

Base Ball in 1860: Rules & Customs

The Ohio Village Muffins Vintage Base Ball Program

When striking:



- A batsman must either straddle the white line running through home plate or stand behind it.
 - The umpire will not call balls and strikes. The exception is when either a pitcher consistently fails to put the ball over the plate or a striker consistently fails to swing at hittable pitches; in those cases, the umpire will first issue a warning and then start calling either a ball or a strike.
 - A swing and miss counts as a strike; foul balls do not count as strikes.
 - A ball is determined fair or foul depending on where it first hits the ground, regardless of whether it may have touched anything before then.
 - If strike three is muffed (a passed ball or caught on more than one bounce) by the catcher and no runner occupies first base, the batman must try to make first base before getting put out.
 - The striker may ask the pitcher to pitch the ball in a certain location of preference (e.g., high, low, inside, outside).
-

When base running:



- A base runner may take a lead of two steps off the base and may advance once the ball is struck.
 - Stealing is only permitted on a muff by the catcher.
 - Intentional sliding into a base is strongly discouraged as an ungentlemanly action.
 - On a foul ball, the base runner must return to his original base. The runner can be put out if the ball is returned to the pitcher and the runner is tagged before returning to the base. The runner is also out if the ball arrives at the base before the runner, only if the ball has been settled in the pitcher's hands prior.
 - The umpire will usually only call foul balls, not fair balls. Be sure to clarify this with the umpire prior to the game.
 - After scoring an ace, the runner ought to report to the scorekeeper to tally the ace. The runner is also invited to ring the tally bell to signal his ace to the crowd.
-

When fielding:



- Infielders typically play within a few steps of their base, excluding the shortstop who may position himself at any point in the field.
- Outfielders may position themselves as they see fit.
- Once struck, the ball may be caught in the air for an out or on one bound off the ground or any other surface in play (e.g., a tree, another player, etc.) in either fair or foul territory.