



Machine-Pitch Baseball

Rules

2006-2007

PLAYING RULES

These Rules are to be read in conjunction with the Bankstown District Baseball Association Playing Rules

RULE 1.000 THE OBJECTIVE of the GAME

1.001 Machine-Pitch Baseball is a game of modified baseball; changes are made with the aim of simplifying and adapting the game of baseball to suit a particular age group or play situation.

1.002 The object of each team is to score more runs than the other team while having plenty of healthy and enjoyable batting, throwing and running.

1.003 The playing field shall be the area on and within two lines at 90° to each other. These lines are called foul lines. The infield shall be a square.

Basepath	60ft
Pitcher's Distance	46ft.

Where a field is not enclosed field, the Dead Ball Line must be suitably marked.

For Home Plate and Batter's Box details - see Appendix A

1.004 The ball shall be:-
See Approved ball list.

1.005 The bat shall be one piece of solid, smooth, round wood, or similarly, one piece of hollow metal. The bat shall not be longer than 30" (762mm), and not bigger than 2.25" (57mm) diameter and maximum Differential of -10.

1.006 Double-eared Helmets are compulsory for the batter and base runners. Players should wear a protector at all times when within the confines of the ground. This is for the player's own safety. Players may wear a mouth-guard.

1.007 Players may only wear moulded sole football boots, rubber-soled sneakers, joggers or shoes with flexible soft stops or dimple type soles.

1.008 Playing equipment such as mitts etc., shall be such that no unfair advantage is obtained by their use.

1.009 Pitching Machine to be approved machine eg Zooka or similar.

1.010 All uniforms shall have some visible identifying numbers.

1.011 Two copies of the batting order with names and uniform numbers, shall be handed to the umpire before the game begins; one is for the umpire and one for the opposing Manager.

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RULE 2.000 DEFINITION of TERMS

An **APPEAL** is the act of a fielder in claiming a violation of the rules by the offensive team.

A **BASE** is one or four points which must be touched in sequence, in order to score a run.

A **BASE COACH** is permitted to be stationed near first and third bases to direct the batter and the runners; must not touch the runner; must stay in box.

A **BUNT** is a batted ball not swung at, but intentionally met with the bat and tapped slowly within the infield.

A **CATCH** is the act of a fielder in setting secure possession in his hand or glove of a ball in flight and firmly holding it; providing he does not use his cap, or any part of his uniform in getting possession. It is not a catch, however, if simultaneously or immediately following his contact with the ball, he collides with a player, or with a wall, or if he falls down, and as a result of such collision or falling, drops the ball. It is not a catch if a fielder touches a fly ball, which then hits a member of the offensive team or umpire and then is caught by a defensive player. If the fielder makes a catch and drops the ball while in the act of making a throw following the catch, the ball shall be adjudged to have been caught. In establishing the validity of the catch, the fielder shall hold the ball long enough to prove that he has complete control of the ball and that his release of the ball is voluntary and intentional.

Note : A "Catch" is legal, if the ball is finally held by any fielder, even though juggled, or held by another fielder before it touches the ground. Runners may leave their bases the instant the first fielder touches the ball. A fielder may reach over a fence or line of demarcation (Dead Ball Line) to make a catch.

A **DEAD BALL** is a ball out of play, because of a legally created temporary suspension of play.

A **FAIR BALL** is a batted ball that settles on fair ground between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that is on or over fair territory when bounding to the outfield past first, second or third base, or that touches first or third base, or that first falls on fair territory on or beyond first base or third base, or while on or over fair territory, touches an umpire or player, or while over fair territory, passes out of the playing field in flight.

A fair fly shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, and not as to whether the fielder is on fair or foul territory at the time he touches the ball.

Note : If a fly ball lands on or beyond first or third, and then bounces to foul territory, is a fair ball. A fly ball that lands in the infield between home and first, or home and third, and then bounces to foul territory without touching a player or umpire and before passing first or third, is a "foul ball".

FAIR TERRITORY is that part of the field within the foul lines and within the boundary fence.

A **FORCE PLAY** is a play in which a runner legally loses his right to occupy a base, by reason of the batter becoming a runner.

Note : The out of a following runner, removes the "Force".

A **FOUL BALL** is a batted ball that settles on foul territory between home and first base, or between home and third base, or that bounds past first or third base on or over foul territory, or that first falls on foul territory beyond first or third base, or that, while on or over foul territory, touches an umpire or player, or any object foreign to the natural ground. A foul shall be judged according to the relative position of the ball and the foul line, including the foul pole, and not whether the fielder is on foul or fair territory at the time he touches the ball.

FOUL TERRITORY is that part outside the playing field, but within the boundary fence. (or Dead Ball Line)

A **FOUL TIP** is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught. It is not a foul tip unless caught and any foul tip that is caught is a strike. It is not a catch if it is a rebound, unless the ball has first touched the catcher's glove or hand.

An **INNING** is that portion of a game within which the teams alternate on offence and defence and in which there are three put-outs for each team or after the ninth batter completes time at bat, whichever comes first.

Note: For U/7s and U/8s, the half innings ends when nine players have had a turn at bat.

LIVE BALL is a ball which is in play.

INTERFERENCE

- (a) Offensive interference is an act by the team at bat, which interferes with, impedes, hinders or confuses any fielder attempting to make a play. If the umpire declares the batter, batter runner, or a runner out for interference, all other runners shall return to the last base that was in the judgment of the umpire, legally touched at the time of the interference, unless otherwise provided by these rules. In the event the batter runner has not reached first base, all runners shall return to the base last occupied at the time of the hit.
- (b) Defensive interference is an act by a fielder, which hinders or impedes a batter hitting the ball.
- (c) Umpire's interference occurs (1) When an umpire hinders, impedes or prevents a catcher's throw attempting to retire a runner, or (2) When a fair ball touches an umpire on fair territory before passing a fielder.
- (d) Spectator interference occurs when a spectator reaches out of the stands, or goes on the playing field, and touches a live ball. On any interference the ball is dead. See also Rule 9.003 for administration.

OBSTRUCTION is the act of a fielder who, while not in possession of the ball and not in the act of fielding the ball, impedes the progress of any runner. If a fielder is about to receive a thrown ball and if the ball is in flight directly toward and near enough to the fielder so he must occupy his position to receive the ball he may be considered "in the act of fielding a ball". It is entirely up to the judgment of the umpire as to whether a fielder is in the act of fielding a ball. After a fielder has made an attempt to field a ball and missed, he can no longer be in the "act of fielding" the ball. For example: an infielder dives at a ground ball and the ball passes him and he continues to lie on the ground and delays the progress of the runner, he very likely has obstructed the runner. See also Rule 9.003 for interpretation and administration.

The **MANAGER** is the person appointed by the club to be responsible for the team's actions on the field, and to represent the team in communications with the umpire and the opposing team. Note, the Manager may delegate various duties (except the pre-game meeting), such as, but not limited to, coaching of base running to a base coach and the checking of Registration Cards to the Team Co-ordinator.

Note 1: the manager is the person ultimately responsible for the team and the person who is required to have the appropriate qualifications. A Coach is a team member, appointed by the Manager, to perform such duties as the Manager may designate, such as but not limited to acting as a base coach.

An **OUT** is one of the three required retirements of an offensive team, during its time at bat.

A **PASS BALL** is one that is thrown by a fielder and settles outside the playable area. see Rule 7.005

DEAD BALL LINE (pass ball line) is one outside the foul lines, that defines the playable area. Only used in the absence of boundary fences.

A **RETOUCH** is the act of a runner in returning to a base as legally required. see Rule 7.006(c)

Note : Another name is " tag up ".

In a fly-ball situation, a runner must retouch and start from contact with the base after the ball is touched.

A runner is not permitted to take a flying start from a position in back of his base.

A **RUN** (or Score) is the score made by an offensive player, who advances from batter to runner and touches first, second, third and home base, in that order.

SAFE is a declaration by the umpire, that a runner is entitled to the base for which he was trying.

A **SWING** is the action of a batter, in causing the bat to move through an arc about the body, to hit the ball. The swing shall comprise of a distinct backswing, and a full follow-through, and shall be of reasonable force.

A **TAG** is the action of a fielder in :-

- (i) touching a base with his body while holding the ball securely in his hand or glove in the course of a force play;
- (ii) touching any part of a runner or his clothing with the ball, or with his hand or glove in which the ball is securely held.

TIME is the announcement by an umpire of a legal interruption of play, during which the ball is dead.

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RULE 3.000 GAME PRELIMINARIES

3.001 The umpire shall check that the diamond layout.

3.002 The team shall consist of 9 players and a maximum of 12 players. Only 9 players may field at any one time. The batting order is the order in which all the players of the team will take their turn at bat. If more than 9 are listed, only 9 may bat in any half-innings (before 3 outs). If, at the umpire's discretion, a batter is removed from the batting order (when more than 9 batters listed) and not replaced, the batting order will close up with no out recorded for the missing batter.

3.003 Any of the 12 players listed in the original batting lineup, may be interchanged in the fielding position at any time, providing "Time" is called. If any of the 12 players in the original lineup is replaced, then the players replaced can take no further part in the game.

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RULE 4.000 STARTING and ENDING A GAME

4.001 Umpire meets the team Managers at home plate, three minutes before game starting time.

- (a) Team mentioned first - Home team - Fields first - occupy 1st base bench;
- (b) Check that footwear complies with Association; (see also Rule 1.007)
- (c) Exchange batting line-ups;
- (d) Clarifies local ground rules;
- (e) Check scorers ready. (must sit together behind home plate)

4.002 (a) When the catcher is inside the catcher's box; the fielders positioned within fair territory; the batter takes stance in batters box and the pitcher stands with the ball next to the machine; then the umpire shall call "Play". The pitcher shall put the ball into the machine and return to the Pitcher's Plate.

Note 1 The plate umpire shall ensure that only one ball is on the diamond at any one time and all balls that are fouled out of play, shall be returned and put into play only by the plate umpire.

Note 2 No one is to put the ball into the machine without being directed to do so by the umpire.

(b) Every pitch is deemed a strike, unless it is so low, so high or so wide that the umpire deems it a "No-pitch". The umpire has the discretion to call a "No-pitch", if in his judgment, the pitch was so far out of the strike zone, that the batter did not have a fair chance to hit the ball.

4.003 The offensive team may station a coach within the 1st and 3rd base coaching boxes. Coaches must not handle or assist players while the ball is live.

4.004 A regulation game shall be :

- (a) U/10 - 7 innings or 1 hour and 30 minutes, whichever comes first;
- (b) In case of inclement weather stopping play; five (5) completed innings or fifty percent (50%) of the set playing time constitutes a game.

4.005 If the top of an innings commences 10 minutes prior to the scheduled completion time, the bottom of the innings must be finished, unless the home team has won the game.

4.006 No person anywhere shall at any time :-

- (1) incite or try to incite by word or sign, a demonstration by spectators;
- (2) use language which will in any manner refer to or reflect upon opposing players, an umpire or any spectator;
- (3) make intentional contact with umpire in any manner;
- (4) distract anyone;
- (5) show violent disapproval of umpire's decision.

4.007 How a team scores :

- (a) 1 run scores by touching 1st, 2nd, 3rd and home plate before 3 outs occur to end a half- innings:

Exception : If the runner advances to home during a play in which the third out is made before :-

- (1) the batter-runner touches first base; or
- (2) any runner being forced out; or
- (3) the out of a preceding runner, eg. the runner is out on appeal for a missed base.

4.008 A game may be forfeited to the opposing team when a team:-

- (a) fails to appear within 10 minutes of starting time;
- (b) fails to field 7 registered players;
- (c) refuses to continue game;
- (d) umpire disqualifies team for violating rules.

Note : (i) for (a) and (b) the result shall be at a score of 7-0;

(ii) for (c) and (d) the unoffending team may elect to take the game score at the time or the score of 7-0.

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RULE 5.000 PUTTING THE BALL IN PLAY

5.001 When the umpire calls "Play" or "Play Ball", the ball becomes "Live" when the pitcher put the ball in the machine. The ball remains "Live" until the umpire calls "Foul" or "Time", upon which the ball becomes "Dead", and play is temporarily interrupted.

5.002 A STRIKE is called, and runners cannot advance:-

- (a) when the batter attempts to hit the ball and misses;
- (b) the ball is fouled by the batter, when he has less than two strikes.

5.003 A FOUL STRIKE (or FOUL) is called, and runners cannot advance when :-

- (a) a foul ball is hit;
- (b) bunts at the ball;
- (c) a batter hits the ball with one or both feet grounded entirely outside the batters box;
(The lines defining the box are within the batter's box)

5.004 The umpire shall call "TIME" when :-

- (a) the defence attempts no further play after the ball is in the secure possession of a fielder within the confines of the diamond. Baserunners shall not pass another base after the fielder has secure possession, unless the fielder attempts a play.

If a further play is attempted after the ball is inside the diamond, then all play proceeds until the umpire sees no further play is imminent;

eg. (i) Runner on second, ball hit to shortstop, who feints to hold the runner at second and then throws to first to retire the batter-runner. The runner at second may advance to third on the throw but cannot pass third unless the firstbaseman attempts a further play.

eg. (ii) A runner rounds third as the cut-off takes secure possession, and continues homeward without hesitation, then the defence may allow him to advance or make a play on him.

If the lines defining the diamond are not marked, then the umpire will judge as to the approximate confines of the diamond on any play.

- (b) a dead ball;
- (c) necessary (e.g., for injury, conference with coach, etc.).

Note : Unless urgent and to avoid confusing players, coaches should wait till "Time" has been called to confer with the umpire or make any interchange or substitution.

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RULE 6.000 THE BATTER

6.001 (a) Each player shall bat in turn as shown in the batting order; (see 1.011, 3.002 and 9.004)

- (b) After the first innings, the first batter shall be the player whose name follows that of the last batter the previous innings.

6.002 The batter is out when :-

- (a) a fair or foul fly ball is caught by a fielder;
(the ball is alive; runners may advance at their own risk)

Note: In the event of a "pop-up" fly NOT being caught, due in the umpire's judgment to the obstruction of the pitching machine, the batter will be given "out" and the ball is "Dead" and no runners may advance.

- (b) three strikes called against the batter;
- (c) after hitting a fair ball, he or first base is tagged before he touches first base;
- (d) after warning, the batter dangerously throws the bat.

- 6.003** When the last batter of the innings comes to bat, the scorers shall inform the umpire, who shall call "Last Batter",
- (a) If the last batter does not reach first base safely and makes the first or second out; then the "TIME RULE" shall apply. [see Rule 5.004(a)]
 - (b) If the last batter does not reach first base safely and makes the third out; no runs are scored on the play.
 - (c) If the last batter reaches first safely, then the "TIME RULE" shall apply; [see Rule 5.004(a)] and any runs scored, shall count.
Remember also, that once the batter-runner and all forced runners have advanced one base safely, then "The FORCE" is removed and any play on any runner, is a tag play.
- eg.(i) runners on 2 & 3; 2 out; batter hits and runs through first and is called "safe" and the firstbaseman makes no further play. A runner from third would count, and the umpire would have to adjudicate as to whether the runner from second had passed third when the firstbaseman had secure possession.
- eg.(ii) 2 out bases loaded; the batter-runner is tagged while running between 1st. and 2nd.
Any runner who crossed the Plate before the batter-runner was tagged would score.
Any runner who crossed the plate after the batter-runner was tagged would not score.
- 6.004** Infield fly rule does not apply.
- 6.005** A batter can only get on base by hitting the ball.
- 6.006** If a batted ball hits the machine, the ball is "DEAD", the batter returns to the batting box, and no runners may advance.
- 6.007** Foul Fly and Foul Tip:
- (a) A Foul Fly is a batted ball that goes in the air and is caught in flight in Foul Territory. The catch is an "Out" and the ball is "Live";
 - (b) A Foul Tip, if the third strike, then the batter is out. [see definition in Rule 2.000]

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RULE 7.000 THE RUNNER

- 7.001** A runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when he touches that base, before being put-out, or until he is forced to vacate it.
- 7.002** No runner may leave his base until the batter has hit the ball.
PENALTY : Defence has option to rule no swing on the batter; or let any play stand. If the latter is chosen each runner shall only advance the same number of bases as the batter. (if forced).
The same player is to be declared out, for a repeat offence in the game.
- 7.003** The runner shall advance the bases in order 1, 2, 3, 4 and if forced to return (eg. when he misses a base); must retouch in reverse order - 4, 3, 2, 1.
- 7.004** Only one runner is allowed per base. Except for a "FORCE" play, the following runner is out if tagged, when two occupy the same base.

7.005 Each runner may, without liability to be put out, advance two bases on a pass ball. In awarding bases, the umpire shall be governed by the position of the runners at the time the wild throw actually left the player's hand and not when the ball crossed the dead ball line. If a thrown ball hits the machine, the ball will remain alive and in play and runners may advance at their own risk.

7.006 Any runner is out when :-

- (a) he runs more than 3ft from the line to avoid a tag; (a runner must avoid a fielder fielding a batted ball)
- (b) he is tagged when the ball is alive, while off his base;
- (c) he fails to tag up on a catch before he or his base is tagged;
- (d) if forced, fails to reach the next base before he or the base is tagged;
- (e) he passes a preceding runner before such runner is out;
- (f) fails to return at once to first after over-running it, without attempting to advance to second base, and he or the base is tagged;
- (g) he is touched by a fair batted ball; the ball is dead and runners; if forced, advance.

Note : the runner is out, even if he is on a base when he is touched by the fair batted ball.

7.007 The runner is out on appeal for missing a base.

Note :- Before the umpire calls "Time" the runner may try to return to the missed base. He will be safe if he returns in the correct order before he or his base is tagged. To appeal, a fielder stands on the missed base, holds the ball in the air, and designates the runner that missed the base. This must be done before the next batter is in the box; or in the last batter situation, before all the infielders have left fair territory.

7.008 The players, coaches or any members of the offensive team shall vacate any space needed by a fielder to field a batted or thrown ball.

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RULE 8.000 THE PITCHER and CATCHER

8001 The pitcher position is to stand with both feet in contact with the pitcher's plate. When the umpire says "Play", the pitcher shall step forward and place the ball in the machine and then retreat back to the plate.

8.002 CATCHER'S MASK, HELMET and THROAT PROTECTOR

The Catcher is required to wear protective helmet, a face-mask with a throat guard, a chest protector and leggins.

Note Equipment to be correctly fitted ie. a face-mask with correctly fitted throat guard extender, a correctly fitted chest protector (high and tight) and leggins.

8.003 SET-UP of PITCHING MACHINE

- (a)
 - (i) The pitching machine is to be fitted with the small legs;
 - (ii) The pitching machine to be set-up with the centre stem of the legs 2 foot-6 inches off the line between second base and home plate; on the third base side; at the mark that is 40 foot from the back of home plate.
- (b) The pitching machine will be positioned, such that a pitched ball will pass over home plate at a suitable height, mutually agreeable to both Managers. If no agreement can be reached, it is then solely at the discretion of the umpire.
- (c) The pitching machine to be set such that the ball is projected at 36 miles per hour.

If the pitching machine breaks down and another is not readily available, the game will revert to equal innings and a Tee will be used.

8.004 SPEED-UP RULE

In all age groups, the catcher may participate offensively, until there are two outs. After the second out is recorded, the catcher if on base, must be replaced immediately with another runner, and if at bat, must be replaced once the play by which he becomes a runner, is completed. Prior to there being two outs, the catcher may be replaced as a base runner, at the discretion of the offensive team manager.

Note: the courtesy runner may be any player listed on the lineup, including a player listed as a substitute player.

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RULE 9.000 THE UMPIRE

- 9 001 (a) The umpire is responsible for maintaining the rules and the conduct of the game;
- (b) The umpire has the authority to rule on any point not specifically covered by these rules.

9.002 The umpire will allow only one ball on the field at any one time and ensure that the ball is put into the machine only when directed.

- 9 003 After the umpire calls "Time", he will use his discretion to adjudicate on any incident where :-
 - (a) a runner was obstructed; (by a fielder)
 - (b) a fielder was interfered with; (by a runner)
 - (c) any unsafe play has occurred.
 - (d) a batter was interfered with, (by the catcher) while hitting the ball.

Note : The umpire may award base/bases and/or safe/out, as he sees fit. Such award will be made, so that the interference or obstruction is nullified and the non-offending party is not disadvantaged.

9.004 The Umpire shall use his discretion to adjudicate on any incident of a batter batting out of turn. He shall declare (on appeal), the batter who should have batted (the proper batter), "OUT", and the batting order to restart at the batter available, after the one declared out.

Note : (i) Scorers shall not bring this situation to anyone's attention. The defence must appeal before the next batter is in the box, or in the last batter situation, before all the infielders have left "Fair territory".

Note : (ii) The Proper batter may take his place in the batting box at any time before the improper batter becomes a runner, and any strikes shall be counted on the proper batter

9 005 The umpire will cause the scorers to note the warning given to any player, coach or club official.

9 006 These rules cover any game under the control of the Association.

For games under another association, all umpires must know any Local Ground and/or Game Rules, under which a game is being played.

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RULE 10.000 THE SCORER

10.001 The Scorers shall be stationed in proximity behind the home plate back-net, and be near to each other.

10.002 If an opposition scorer brings to anyone's attention that a player is batting out of order, all appeals are null and void.

10.003 The Scorers are not permitted to call out tactical advice or playing instructions, to players, managers or coaches.

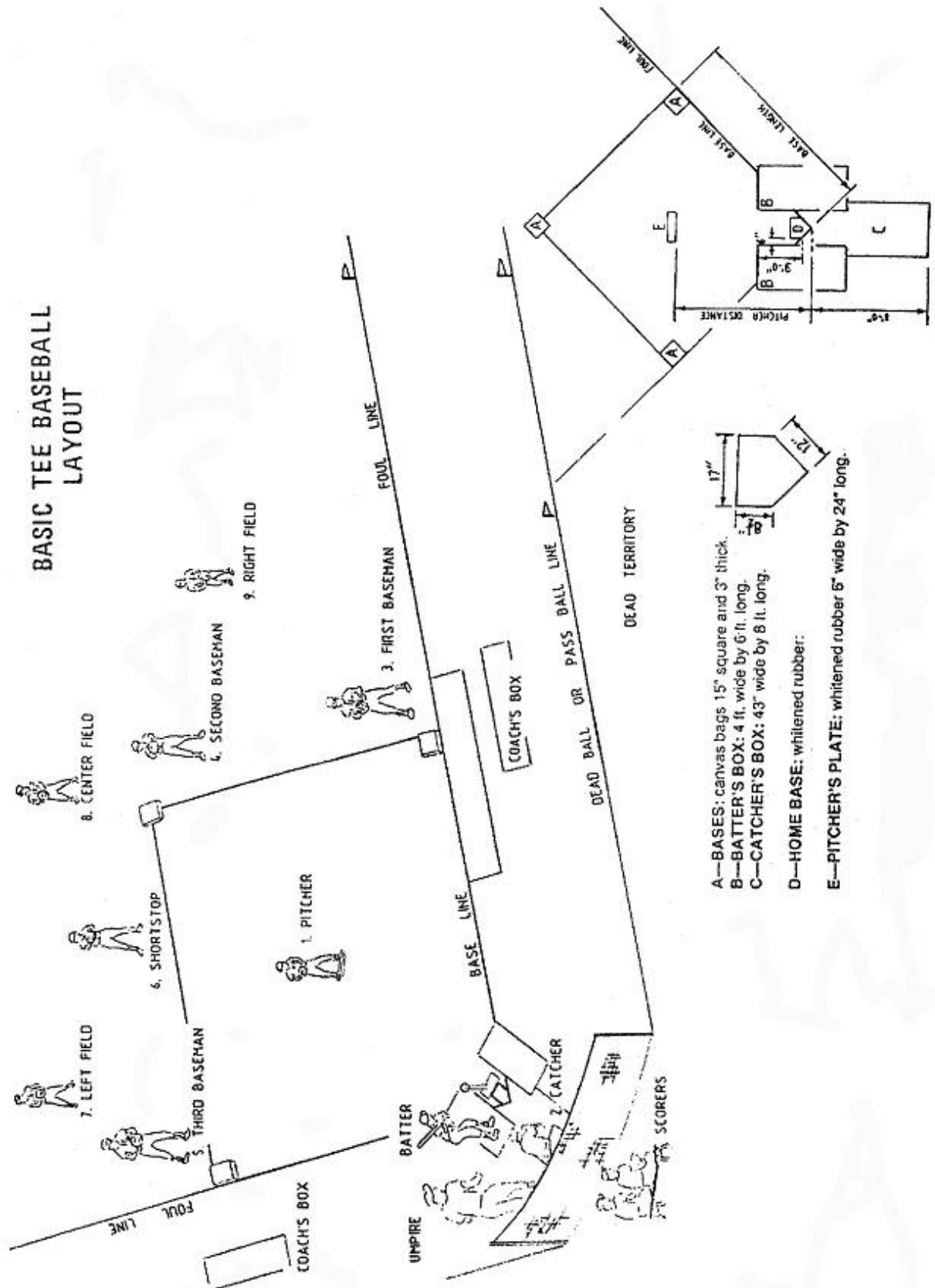
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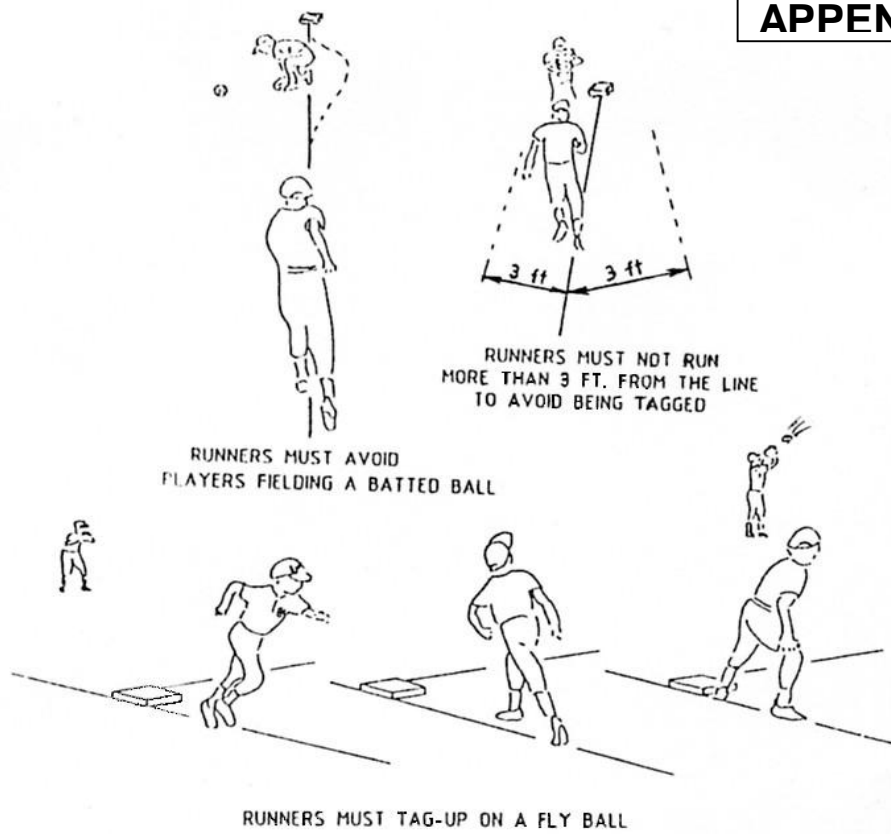
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APPENDIX A



APPENDIX B



UMPIRING SIGNALS



OUT



SAFE



TIME



LAST BATTER