the home base, except it mark the boundary line of the field, in which case the umpire, for every ball passing the catcher and touching the fence, shall give each base-runner one base without his being put out.

**Special ground rules.** Before calling "play" the umpire shall ask the captain of the players on whose ground the match is played, whether or not there are any special ground rules to be enforced, and if there are, he shall take note of such rules and see that they are duly enforced, provided they do not conflict with any rules of the game.

SEC. 4. No decision rendered by the umpire on any point of play in base-running shall be reversed upon the testimony of any of the players. But if it shall be shown by the two captains of the contesting clubs that the umpire has palpably misinterpreted the rules, or given an erroneous decision, he shall reverse said decision.

SEC. 5. Should the umpire be unable to see whether a catch has been fairly made or not, he shall be at liberty to appeal to the bystanders, and to render his decision according to the fairest testimony at command.

SEC. 6. No person, not engaged in the game, shall be permitted to occupy any position within the lines of the field of contest, or in any way interrupt the umpire during the progress of the game. No player shall be permitted to converse with the umpire during any part of the contest, except the two captains of the contesting nines, and then only as provided in Section 4 of this rule.

SEC. 7. The umpire shall render no decision in the game except when appealed to by a player, unless expressly required to do so by the rules of the game, as in calling "balls," etc.

SEC. 8. The umpire shall not enter the infield while the ball is in play, and he shall require the players on the batting side who are not at the bat or running the bases, to keep at a distance of not less than fifty feet from the line of home and first base and home and third base, or farther off if he so decide. The captain and one assistant only shall be permitted to coach players running the bases, and they must not approach within fifteen feet of the foul lines.

Unfair  
fielding and  
dead balls.

SEC. 9. Should any fielder stop or catch the ball with his hat, cap, or any part of his dress, the umpire should call "dead ball," and base-runners shall each be entitled to two bases for any fair hit ball so stopped or caught. Should the ball be wilfully stopped by any outside person not engaged in the game, the umpire must call "dead ball," and players running bases at the time shall be entitled to the bases they were running for, and the ball be regarded as dead until settled in the hands of the pitcher while standing within the lines of his position.

Violation  
of rules.

SEC. 10. Any match game in which the umpire shall declare any section of this code of rules to have been wilfully violated shall at once be declared by him to have been forfeited by the club at fault.

SEC. 11. No manager, captain, or player shall address the audience, except in case of necessary explanation; and any manager, captain, or player who shall use abusive, threatening, or improper language to the audience, shall be punished by suspension from play for twenty days and forfeiture of his salary for such period.

SEC. 12. No Section of these Rules shall be construed as conflicting with or affecting any Article of the Constitution.

It was agreed by and between all the clubs, members of the League, that all existing contracts between them (the League clubs) and players should be recognized by the League as if made under and according to the requirements of the Constitution of the "National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs."

On motion, it was resolved that the first annual meeting of this League be held at Cleveland, Ohio, on the date called for in the Constitution.

The Secretary was instructed to send twenty-five copies of the Constitution and Playing Rules to each member of the League, when printed.

No further business appearing, on motion adjourned.

M. G. BULKELEY, *President*.

HARRY WRIGHT, *Secretary, pro tem.*

Extract from the minutes of the "League," held in New York, February 2, 1876:

*Resolved*, That the publication of the Association books, for the benefit of the Association, be left in the hands of the Secretary.

WASHINGTON, D. C.,  
February 15, 1876.

By the authority vested in me by virtue of the above resolution, I hereby certify that Messrs. Reach & Johnston, of Philadelphia, Pa., have been granted the exclusive right to publish the official book containing the Constitution and Playing Rules of the National League of Professional Base Ball Clubs, as revised and adopted at a meeting held at the Grand Central Hotel, in the city of New York, on the 2d day of February, A. D. 1876, and that the foregoing is a true copy of the same.

N. E. YOUNG,  
*Secretary.*