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A Woman's Guide to Enjoying Baseball with Her Man

Or- Why Should She Care?

By Tammy and Mel Griffin

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Introduction by Tammy Griffin

Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote, ““In the Spring, a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love” (not, “In the Spring, a young man’s fancy turns to love.” – you can win pocket money with trivia like that!) But, years later, some spoil-sport invented baseball!

Most men, and many women, love to play and/or watch baseball.

Many of our friends' wives and girlfriends just mentally switch off when the discussion turns to sport, and baseball in particular. And, many of them don't hesitate to make it obvious that they prefer to be elsewhere when a game is on the TV!

They just don't understand the appeal of it. Maybe they've been verbally assaulted by a statistics fanatic, were refused a game when they were young because, “You're just a *girl!*”, or had their (normally reasonable) boyfriend or husband turn into a tyrant demanding silence and beer while the World Series is on their television.

This book is for those women that are comfortable in their baseball-free zone but may be wondering what so interesting about baseball. I'll give you just enough information so your eyes don't glaze when the subject is mentioned, and some points in favor of it which you may not have realized!

Mel's contribution has been in the research, which involved attending a lot of games and asking questions of the experts among his friends.

There is a lot of enjoyment to be found in a good game of baseball, and sharing the experience with someone you care about will make every game a good one.

Just put any turn-offs aside and chain up your phobia for now, because I want to help you find out what you're missing during the baseball season if you're clueless about curveballs and all the rest of America's favorite outdoor pastime.

On the baseball field, some of the best athletes in the country sweat and strain to

out-perform their opponents. Their bodies are not encased in the armor that footballers have to wear.

The basic rules are easy to follow and you can always ask your favorite man to explain anything which is obscure (but please wait till a break in play, okay?)

I guarantee that he'll be real pleased to share his knowledge with you.

Is Baseball for You?

In our parents' time, and even when we were growing up, there was little support for girls to play baseball at any level – even in schools.

Many people, especially men, thought that women didn't have the toughness and other attributes to play it well enough.

The "All American Pro Girls League" had shown otherwise but the entrenched interests were not inclined to welcome or support women's teams, or share the gate receipts!

That's changing for the benefit of us all.

Today, boys and girls can start out very young and play **Tee-Ball** between the ages of five to twelve. Each player smacks the ball into play off an adjustable stand; there's no pitcher required.

After that, it's **Little League**; the divisions cover ages 11&12, then Junior (13-14), Senior (14-16) and Big (16-18).

When I was growing up, only boys could play Little League; baseball was only for boys. People (mostly men, of course) said that the 'little ladies' didn't have what it took to compete. They didn't have 'game', gloves, the respect of the boys, and they didn't have toughness or courage.

The truth was that they didn't have the **opportunity, encouragement**, or a **chance** to get involved!

Much has changed for the better since then.

My sons grew up in a different social climate, and most boys today probably don't have the same notions about girls and women that were prevalent then, because girls are now included at nearly all levels of sports - and not just as cheerleaders.

In fact, when I told my daughter that she could grow up to be anything she wanted,

she had no reason to doubt me. It's a man's game, a boy's game and a girl's game too.

It's also a women's game. Women's College Softball is played at such a high level of competence, energy, and passion, that the average man, however fit or athletic (unless equally trained in the game), would humiliate himself when trying to compete with or against them. (Many men will not confess, or even believe, that statement - but is so true.)

An all-star woman player at the peak of her strength, her endurance, and her agility is a champion by any standard!

A softball game lasts seven innings instead of nine, is pitched underhand, and the ball is larger and softer than the hardball used by the pros playing baseball. But, I can't stress enough that you shouldn't let those differences mislead you.

Did you know that a female college pitcher could throw a ball at 80 miles per hour? That's *fast!*

Most men could never aspire to be a good enough player to contend with that, however much they might *hate* to admit it.

Why Should a Girl like You go to a Baseball Game?

If you're not in a serious relationship at the moment, you might find the right person among baseball fans at a game. They're mostly fairly healthy and enthusiastic people.

It's a lot less confronting than in many bars.

At the least, you'll get some fresh air and a chance to let off some of the tension which many of us build up during the working week. At the game, you can shout, wave your arms and no-one will care.

How to Learn Just Enough about Baseball

You probably don't want the equivalent of a "Certificate in Baseball", but your acceptance by the true die-hard fans will be smoother and quicker if you know a few of the basics early on. You will make a better impression if you know what questions to ask and can pretty much understand the answers straight away.

So, let's cover best and worst sources of knowledge for someone that doesn't know much and doesn't need to know everything.

This ebook: It's a great choice (we're biased, of course!) We've included something about each of the most important parts of the world of baseball. We've tried to keep our opinions to ourselves and just give you enough facts to point out where you go next.

The Internet: The Internet has an overwhelming amount of information, opinion and outright lies about baseball (and almost every other subject too, we suspect). When you understand the basics and know what questions to ask as well as what you don't need, that's the time to squeeze answers from your favorite search engine. Otherwise, you could be smothered under 40,000 bits of possibly relevant information! When you're just starting, you can get what you need faster and more enjoyably through personal contact.

The Library: This is another great resource. Don't forget the Children's section if you want very clear explanations, without much statistics, argument or hype. I always check there when researching any subject that is new to me!

Baseball Fans: They are the best source but be sure to start with those who are closest to you and work outward only when absolutely necessary. And, be very selective. You don't need much information to understand and enjoy your first few games.

Some die-hard fans, instead of just giving a straight answer to your question, will pour almost as much technical and statistical information in your ear as you'd see in your Internet searches! They're probably trying to be helpful and, of course,

impress you as well. But you don't *need* all that background information and won't be very impressed at their lack of empathy.

But your husband or boyfriend (or a potential b/f or husband) is the ideal person to ask your questions of.

The media: Baseball supports hours of television and radio programs as well as acres of magazines. Just pick what you need from among all of that when it's convenient.

Baseball's Basics

Baseball is an outdoor summer game played by two teams of nine players each, exception in the American League, where they have what's called a 'designated hitter.'

The designated hitter bats in place of the pitcher and has no other function. That, of course, makes ten players, and violates the very first rule. Many fans would rather see the pitchers, who are almost always the worst hitters on any team, face each other.

Baseball is played with a bat and ball, on a baseball field which is usually referred to as a baseball diamond.

The object of the game is to score more *runs* than the other team.

Baseball is measured in innings, and innings are measured by outs.

There are three outs to an inning. For each time they are up.

Three outs are recorded by the defensive team, (the team on the field, including the pitcher) then it is their turn to bat. Three more outs and you have yourself an inning.

Nine innings and you have yourself a ballgame.

It takes as long as it takes, or as famous baseball player Yogi Berra so aptly put it, "The game isn't over until it's over."

A run is scored when a runner crosses home plate after having first touched first, second, and third base. A batter becomes a runner by getting walked by the pitcher, getting hit by the pitcher, getting a hit off the pitcher, or by an **error** on the defensive team.

An **error** is when the batter hits the ball (puts it in play) in such a way that the defensive team *should* have gotten him out, but failed to.

An error is charged against the defensive player and goes against his record. This doesn't help that batter's personal statistics, but it's much better than being put out.

Although an error made by a player on the defensive team is not recorded as a 'hit' for the batter, the batter who should have been out is now a runner on base, an out has been avoided, and he has a chance, depending on what his teammates do, to score.

There is no break between innings like football has, except the seventh inning stretch in baseball. There is a five minute break.

The Little Things that Matter

There are many things in the world of baseball that have a significance which people that are not devotees may not realize.

Statistics

You've probably been verbally assaulted by a baseball fan with a cart-load of statistics when all you want to know is, "Who is most likely to win?"

Baseball statistics cover every detail of every player's performance and characteristics.

They affect their future prospects and are used by each team manager when they work out which of their players to use, in what order, in their next game.

They are so detailed that the managers can get a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses of their opponents just from what probably seem to you to be dry, dull numbers.

Here's some good news; I probably won't mention and certainly won't go into more detail of how to record and understand them in this ebook.

(HINT: Ask your significant other for help in understanding the stats of his favorite team.)

Mementos.

The amount of stationery and other oddments which baseball fans accumulate is staggering.

There are tickets, programs, magazines and much more.

If your man is an avid collector, don't ask him to tell you how much he paid for his most treasured pieces or faint if he tells you.

But, do ask him to make a proper record of his collection. It may just be a nuisance and a space eater for you to navigate around but, judging by the prices which

today's collectors pay for bits and pieces from just a few years ago, your grandchildren might end up set for life or, at least, have their college education assured before they're even out of junior school!

Currently, baseball cards are in a slump compared to the jaw-dropping prices paid a few years ago but there are still many fans that happily pay significant, while not astronomical, sums for particular cards in especially good condition or some that are particularly rare.

How to Show You're a Novice

A young man wanted his bride to share his passion for the sport with him. So, he took her to the ballpark to watch a pro baseball game together.

They arrived unfashionably late.

She felt remorseful at having been the cause of them arriving in the middle of the fourth inning, but saw that the score was zero to zero. So, she said, with some relief, *"Oh good, we haven't missed anything!"*

Her groom smiled that time because they were newlyweds.

Though the score was 0 to 0, the game was close to being half over and they had probably missed many great duels and near-misses which the fans would discuss around the office water coolers to help them get through their working days until the next game.

Do not refer to runs as points, as in, "How many points are we ahead?"

Another way to show that you haven't yet got a grasp of the game's fundamentals, is to use Football lingo - like asking, 'What quarter is it?' or 'When is halftime?'

Remember that there is no time limit in baseball.

Why Winning a Baseball Game Is Not Everything

Baseball is an altogether different type of game, compared to most sports. It comes across as an extremely mature sport. Baseball seasons cannot be perfect seasons with any one-team winning the majority of all games.

Defeat is an essential part of a baseball game. No amount of practice, experience and enthusiasm by any one team, and incentives from their managers and coach can ensure that they will win every game. It is next to impossible to be the all-perfect team every time.

Baseball fans are comfortable with losses and defeats. They know perfect games are rare. There have been only five teams in the whole of last century to win seventy percent of their baseball games. The fans will scream encouragement to their favorite team and players but are well aware, and even expect, limits on the performances by their favorite baseball players.

'Baseball fever' can go to extreme levels with fans becoming **extensively spiritual** and avoiding probabilities of defeat through emotional appeals. Some of them **develop slogans to boost their self-confidence** and build up inner strength in the face of glaring defeat. Politics also has its say in baseball, with many politicians and businessmen having roles in administering or even owning baseball clubs at some time during their careers.

Although baseball players receive excellent salaries, this game sometimes struggles to attract as many good recruits as the major teams need each year. The reasons include the intense mental and physical pressure and the traveling can seriously interfere with normal family life. The regular defeats and other hassles require mental and as well physical maturity.

You cannot expect wins all the time, rather you need to try and keep your cool with consecutive defeats. Baseball provides fantastic lessons in humility. To be the topmost in baseball is usually fairly temporary.

The wealth and other benefits which flow to successful teams are as reliant on the

rapport between team members and ability to ride the inevitable lows as well as accepting the highs.

Every baseball season reveals examples of humility, religious and emotional strength, maturity, and extensive hope and belief in your capabilities by players, coaches and fans as well.

Why Baseball Is Better Than Movies

Baseball and movies are two very different types of entertainment. For me, games like baseball gain over movies for many reasons.

Most movies work to specific formulas, fictional happenings, even when based on real events and people, and have mostly predictable outcomes. Movies are set up to deliver according to the expectations of viewers and current trends. If movies are not satisfying, people hardly view them and moviemakers suffer big losses in revenue. Action movies are crammed with many car and bike chases, shootouts, and fantastic, thrilling action. But it's all in a fantasy world!

Some movies that have enormous budgets and all the action you might wish for do not click well. They may have weak characters, a boring storyline, or bad acting.

These factors do not play any role in baseball, which is real.

Players play the game in front of your eyes. You enjoy sharing the experience with your friends and the other spectators, even those who loudly support the rival team. At the same time, you can share the players' joy in victory and your heart goes out to them if they lose or are unable to score runs despite their best efforts.

Even before the baseball game starts, everyone will be speculating about which team will play better, which players will participate in each team, how good will the competition be, who might get tagged out, who might be injured or what would be the critical moment.

It's live – it's life played out right in front of you! And the participants get far more enjoyment than with most movies where you can probably be fairly sure how it will all work out at the end.

These questions get you thinking and build up your enthusiasm, so **you become glued to your seats as you all watch and enjoy real action**, which is not dreamed up in the imagination of any storyteller as it is in movies.

Reasons You Should Care About Baseball

Some of the reasons one should care about, or have some knowledge of the game:

a) Baseball is America's pastime and almost everyone except a confirmed recluse will find themselves, during baseball season (especially in October - playoff time,) constantly explaining why you don't know or care how the local team is doing, or what teams have made it to the playoffs, or what two teams are going to the World Series, and you might even get *teased* for your attitude.

Even if you will never really care about the game, it's very likely that you will have serious baseball fans among the people you most care about. So, take the time to gather a little awareness and knowledge.

Then, if you want to, you can join in the teasing. "So, how is little (fill in the blank with baseball hero's name) doing these days--- taken any steroids lately?" Of course, you'll keep anything like that at a very light-hearted level and accept and friendly barbs that are sent your way in response.

What I'm talking about here are Current Events. If you want to 'fit in', get a little knowledge about what most American men, and many women love so passionately.

There are many reasons to know about Baseball, even if you are not as passionate about it as most of the men around you are.

Talent is not all home-grown.

Baseball is growing in popularity around the world, especially in Central and South America, and East Asia. Millions of fans around the world follow Major League Baseball, especially during the month of October. It's huge in Japan.

A young ball player known as Ichiro was brought up in Japan and his father was determined to make a great player out of his son. Ichiro did not 'have fun' because of the driving influence which his father exerted, but he practiced hard.

When Ichiro joined his junior high school baseball team, his father told the coach,

"No matter how good Ichiro is, don't ever praise him. We have to make him spiritually strong. "

He played in Japan, and managed to come to the United States where Americans were skeptical because his size; he is very slender, 5'9 inches tall and only weighing in at about 120 lbs. But, in 2001, he broke a record that had stood from 1930 where he accumulated 242 hits and a .350 batting average (you'll learn later about batting averages.)

Although he was small in stature for American baseball, he proved he belonged.

He has a friendly demeanor and plays for the Seattle Mariners. Watching him up at bat is an awesome experience.

Baseball is Part of American Culture

c) So much of our culture is steeped in baseball lingo, terminology, humor, and history, such as:

Baseball adds color to our language:

After a date, some men might say to their friends that they, "*got to first base, or to second or third base.*" You almost certainly understand what those terms mean!

"I struck out." means failure, romantically or otherwise.

"I hit a home run." means success.

"Threw me a curve, or curveball" means that one was not expecting, or wasn't able to handle something correctly or in a timely manner.

Reporters can ask "*softball*" or "*hardball*" questions.

Politicians are said to be playing "*hardball*" when they say unkind or unfair things about their opponent.

Rising to local or national prominence in any field, one can be said to be "*In the Big League.*"

"Strike one" is a warning, meaning that one has screwed up and won't be getting too many more chances.

"Three strikes, you're out!" means too many mistakes.

..... and you thought you didn't know *anything* about baseball!

Baseball adds fun to our lives:

Popular culture has always used baseball as a source of humor. You can enjoy it without knowing anything about the game when it's well done.

'Who's on First?' is a classic comedy sketch which Bud Abbot and Lou Costello performed thousands of times in live shows, on radio and in their movies.

Variations of it are sometimes used by other comedians.

'Casey at the Bat' is a classic poem by Ernest L. Thayer, and portrays the raw emotion of the disappointed baseball fan, after expecting the ego-driven batter (Casey) to hit a home run.

The last verse reads:

"Oh, somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright.
The band is playing somewhere, and somewhere hearts are light.
And, somewhere men are laughing, and little children shout,
but there is no joy in Mudville
- mighty Casey has struck out."

Great People in Baseball and American History

Some players have become part of America's history, not just Baseball's Hall of Fame. There have been some great administrators too that showed by their actions they were interested in more than just the bottom line in their ledger.

Yogi Berra

I promised Mel that he could have some space here to explain why Yogi Berra is his favorite baseball player ever.

Mel: Tammy, thanks for letting me take a little space here and fill our readers in about this truly unique individual. He's not to be confused with Yogi Bear, though the Hanna-Barbera cartoon character *was* named after him.

Yogi Berra is probably second in baseball folklore to Babe Ruth, but many times more interesting. Yogi (Lawrence Peter) got his nickname from a friend who said that he looked like a Hindu holy man (a Yogi).

For my money, he was the greatest baseball player who ever lived, but he's probably most well-known for the amusing things he has said. Yogi is still alive as of this writing, and is still unintentionally saying funny things.

Here are some Yogi-isms:

"Baseball is 90 percent mental. The other half is physical."

"A nickel ain't worth a dime any more."

"It's like déjà vu all over again."

"I didn't really say everything I said."

"If you can't imitate him, don't copy him."

"You can observe a lot by watching."

"If you come to a fork in the road, take it."

"I usually take a two-hour nap, from one o'clock to four."

"If the people don't want to come out to the park, nobody's going to stop them."

"You've got to be very careful if you don't know where you're going because you might not get there."

"If you don't know where you are going, you will end up somewhere else. "

"Nobody goes there any more because it's too crowded."

"I'm not going to buy my kids an encyclopedia. Let them walk to school like I did."

"Little League Baseball is a very good thing because it keeps the parents off the streets."

"I think Little League is wonderful. It keeps the kids out of the house."

"It gets late early out there."

"He hits from both sides of the plate. He's amphibious."

"The other teams could make trouble for us if they win."

"You give 100 percent in the first half of the game, and if that isn't enough in the second half you give what's left."

"You should always go to other people's funerals, otherwise, they won't come to yours."

Yogi's wife Carman: "Yogi, you are from St. Louis, we live in New Jersey, and you played ball in New York. If you go before I do, where would you like me to have you buried?"

Yogi: "Surprise me."

"It ain't the heat, it's the humility."

"The towels were so thick there I could hardly close my suitcase."

When told by the New York mayor's wife that he looked cool in his new summer suit, he replied, "You don't look so hot yourself."

"I always thought that record would stand until it was broken."

A waitress once asked Yogi how many slices she should cut his pizza. He said, "You better make it four, I don't think I could eat eight."

And finally (because this has to end somewhere), "We made too many wrong mistakes."

Lou Gehrig

Then, there was **Lou Gehrig** who died of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS which progressively weakens and then destroys the motor neurons (parts of the nervous system that connect the brain with the skeletal muscles and control such actions as walking and talking.) It was a disease without a name at the time and is now referred to as the 'Lou Gehrig disease'.

Lou Gehrig was born on Friday, June 19 1903, in New York, NY.

He was just a few days from 20 years old when he joined the big league with the New York Yankees on June 15, 1923.

Hank Aaron

Bad Henry and Hammerin' Hank are his nicknames. At this writing, he is still living. He was born February 5, 1934 and made his baseball debut in 1954.

Moses "Fleet" Fleetwood.

Moses "Fleet" Fleetwood played before rules regarding segregation (brought about by powerful Caucasians), were established. He was a great player by any standard, as was Jackie Robinson, but Fleet's career was cut short because of the prejudice which was prevalent at the time. Fleet was 67 when he died May 11, 1994, in Cleveland.

Tough Question:

If you want to stump a baseball fan, get ready for an argument and ask, "Who was the first Afro American man to play major league baseball?"

The response you will get, most of the time, is Jackie Robinson, but the answer is Moses "Fleet" Fleetwood.

You can win money with trivia like that!

Branch Rickie

Branch Rickie was the promoter for the Brooklyn Dodgers who brought Jackie Robinson's skills to aid his team and, by doing that, helped to break the color barrier in baseball.

Baseball continues to be a part of the healing racial inequities in American culture as more and more big league players come from ethnic minorities and even from outside the United States. In this way, the game of baseball acts as a Goodwill Ambassador around the World.

Jackie Robinson

Jackie Robinson, was the first black man to play in the modern, post 1900, big leagues. He not only had the baseball talent, but the necessary temperament and courage to do so.

Both he and Branch Rickie, the promoter, risked their lives and got heaps of abuse as they pursued their goals.

This was a major turning point in the social and spiritual growth of America. it would now be almost impossible to go back to an America so racially divided as it was in 1947.

If only for that reason alone, watch a baseball game and enjoy the diversity that *is* America.

Babe Ruth

Not many Americans over eight haven't heard who Babe Ruth was and/or something about him.

Babe Ruth was a legend. He has been one of the most talked about baseball players for years. In baseball, you do need to know a few of the top players of all time.

One was George Herman Ruth. Everyone called him '*The Bambino*' or '*The Sultan Of Swat*'

He was a southpaw (left handed). He batted with his bat in his left hand and he threw with his left arm.

His height was 6' 2" and he weighed in at 215 lbs.

He was born February 6, 1895 in Baltimore, MD and he died August 16, 1948 in New York, NY.

He made his baseball debut on July 11, 1914 He played his last game on May 30, 1935.

Babe Ruth was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1936.

Ted Williams

Ted Williams was born on Friday, August 30, 1918 and started with the Boston Red Sox on April 20, 1939. He died on July 5, 2002.

Share Their Game with the Men in Your Life

Most husbands and boyfriends would love for their partners to share with them the experience of watching their games, either live or on TV.

To most fans, baseball is not just a game, it's an experience that lifts their spirits and helps them to release a lot of the tension which builds up in their working week. The satisfaction that they get from watching their team *win* is almost pure joy, and the disappointment from a loss really *hurts*.

There are enough strategy and potential outcomes in any game of baseball to rival chess, but it's more exciting and colorful – it's real!

Although there are reams of information, rules and statistics, you don't need to know much more than you'll read here to have a great time watching baseball with someone special.

If your significant other hollers from the living room, "*Hey, Honey, you gotta see this!*" try to show genuine appreciation and to share his excitement.

You don't have to rush! If the play was spectacular enough, it will be replayed a number of times from different angles, and will undoubtedly be on the six o'clock, nine o'clock and eleven o'clock news.

If you are a mom, your kids will, more than likely, play Tee ball and then Little League. That will get them interested in the Major League Baseball and, if you want to share their interests, you are going to want to know what a shortstop is, or what RBI means.

You'll need that information when you go to a few of her/his games and sit with other parents. I believe that you and your little slugger(s) are going to be a lot happier if you are able to follow the game and talk intelligently about it, during and afterward.

Because of its hold on the American psyche, your children are likely to turn into baseball fans - whether you do or not. Then, if you stayed aloof from their baseball

activity, you will have one less thing in common as they get older. Don't let this happen to you. Stay interested in what your children do.

What is really disappointing to men like Mel is when their partners show that they really do not enjoy watching baseball and that even eating live spiders might rank as more enjoyable! These women have no interest whatsoever in the game and their men cannot share their intense feelings about baseball with them without feeling like a moron.

It would be very satisfying for their men if their partner genuinely tried to get some knowledge and interest in the game so they could enjoy watching pro baseball together.

You might ask a man to about teaching you the important aspects of the game as you watched your team through a season. That will be great fun for you both.

Right or wrong, sensible or not, most men love their sports. If you can get yourself to sit and enjoy it with him, **that would be awesome!**

Baseball players are active, healthy young men, and many women enjoy watching them in the prime of their lives. How about you?

I meet many women that ask me, "Where can I meet men besides a bar?" I immediately think that you don't need to go into bars to meet men.

In sports, you'll find men from all walks of life. You'll find them at a game, in parks, at children's games, women's games. Some are married, but there are many single men either playing or watching sports.

There has got to be lots more reasons to learn enough about Baseball to be able to follow the action and enjoy watching it with those whom you love, but I can't seem to think of any more.

Anyway, that's more than enough, isn't it?

Understanding Baseball

Baseball is easy to understand. It's more than likely that you already know the rudiments of the game. The difference between professional baseball (hardball), Little League, Softball, and Slow-pitch are minor.

The terminology and basic rules are the same:

Slow-pitch

The ball in this version of the game is bigger and softer than the softball and is pitched in a high (over six foot) arc.

The ball is easy to hit but difficult to send very far. For the most part, slow-pitch is played for those of us just starting to move past our prime. It's mostly play on weekends just for fun, but there are leagues around the country; men's or women's and mixed.

The ball is easy to hit, so there is a lot of action on the field and everyone has plenty of opportunity to get into the action, both hitting and fielding.

Pro Baseball - Hardball

The Appeal of a low-scoring game.

At the professional (pro) men's level, the game can often be a pitcher's game without a lot of scoring. So, you may wonder what is the fun in watching those sort of pro games?

It is fun!

There is a lot of strategy as well as the action. There's the heroism, success and failure and the spectacle of players pushing themselves to their physical limits.

A pitching duel is very subtle and stimulating. It require quick thinking and very quick reflexes.

Anyone can come to appreciate it, when you've learnt something about the

personalities involved and their respective reputations, and the expectations their fans have for them.

That's when watch the game becomes more fun for your and your partner as well.

A low-scoring game plays out much faster than a high scoring one, but one swing of the bat that gets a player waiting on base over the home plate (a home run) might happen at any time. And, just one is often the difference in those games!

It has been said that one outstanding play makes the entire game worth watching.

Baseball Equipment

Bat

Baseball bats are smooth and rod-shaped and mostly, though not always, made of wood. The thickest part of baseball bat (the barrel) has a diameter of 70mm and the bat itself is 1067mm in length. The barrel is the thickest part of baseball bat and a specific part of the barrel-sweet spot- is for hitting the baseball. The batter needs to hit the ball hard with the bat to either score runs himself or help runners who are already on the first, second or third base get home and thus score runs or, at least get to other bases.

The barrel thins down at the tip, or end, of the bat. The top portion of the barrel also narrows to become the handle. The batter holds the bat firmly by its thin handle. Metal bats have handles covered with cloth or rubber for better grip. A knob at the top of the handle prevents the bat from slipping from the batter's hands.

Professional baseball permits only wooden bats, but metal as well as wooden bats are used in amateur baseball. Recently, more competitions are requiring only wooden bats to be used as the lighter metal bats exert greater velocity on the ball, which can be dangerous for the fielding team. Some of those accidents are fatal.

Most wooden bats are of maple, bamboo, ash, and hickory. Bats made out of maple are probably the most popular.

The Baseball

A Baseball is around nine inches in circumference and weighs around five ounces. Smaller balls are used in children's leagues. The ball's center (sometimes called the 'ball cork') may be cork, rubber or a combination of both. The ball then has many layers of linear materials like twine, yarn, or wool. Finally, it has a leather cover with two pieces stitched together by 104 stitches of waxed, red cotton thread.

Historically, a single ball was in use throughout the game. Ball replacement was only permitted if the ball suffered extensive damage. The ball would become very dirty and suffer burst seams and tears.

Today, many dozens of baseball balls are used in a single professional game of baseball. Most often, spectators can keep baseballs which are hit outside by batters.

In fact, it was recently said that no baseball in professional sports is used more than seven times.

The Baseball Playing Area.

The field consists of the **infield** and the **outfield**.

The **infield** is a 90-foot square, called a diamond, with first, third, and home base being on the inside three of the corners of this square.

The pitcher's plate is made of rubber and is 60 feet 6 inches from home plate in a straight line with second base.

The center of second base is 127 feet, 3 and 3/8 inches from home plate. Because the infield is square, the third base is also 127 feet, 3 and 3/8 inches from first base.

If these measurements were any different, baseball would be a radically different game. If the bases were 85 feet apart instead of 90, getting a hit would be easier, and innings might last three times as long. Of course, if the bases were 95 or 100 feet apart, getting a hit would be more difficult.

If the pitcher were any closer, only the very best athletes could hope to ever hit a good fastball. If the pitcher were more away from home plate, then almost everyone could.

There is an illustration on the next page:

A Woman's Guide to Enjoying Baseball with Her Man
Or
Why Should She Care?

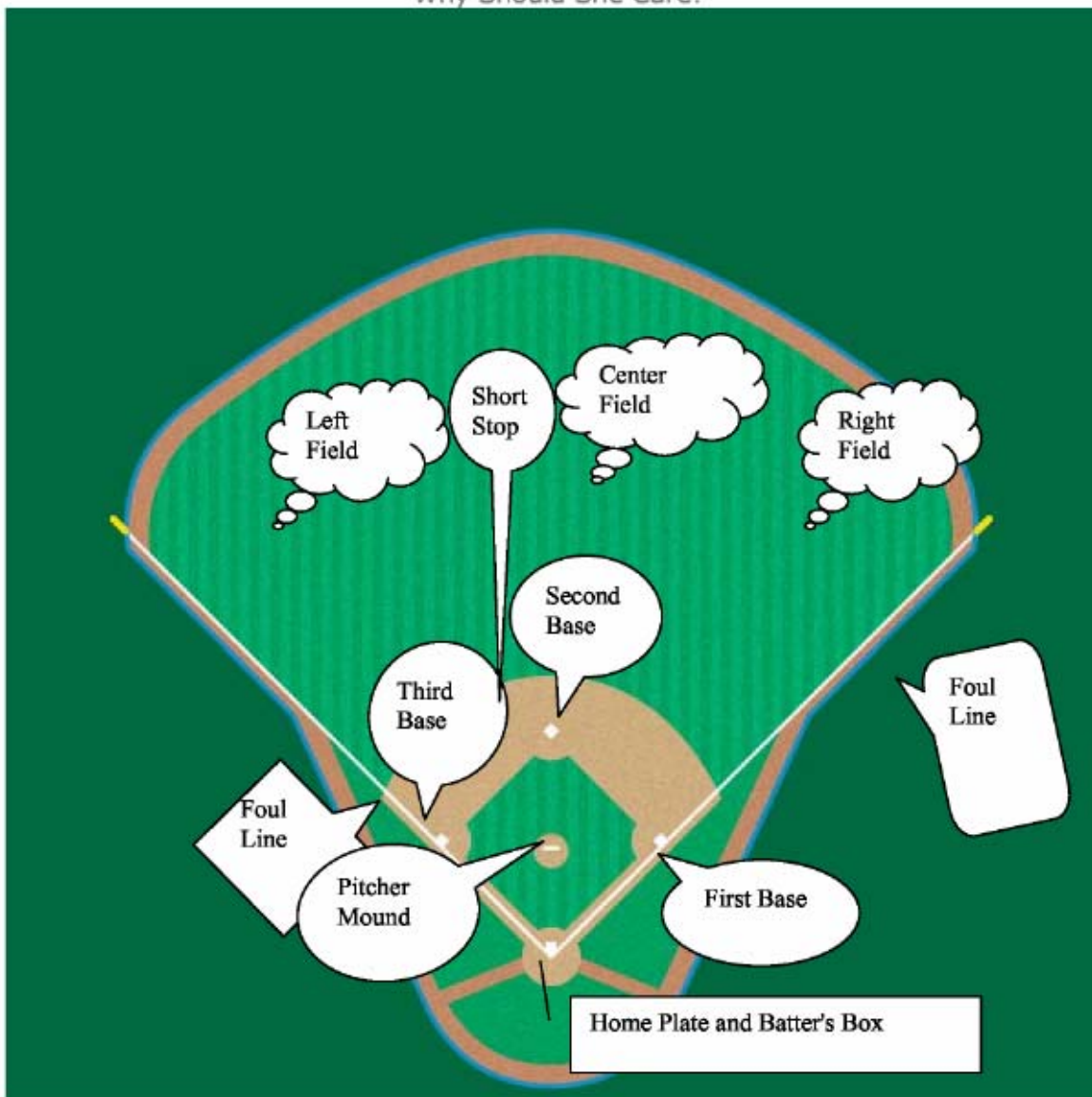


Illustration of a Baseball Field.

Special Permission to use the Field Image was given by Tom Tippett, President of Diamond Mind, Inc. Its images were designed for use in its flagship product, which is called Diamond Mind Baseball, and its web site address is www.diamond-mind.com. Give it a visit!

When you stand at home base, also known as the batter's box area, and look straight forward, you'll see the pitcher mound in the middle. Look to the right, going up the side of diamond, and you'll see **first base**.

To your left, angled in toward the pitcher and straight-ahead, is **third base**.

There are two foul lines, which are created by extending two sides of the infield-square for a minimum distance of 320 feet from the point of home plate. The first base foul line is on the right and the third base foul line on the left.

From home plate (base), the distance to the centerfield fence should be at least 400 feet. **Center field** is that area of the outfield that lies in a direct line from home through second base. **Left field** is that area of the outfield to the left of center field, and **right field** is to the right of center.

The **outfield** is everything past the infield, in-between the foul lines.

The **pitcher's plate** is two feet long by six inches wide and is embedded in the **pitcher's mound**, which is a small dirt hill ten inches higher than the rest of the infield.

Players and Their Positions

The outfield positions are **left field**, **right field** and **center field**.

In the **infield** are the **pitcher**, **catcher**, **first baseman**, **second baseman**, **third baseman**, and **shortstop**.

There is also the **third base coach** and the **first base coach**. These are players dressed in uniform that help the runner decide what to do.

The **first base coach** is only responsible for the runner from the time he hits the ball until he reaches first base, and then from when he leaves first base and heads for second base.

The first base coach encourages the runner to run over the bag on the first base to keep his speed, or may tell him to move on to second base. He will tell the runner on first if it looks safe to steal second. The first base coach must keep an eye on how deep the infielders are positioned. It also doesn't hurt the team spirit to congratulate a runner for getting safely to first base.

The **third Base Coach** has a lot more responsibilities.

They remind the runners to tag the third base, and to remember to step on the home plate when they run for home.

He can see where the ball is as the runner is running and he can tell him to slide by signaling with his hands:

- SLIDE - Hold both hands out wide apart with palms down
- STAND UP - Hold both hands out wide apart with palms up.
- GO HOME - Windmill motion with left arm.

Left Handed Bias

There are positions in baseball that many parents think that their children are being

kept away from. That may sometimes be true. It turns out that there are seldom, if any, left handed players as shortstop, third base, second base and only a few left-handed catchers have played in the Major League.

This example shows why right-handed players are preferred for some positions:

When a player fields a ball, they have to then throw it to first base. Naturally, this is much easier to do with the right hand. It takes fewer movements to throw to the left with the right hand. This is very true when a player has to throw the ball almost 80mph from distances further than 120 feet. In pro ball, you cannot afford to lose any part of a second to scoop up the ball and throw it to first base fast.

One leftie was Babe Ruth, who said he had to catch the ball with a right-handed mitt and throw the mitt to the ground, then throw the ball.

Being a Catcher was not his main area of play. A special left-handed catcher's mitt is a rare mitt indeed (they can be specially ordered.)

Many people can see the reasoning of a shortstop, third and second base not being left-handers, but wonder about the catcher. A left-handed catcher can have problems protecting stolen bases from second to third. Any right-handed batter would be in the way of his throw to third base.

It is very rare, and almost not heard of, to find a left-handed player at any of those positions in the major or minor leagues of baseball.

But, many 'lefties' play first base, pitcher, or outfield.

It sounds like it isn't fair, but, by the time a child is 12, he will know what position he can play best, and more naturally.

The Game of Baseball

Professional baseball (hardball) is divided into nine innings. Each innings are split in two sections; the top and the bottom.

At the top of each inning, the visiting team sends each of its players to bat, one at a time, in a rotating order which is determined by their manager. Each batter, in turn, goes to home plate and face the home team's pitcher until three outs are recorded by the home team against the team at bat.

The manager may change the batting order from game to game, but it cannot be altered once it is set for a particular game, except by substitutions. Also, once a man has been taken out of the game and replaced by another player, he may not return to take any further part in that game.

A batter that hits the ball has to become a runner and get on to a base. A hit may be a single, double, triple, or home run depending on how many bases the batter covers before the ball is retrieved.

A batter may receive a base on if he is walked after having four balls (un-hittable deliveries pitched to him.)

Sometimes, the batter can get hit with a pitch which is generally painful and not always an accident.

This causes hurt feelings.

Sometimes retribution is delivered by his team's pitcher when the pitcher whose pitch struck him takes his turn at bat. But, the hurt batter may try for immediate retaliation by rushing the pitcher with the intention of punching him out. This is a bad mistake:

- x He's going to get kicked out of that game - and maybe the next few as well.
- x The pitcher can see him coming and, as he is standing on a hill a full ten inches higher than the rest of the field, he has plenty of time to prepare a

punch of his own.

This, of course, will empty both benches onto the field of play. That's just one of the reasons it is called hardball.

The obvious aggressiveness is not supposed to be a part of the game, but it is. Baseball fans should not enjoy the spectacle of both teams emptying on to the field and fighting, but most of them obviously do (blame it on "men being men"!)

A **runner** can be forced out, or, if he is not in contact with any of the bases (which are safe), he can be tagged out.

Common ways in which a batter can be out include:

The **batter** may fail to reach base by striking out, grounding out, flying out, or he can get thrown out (of the game) for arguing with the umpire.

Force Out: Ground out is one of the many types of force-outs.

Ground Out: Batter hits ball on the ground, player of the defensive team recovers the ball and throws to another defensive player standing on first base before the runner arrives at first base. This is Ground Out.

Strike Out: Strike out is when pitcher successfully does not allow the batter to hit the ball. Or, the batter hits foul balls.

(A foul ball is when the batter hits the ball, but it goes outside or down the foul line on the baseball field.)

Tag Out: Runner is tag out when defensive player touches offensive player with ball in hand.

Fly Out: When batter hits the ball and defense player catches the ball before hitting the ground, it is Fly out.

It's a strike when:

The batter swings at a pitch and misses.

If the batter doesn't swing at a pitch that is over home plate, between the batter's knees and armpits, *and* the home plate umpire calls it a strike

The batter hits or bunts the pitched ball out of the field of play (called a foul ball), or the batter 'foul tips' the ball and it flies straight back and is caught by the catcher.

A foul tip is when the bat nips the ball, and you can hear the ball hit the wood, but the ball usually doesn't go anywhere, and is considered a foul ball. A foul ball is considered a strike, and the first two ticks are considered strikes, and count against the player, the batter can continue to tick after that and it is not a strike. A batter can hit a foul ball twice, and have both foul balls counted as a strike each. Any foul ball after that will not be the third strike.

A **foul tip** that is caught by the catcher is a strike.

When the batter does nothing but just lets the ball pass and the ball travels over home plate between the armpit and the knees of the batter and in the strike zone that's a strike unless he already has two strikes against him.

The batter also strikes out if, after two strikes, he foul tips the ball and it flies straight back and is caught by the catcher.

Unfortunately, umpires are human and sometimes (some fans would suggest that some/most umpires do it far too often!) call strikes that are outside the strike zone, which upsets the batter and, conversely, they sometimes (often) call a pitch which touches the strike zone (obvious to everyone but him) a 'ball.' That, of course, upsets the pitcher and his team and their fans.

One of the rules of the game is that one may not argue with the umpire, so a pitch that is called a strike is a strike whether it was over the plate or not. And, I'll tell you right now that the consequences of arguing with the umpire is no small matter; what the umpire says, goes!

Three strikes and you're out!

Definition of a Foul Tip:

In baseball, a **foul tip** is a batted ball that goes sharp and direct from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught.

When a foul tip occurs, a strike is recorded against the batter. The batter does not become a runner. If the batter had two strikes before the foul tip, he has struck out.

A foul tip is neither a foul ball nor a fair ball. Many fans and sportscasters will mistakenly describe a low foul ball batted straight back as a "foul tip".

After a batter has two strikes on him, he may hit any number of foul balls until he gets a hit, gets hit with the ball, gets walked, grounds out, flies out, or strikes out. This is true unless he tries to **bunt** the ball (hit it softly) with two strikes and it goes foul. In that case, he has struck out.

Definition of 'Ball'

A '**ball**' is when a pitcher pitches the ball outside the strike zone and the batter does not swing at the ball. The umpire calls out

The umpire will call BALL one, two, three or four.

Four un-swung on pitches out of the strike zone (called a walk, or a base on balls) allows the batter to drop his bat and walk to first base.

He's safe! If a player is on first base, he will walk to second, and if there is a player on first, and second, they will walk to the next base. If the bases were loaded (all three bases filled), then the player on third base will walk home to score a home run. And, the bases will still be loaded.

The umpire doesn't call it a strike because he thinks it was either too low, too high, too far inside (off the plate *towards* the batter), or too far outside (off the plate *away* from the batter).

Keeping track of the balls and strikes is called **the count** and is one of the

responsibilities of the **home plate umpire**.

A **ground out** is when the batter hit's the ball, the ball hits the ground, and a defensive player gets the ball and throws it to the first baseman (whose foot must be touching first base) before the runner steps on first base.

'**First base**' is the only base a runner can over-run; touch and run past, without being tagged out, as long as he runs off the base into foul territory (to the right). He then goes back to first base and is '**safe on first**'.

A **fly out** occurs when the batter hits the ball into the air and the opposing team catches the ball. The batter is out even if the ball is caught in foul territory.

When a man (runner, offensive player) is on first and the batter hits a fair ball which hits the ground, the runner on first must advance to second base before the ball is thrown to the second baseman. If the runner does not reach second base before the ball gets to the second baseman or any defensive player with his foot on the base, he is **forced out**. As with first base, the runner does not need to be tagged; touched by the opponent with the ball, to be forced out.

This is one of the rules that make baseball so much fun to watch because, once the runner at second is thrown (forced) out, the second baseman can then make an attempt at the runner going to first base. As before, if the ball gets to the first baseman before the runner reaches first base, then that runner is out also. That is called a **double play**.

The same holds true when runners are already on first and second base; If the next batter puts the ball onto the ground, both runners that are already on bases must get to their next respective base, to make room for the man going to first.

Two runners cannot occupy the same base. The force then is on third and/or second. If the bases are loaded, that is, runners on all three bases, then the force is at home plate and, as long as the ball beats the runner to the plate, and the catcher's foot is on home plate, the runner need not be tagged; he is **forced out**.

One of the things to watch for when the defense attempt a double play is the man sliding into second base. He knows that he is out, so what he will attempt to do is disrupt the second baseman's throw to first by sliding into his feet, forcing the baseman to throw while jumping.

Strangely enough, this does not cause hard feelings and this move is seldom successful because the level of talent in the Major Leagues is so very high.

It does highlight the talents of that second baseman.

The rules of hardball allow a runner, at the risk of being caught off base and being tagged out, to leave the base he is on and lead off towards the next one before the ball is pitched. This gives him such a head start towards the next base, if the batter gets a hit, that he should in most cases be able to take two bases.

If the batter hits a grounder and the runner is already halfway to second, the defense usually takes the easy out at first, and the double play has been avoided.

If the batter flies out, the runner may not advance unless he is on base when the ball is caught or unless he goes back to that base and touches it (tags up) after it is caught; and, if the runner has taken a lead off of any of the bases and the ball is caught, he must go back to the base he was on before the ball gets there or he is also out, without having to be tagged.

So, we have our batter at the plate with a full count. Now we need to know how many outs there are, how many runners are on base, and what bases they are on. It makes every difference.

Examples

This gets a bit technical in parts and you probably don't need all the information and details that are here.

But, I didn't have the heart to tell Mel that we wouldn't use at least some of his deeper research, after he put so much effort and his highly-valued own time into it.

Take a quick scan through it and then come back later if you want to test your knowledge and understanding of the great game against Mel's carefully worked-up imaginary examples.

No outs, no one on base:

With no outs and no one on base, our batter must be the lead-off batter; the first player at bat for his team in this inning. The count is full and the pitcher must try to throw a strike. He does not want to walk the lead-off batter. That's about the worst thing a pitcher can do, and will give the manager ulcers while cheering up the other team, as it gives them many options.

Sometimes, a pitcher will intentionally walk a man, but walking the lead off batter is always a mistake. If the runner (the batter who was walked) reaches second or third base, he is in scoring position; a hit, even a single, should bring him home to score a run.

In our scenario, the batter reaches first base. He was either unintentionally walked, hit a single, or got hit by the pitch. In any case, he is on first base, he is quick and has a record of stealing second base.

Yes, there is **stealing** in baseball! A man on any base can wait for an opportune time to sneak off one base, and make a mad dash to the next base. It's legal and it can make a pitcher very edgy as he watches those thieves trying to get home by stealing bases.

This can greatly change the options of the pitcher and the positioning of the infield players, especially the first baseman. With no runners on first base, the first

baseman places himself in the best possible defensive position with regard to the man at bat.

With a man on first, however, he has to keep that man close to the bag (base) by being close to it himself, in case the pitcher throws the ball to him in an attempt to pick off the runner on first.

(Pick a runner off; when a man on base becomes a runner by trying to steal a base, the pitcher can stop his pitch, throw a fast ball to the man guarding the base, and try to tag the "thief" with the ball and put him out.)

This keeps the runner from taking too big a lead towards second base, which would make stealing too easy. The runner on first base, the pitcher and the player guarding first base must all be very alert in this particular position.

Holding the runner close to first opens a big hole, or gap, in the infield between first and second base, weakening the defense.

The third baseman, with our base-stealer on first, also must position himself differently than if the bases were empty.

Not many ballplayers bunt with the bases empty, or with two outs.

The chances are that he will be thrown out at first but, with zero outs and a base stealer on first or second, the third baseman must assume that the next batter will bunt. So he moves closer to home to be in position for a bunt down the third base foul line, which takes him out of the best overall defensive position.

If the third baseman doesn't do this, the next batter *will* bunt. If the third baseman does position himself for the bunt attempt, he is more vulnerable to a line drive, or a hard grounder in his direction, or a blooper (softly hit fly ball) over his head.

With a man on first base, especially one known for stealing bases, the pitcher can't focus on the batter alone, but must pay attention to the runner as well. This will sometimes rattle a pitcher so badly that his pitching suffers and he may walk the next batter, or get behind in the count, i.e., 1-0, 2-0, 3-0, 2-1 or even 3-1.

The farther he gets behind in the count, especially at 3-0 and 3-1, the more certain it becomes to everyone that he must throw a strike. This is all very cozy for the batter, as his chances of getting a pitch that he can hit go way up.

The only problem for the batter is that however much he (and everyone else) knows that the pitcher must throw a strike, the pitcher may, for whatever reason, not be able to.

It is standard practice in baseball when the count becomes 3-0, to take the next pitch; to not swing at it no matter how inviting it looks.

This keeps the batter from swinging at what might have been ball four.

It also gives the batter a good look at what the pitcher is likely to throw at him again.

The batter (if the manager hasn't made the decision for him) can decide to let another pitch go by, no matter how good it looks. If the pitcher doesn't choke, and throws the next two pitches for strikes, the count becomes three balls and two strikes.

The pitcher still has to throw yet another strike, which sometimes he does and sometimes he doesn't.

If it were an easy thing to do, pitchers wouldn't be getting paid so dangd much to do it. And to a large extent, this is sometimes the pitcher's saving grace.

If the batter knew for certain that the next pitch (with the count full) was going to be thrown for a strike, he would always swing, and no one would ever be unintentionally walked.

With no outs, if the runner on first base does not steal second, it becomes the duty of his teammates to put him into scoring position by advancing him to second base with a sacrifice bunt or a sacrifice fly.

Bunting and 'using your outs' to move runners along is called playing 'little ball',

and not every ballplayer is efficient at it. Nor is it always desirable. The manager may want his better hitters to try to get a hit or, at least, to drive the ball deep enough into the outfield so that, even if it is caught, the runner(s) will be able to advance.

Although a "sac" (sacrifice) fly ball is not as desirable as a hit, it is valuable and goes on the batters record. It helps to show that he's a team player.

In the latter innings of a low scoring game, however, or anytime that one run will make a difference in the outcome, it's the team that can play these balls that has the advantage.

Where were we? Oh, yeah.

We've got a runner on first, no outs. We need to know the score and we need to know where we are in the game.

So, let's complete the scene:

The score is tied, two runs each, it's the *bottom* of the fourth, a man on first, with no outs and the count is 3-1. We now know that the home team is at bat and in good position to try and execute any number of options.

The first baseman is holding our man close at first. The third baseman is much closer to home and ready to charge a bunt in his direction, so the manager of the home team, using a series of hand signals (possibly including pulling on his ears, pinching his chin, pointing to his nose, patting his belly, or, in many other ways), communicates to the batter and the runner that he wants them to execute what is called the '**hit and run**'.

This means is that he believes that the pitcher will throw a strike or a pitch that his batter should be able to get his stick on, and he is ordering his runner to run and his batter to try to put the ball into play anyway he can. The manager could have signaled for a bunt, but decided to be more aggressive.

Sometimes, just knowing that one *must* swing on the next pitch (because the

manager called for it), makes one a better hitter. When the manager signals for the 'hit and run', it becomes the batter's duty to put the ball in play or foul it off.

If the batter puts it safely in play (gets a hit), the runner should be able to easily get to third base because he is already running with the pitch.

If he fouls it off, the runner goes back to first and the batter has two strikes on him instead of one. If he fails to swing, or swings and fails to connect (foul it off), the runner is apt to be thrown out at second.

In our make-believe game, our batter gets a hit to shallow left field, which is normally only good for a single, but the runner comes in to third so fast (because of the 'hit and run') that the left fielder is afraid that he might turn the corner (third base) and make it home to score.

So, instead of hitting the cutoff man (the third baseman), he throws the ball all the way home, which prevents the lead runner from scoring, but allows the batter/runner to get to second base.

Exciting game, huh?

So now, in the bottom of the fourth with the scores tied, runners on second and third and no outs, the pitcher faces the third batter of the inning. All this has happened so fast that the relief pitcher hasn't even started to warm up yet, as he was not to come into the game until the sixth inning.

This pitcher is in deep trouble. His manager doesn't want to go to the bullpen (relief pitchers) just yet. He wants to get at least five innings out of his starting pitcher, who will need four or five days rest before he can pitch again.

The manager is desperately hoping that his ace (starting pitcher) will get out of this jam.

This pitcher would like to leave the game after five innings with his team in the lead. If he leaves the game with less than five innings pitched then he won't get credit for the win if his team does go on to win the game. Even after pitching five

innings, if he leaves the game with his team trailing, he won't get credit for the win if his team comes back to win it; another pitcher on his team will. And if his team loses the game, he will have that loss on his record.

A batter may hit the winning "**RBI**" (runs batted in), but pitchers get the credit for wins and losses.

Facing the third batter of this inning, with two runners in scoring position, this pitcher needs an easy out. A strikeout would do nicely if he can manage it. Feeling the pressure, he tries to 'paint the inside corner' (put his pitch really close to that corner of the home plate) and misses. Ball one.

Now, the catcher runs onto the pitcher's mound to have a little chat with the pitcher. He may be stalling for a little extra time for the relief pitcher to get warmed up, but there is only one thing to talk about. The next pitch must be a strike, period!

So, the pitcher goes into his windup, delivers the pitch and the umpire calls, "Ball two!" The count is now 2-0, and the pitcher seriously wishes he were elsewhere.

Some games are won or lost at this point:

Should the pitcher's manager go to the bullpen and replace him?

Should the manager of the team at bat try and score the man on third by signaling the batter to bunt, and the runner on third to steal home (a squeeze play)?

This pitcher is shaken and is probably going to be replaced as soon as *his* manager can, uh, manage it, which will be as soon as the relief pitcher can be made ready.

Our pretend manager of the batting team signals to his batter to 'take' the next pitch, hoping that it too will be a ball. It's not. The count goes to 2-1.

With only one strike, bunting is still an option, but the count favors the batter and the manager hopes that he can get more from this situation than one run, which isn't a sure thing anyway. So he signals his batter to use his own judgment.

This is a fortunate decision this time, as the pitcher, not wanting to go 3-1 in the

count, tries to 'jam' our batter (a pitch on the inside of the plate near the batter's hands) but makes a 'mistake' and throws a fastball through the 'heart' of the strike zone, in our batter's 'wheelhouse'. The batter gets the 'sweet spot' of the bat on it for a 'dinger'- a 'four bagger' a 'homer'- and he gets to 'touch 'em all' (all the bases – a home run!

The score is now two (visiting team's score first) to five, and still no outs.

Let's back up a bit. We can do this in an example or a movie but, unfortunately for any pitcher that got into that situation, never in a real baseball game.

Anyway, we'll go back to no outs, runners on second and third. This pitcher is in deep trouble and needs an easy out.

Let's give it to him.

The batter hits an easy infield fly, which prevents the runners from moving up or scoring.

So we have one out, and runners still on second and third.

Now, what the defense needs is a double play to get them out of the inning. But, with first base open, the runners are not forced to advance to the next base, so a double play is not very likely.

With only one out, even if the next batter grounds out at first or flies out, the runner at third is likely to score, so the next batter is sometimes walked intentionally, which loads the bases, to keep the double play in order.

This is a very dangerous move and many considerations go into the making of it. Generally speaking, each batter in the lineup is not as good as the one preceding him, so walking a man brings the pitcher to the next best hitter, and presumably, an easier out.

However true that may be, it is an insult to that batter. The man in front of him was just walked so that the pitcher could get to him.

This is a huge opportunity for him to show that he is a 'clutch' hitter (a good hitter in tight situations). A hit now, a 'single', scores two runs, a double or triple scores three, and a home run with the bases loaded (grand slam) scores four.

The pressure on the batter is huge, but nothing to what the pitcher is feeling. He has nowhere to put this next batter. The bases are full and walking in a run is not an option. He must throw strikes. But, time after time, pitchers will get behind in the count.

A strikeout is always the pitcher's goal. Failing that, he needs a grounder to an infielder who, with the bases loaded, can go to any base for the force out, and from there to first, or the next closest base to first, completing the double play.

Suppose, with one out, that the batter does hit a ground ball to the shortstop (the defensive player between the second and third baseman), and he throws it to the second baseman, (out # two) who turns the double play by getting the ball to the first baseman before the runner gets there (out # three).

BUT the man on third has crossed home plate *before* the double play was completed. Does this score a run? Good question. The answer is, "No, it does not."

Why? Because out # three was the result of a force out.

Would crossing home plate have counted as a run if, with two outs, the man on third crossed home plate before a double play was completed where the third out was the result of a tag out and not a force out? Yes!

Example #2

As the batter approaches the plate for his turn at bat, the count on him is 0-0, no balls no strikes. Balls are always counted first, then the strikes.

If the pitcher throws a strike on his first pitch to this batter, the count becomes 0-1, pronounced "oh and one." The pitcher is now *ahead* in the count, and has a distinct advantage over the batter at this point.

Maybe the next pitch is a ball. The count then goes to 1-1 (one and one). The count

is now even. The batter fouls the next pitch off, (a strike) and the count goes to 1-2.

This is very much in the pitcher's favor as one more strike on this batter retires him, (strikes him out).

The batter no longer has the luxury of waiting for a good pitch to hit. To keep from striking out, he must 'protect the plate'; try to get his bat on every pitch that the umpire might call a strike, and either put it in play or foul it off.

One way to protect the plate is to 'choke up on the bat'. That means that he slides his grip a few inches higher on the bat, away from the knob on the handle. This gives him more control of the bat but reduces the power he can apply to each hit.

The pitcher, on the other hand, knows the batter's dilemma (being down 1-2 in the count) and can now throw him at least two pitches that are off the plate, even in the dirt, hoping the batter will chase these garbage pitches and strike out.

The batter will often do just that.

But, for our example, our batter is patient, has a good eye, doesn't chase these two pitches, and is fortunate in that the umpire also sees these last two offerings as balls.

The count is now three balls and two strikes (3-2). This is called a **full count**.

A full count is sometimes also referred to as either a long count, three-two count or a three-and-two count.

The umpire shows the count with the fingers of his hands; balls on the left and strikes on the right.

When the score is 3-2, the umpire will hold both hands up with his fists closed. It's called a full count.

In this situation, the pitcher must throw a strike or the batter walks. The batter, on the other hand, still has to swing at any pitch that the umpire might call a strike.

This is a classic tense situation and very exciting for the fans.

The pitcher, whatever his intentions, could easily fail to throw a strike and the batter, in his anxiety, will swing at a possible 'ball' so that he strikes himself out!

In this example I've kept it fairly simple! Nothing was mentioned about whether there was a man on base or not.

With no one on base, the pitcher can take chances with his pitches that he wouldn't be as free to do with a man on first, even less so with a man on second, and probably never with a man on third. With any runner on one or more of the bases, a wild pitch (error on pitcher) or a passed ball (error on catcher) would probably get the runner from third home to score, or advance the runner from first to second, or from second to third. Stopping the advancement of the other team's runners is the main objective of the entire defensive team.

Baseball Traditions and Legends

The Presidential First Pitch

Popular memory has been unkind to William Howard Taft, 27th President of the United States, who surely would have wished to be remembered for something nobler than his weight. At 300 pounds, he is the heaviest chief executive on record. It's the rare biographical sketch that doesn't mention the giant bathtub — spacious enough to accommodate four average-sized men — specially built for him in the White House.

Baseball history has accorded him somewhat more dignity, for it was Taft who launched the tradition of the presidential first pitch on the opening day of the season. The occasion was a game between the Washington Senators and the Philadelphia Athletics on April 14, 1910 at Griffith Stadium. Apparently on the spur of the moment, umpire Billy Evans handed Taft the ball after the rival managers had been introduced and asked him to throw it over home plate.

The president did so with delight. Nearly every chief executive since Taft (the sole exception being Jimmy Carter) has opened at least one baseball season during their tenure by tossing out the first ball.

The seventh-inning stretch

Legend has it that Taft inspired another baseball tradition on that same day, quite by accident. As the face-off between the Senators and the Athletics wore on, the rotund, six-foot-two president reportedly grew more and more uncomfortable in his small wooden chair. By the middle of the seventh inning he could bear it no longer and stood up to stretch his aching legs — whereupon everyone else in the stadium, thinking the president was about to leave, rose to show their respect. A few minutes later Taft returned to his seat, the respectful crowd followed his lead, and the "seventh-inning stretch" had been born.

A charming tale, but folklorists have a saying: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't.

Another claim to the invention of the Seventh Inning Stretch is the story of Brother Jasper of Mary, F. S. C., the man credited with bringing baseball to Manhattan College in the late 1800s. Being the Prefect of Discipline as well as the coach of the team, it fell to Brother Jasper to supervise the student fans at every home game. On one particularly hot and muggy day in 1882, during the seventh inning against a semi-pro team called the Metropolitans, the Prefect noticed his charges becoming restless. To break the tension, he called a time-out in the game and instructed everyone in the bleachers to stand up and unwind. It worked so well he began calling for a seventh-inning rest period at every game. The Manhattan College custom spread to the major leagues after the New York Giants were charmed by it at an exhibition game, and the rest is history (or not, as the case may be.)

As it turns out, baseball historians have located a manuscript dated 1869, thirteen years earlier than Brother Jasper's inspired time-out, that documents what can only be described as a seventh-inning stretch.

It's a letter written by Harry Wright of the Cincinnati Red Stockings, the first pro baseball team. In it, he makes the following observation about the fans' ballpark behavior: "The spectators all arise between halves of the seventh inning, extend their legs and arms and sometimes walk about. In so doing they enjoy the relief afforded by relaxation from a long posture upon hard benches. "

Truth be known, we have no idea where and when the custom of the seventh-inning stretch began. Based on the evidence that exists, it's doubtful that the phenomenon originated with William Howard Taft, or even Brother Jasper. We know it's at least as old as 1869, that it cropped up in various places afterward and that it eventually became a solid tradition. No record of the phrase "seventh-inning stretch" exists before 1920, by which time the practice was already at least 50 years old.

"Where history cannot tell the whole story, folklore arises to fill in the gaps."

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"What's a Jasper?" at the [Manhattan College](#) website

"William Howard Taft." at the [White House History](#) website.

The Language of Baseball.

ace -- A team's best starting pitcher.

alley-- The section of the outfield between the outfielders. Also "gap."

around the horn-- A double play going from third base to second to first.

backdoor slider -- A pitch that appears to be out of the strike zone, but then breaks back over the plate.

bag -- A base.

basket catch -- When a fielder catches a ball with his glove near belt level.

brushback -- A pitch that nearly hits a batter.

can of corn -- An easy catch by a fielder.

caught looking -- When a batter is called out on strikes.

cellar -- Last place. "basement."

cheese -- Also "good cheese." A good fastball.

chin music -- A pitch that is high and inside.

choke up -- Gripping the bat a few inches away from its end for better control.

closer -- A team's relief pitcher that finishes the game.

cutter -- A cut fastball (one with a late break to it).

cycle -- When a batter hits a single, double, triple and home run in the same game.

dinger -- A home run.

gap -- See "alley." A ball hit here is a "gapper."

heat -- A good fastball. Also "heater."

high and tight -- Referring to a pitch that's up in the strike zone and inside on a hitter. Also known as "up and in."

hill -- Pitcher's mound.

homer -- A home run. Other terms include: blast, dinger, dong, four-bagger, four-base knock, moon shot, tape-measure blast and tater.

hot corner -- Third base.

in the hole -- The batter after the on-deck hitter.

jam -- When a hitter gets a pitch near his hands, he is "jammed." Also when a pitcher gets himself in trouble, he is in a "jam."

nail down -- As in "nail down a victory." Refers to a relief pitcher finishing off the game.

pick -- A good defensive play by an infielder on a ground ball. Also a shortened version of "pick-off."

pickle -- A rundown.

punchout -- A strikeout.

ribbie -- Another way of saying RBI. Also "ribeye."

rope -- A hard line drive hit by a batter. Also "frozen rope."

rubber game -- The deciding game of a series.

run-down -- When a base runner gets caught between bases by the fielders.

set-up man -- A relief pitcher that usually enters the game in the 7th or 8th inning.

shoestring catch -- A running catch made just above the fielder's shoe tops.

southpaw -- A left-handed player.

sweet spot -- The part of the bat just a few inches from the barrel.

It is the location on the bat where the ball will travel the furthest distance. It is often referred to as the "fat part" of the bat because it is the thickest part of the bat.

table setter -- Batter whose job is to get on base for other hitters to drive him in.

tape-measure blast -- An extremely long home run.

Texas Leaguer -- A bloop hit that drops between an infielder and outfielder.

Touch 'em all -- Hitting a home run (touching all the bases).

Twin killing -- A double play.

utility player -- A player who fills in at many positions.

wheelhouse -- A hitter's power zone; usually a pitch waist-high and over the heart of the plate.

wheels -- A ballplayer's legs.

whiff -- Strikeout.

Sure Fire Ways to Get an Autograph

Baseball fans want autographs of their favorite baseball players on different items. This is a memento of being with your favorite player at a particular time. Hence, many shy away from pre-signed autographs.

You can increase your chances of getting the autographs you most want by following these tips.

What to Autograph

Keep ready different autograph items like **pens, balls, magazine covers, program books, baseball cards, photos**, etc., to receive autographs of your favorite players. It is easy to toss baseballs and slip small cards through fences to players when they are on field to get their autograph. You could also get autographs on big balls like volleyballs, giant baseballs, etc. You need a clipboard to make an autograph easy to write on for your favorite player. Also, keep bottled water handy to be able to stand for long hours in the sun or shade to meet your player and receive their autograph.

When to get Autographs

The **best** period to add to your collection is during Spring training.

Learn what the team plan is. You can check team plans by visiting their websites to find the location and time of their free practice sessions.

Some players stay back after their game to sign autographs. Some others sign while standing at edge of the field or stands. You could also stand near the path leading to clubhouse from where players alight from the bus to spend few moments with your players and get their autographs.

But, some players may be in a hurry before start of game and may sign autographs while on their way back after practice or game.

Sometimes, players oblige **while going or coming from dugouts**. Some teams do not have bullpens and pitchers sit on field between third base and foul pole. At

times, they just turn around to sign autographs. Some oblige you after completing their workouts at outfields or foul poles. You can also catch a few players at parking lots when they are ready to leave the field and go home.

Strategies

Keep different unique items for getting autograph of players as players find it interesting to sign across unique things. Always be polite to players and fellow enthusiasts and do not resort to any violence or other irritating techniques while trying for an autograph.

Kids and women receive greater preference. However, do not be upset if you are unable to get autographs. Players are out to do a job. Always give them the space and time they need to concentrate and play their game.

If you need to throw your memorabilia for the autograph, wait for your turn. Make eye contact with the player and then aim for your autographed ball.

Funny Baseball Quotes

A baseball game is simply a nervous breakdown divided into nine innings. ~ **Earl Wilson**

When we played softball, I'd steal second base, feel guilty and go back. ~ **Woody Allen**

A baseball park is the one place where a man's wife does not mind him getting excited over somebody else's curves. ~ **Brendan Francis**

Cricket is baseball on Valium. ~ **Robin Williams**

Finish last in your league and they call you Idiot. Finish last in medical school and they call you Doctor. ~ **Abe Lemons**

You see, you spend a good piece of your life gripping a baseball and, in the end, it turns out that it was the other way around all the time. ~ **Jim Bouton, Ball Four, 1970**

If a woman has to choose between catching a fly ball and saving an infant's life, she will choose to save the infant's life without even considering if there are men on base. ~ **Dave Barry**

People ask me what I do in winter when there's no baseball. I'll tell you what I do. I stare out the window and wait for spring. ~ **Rogers Hornsby**

Baseball is the only field of endeavor where a man can succeed three times out of ten and be considered a good performer. ~ **Ted Williams**

No game in the world is as tidy and dramatically neat as baseball, with cause and effect, crime and punishment, motive and result, so cleanly defined. ~ **Paul Gallico**

There are three things in my life which I really love: God, my family, and baseball. The only problem - once baseball season starts, I change the order around a bit. ~ **Al Gallagher, 1971**

Baseball was made for kids, and grown-ups only screw it up. ~**Bob Lemon**

"Ideally, the umpire should combine the integrity of a supreme court justice, the physical agility of an acrobat, the endurance of Job, and the imperturbability of Buddha."**Time Magazine; August 25, 1961**

Baseball is a fun game. It beats working for a living. ~**Phil Linz**

Baseball is a game where a curve is an optical illusion, a screwball can be a pitch or a person, stealing is legal and you can spit anywhere you like except in the umpire's eye or on the ball. ~**Jim Murray**

Baseball is the only sport I know that when you're on offense, the other team controls the ball. ~**Ken Harrelson, Sports Illustrated, 6 September 1976**

Good pitching will beat good hitting any time, and vice versa. ~**Bob Veale, 1966**

Poets are like baseball pitchers. Both have their moments. The intervals are the tough things. ~**Robert Frost**

Many baseball fans look upon an umpire as a sort of necessary evil to the luxury of baseball, like the odor that follows an automobile.**Christy Mathewson**

It breaks your heart. It is designed to break your heart. The game begins in spring, when everything else begins again, and it blossoms in the summer, filling the afternoons and evenings, and then as soon as the chill rains come, it stops and leaves you to face the fall alone. ~**A. Bartlett Giamatti, "The Green Fields of the Mind, " Yale Alumni Magazine, November 1977**

Baseball is the only place in life where a sacrifice is really appreciated. ~**Author Unknown**

It's no coincidence that female interest in the sport of baseball has increased greatly since the ballplayers swapped those wonderful old-time baggy flannel uniforms for leotards. ~**Mike Royko**

Baseball is an allegorical play about America, a poetic, complex, and subtle play of

courage, fear, good luck, mistakes, patience about fate, and sober self-esteem.

~ **Saul Steinberg**

The strongest thing that baseball has going for it today are its yesterdays.

~ **Lawrence Ritter**

Baseball, to me, is still the national pastime because it is a summer game. I feel that almost all Americans are people that summer is what they think of when they think of their childhood. I think it stirs up an incredible emotion within people.

~ **Steve Busby, in**

Washington Post, 8 July 1974

A critic once characterized baseball as six minutes of action crammed into two-and-one-half hours. ~ **Ray Fitzgerald, in Boston Globe, 1970**

More than any other American sport, baseball creates the magnetic, addictive illusion that it can almost be understood. ~ **Thomas Boswell, in Inside Sports**

Baseball is a harbor, a seclusion from failure that really matters, a playful utopia in which virtuosity can be savored to the third decimal place of a batting average.

~ **Mark Kramer**

Hitting is timing. Pitching is upsetting timing. ~ **Warren Spahn**

A baseball game is twice as much fun if you're seeing it on the company's time.

~ **William C. Feather**

Baseball is like a poker game. Nobody wants to quit when he's losing; nobody wants you to quit when you're ahead. ~ **Jackie Robinson**

Baseball is an island of activity amidst a sea of statistics. ~ **Author Unknown**

Baseball is a ballet without music. Drama without words. ~ **Ernie Harwell, "The Game for All America, " 1955**

Pitchers, like poets, are born - not made. ~ **Cy Young**

It actually giggles at you as it goes by. ~**Rick Monday, on Phil Niekro's knuckleball, quoted in Sports Illustrated, 1 August 1983**

The best way to catch a knuckleball is to wait until the ball stops rolling and then pick it up. ~**Bob Uecker**

Baseball statistics are like a girl in a bikini. They show a lot, but not everything. ~**Toby Harrah, 1983**

Baseball is too much of a sport to be called a business, and too much of a business to be called a sport. ~**Philip Wrigley**

Baseball isn't a business, it's more like a disease. ~**Walter F. O'Malley**

Baseball is the only game left for people. To play basketball, you have to be 7 feet 6 inches. To play football, you have to be the same width. ~**Bill Veeck, 1975**

Baseball is drama with an endless run and an ever-changing cast. ~**Joe Garagiola, 'Baseball is a Funny Game'**

Love is the most important thing in the world, but baseball is pretty good too. ~**Greg, age 8**

Mel on 'Baseball and the Game of Life'

Baseball, or any other sport, teaches you many things about real life.

In your younger days, you probably did not find any similarity or connection between baseball and life.

It is only about rushing out to play with friends and win or lose on any specific day. However, as you age, you reminisce about your baseball games and their lessons on life nostalgically.

Baseball or any team sport teaches you excellent lessons on **personal interactions between team members**. You aim to win matches with your teammates and remain together even in the face of defeat. Then you analyze reasons for your defeat and work upon them in your next game of baseball. These valuable skills come in handy in later life; **you do not run away from defeat** and instead, look into other avenues to correct your mistakes and learn valuable lessons from them.

While facing pitcher's ball alone in batter's box, you are trying to score on your own. You strike and win. This gives you an idea about your personal capability. You understand how to go beyond this to achieve still more. Life is also the same story; you cannot back out if you lose, nor can you be static visualizing your past successes. You need to progress ahead always, be it game of baseball or life.

There are good and bad days in baseball. Although you can score well some days, other days you are unable to score and face defeat. **Defeat is an essential part of game and life**. You can't give up just because you lost. You may have lost one game but you learned to perform with greater determination and desire to excel. This helps you handle any kind of situation, be it your next baseball game or life.

You learn over a time that opportunities come across now and then. If you lose one, you can work better at another. You treat both ups and downs with equal ease and proceed ahead with your quests and life in whole.

The Difference between Female and Male Baseball Fans

Baseball is a popular game with both boys and girls alike. Although many still associate baseball to be very masculine or only for boys, that view is not as prevalent as it was.

There are many female baseball players and female fans that watch every move of their favorite baseball players. It is not that they are just out to enjoy a day with their husbands or boyfriends at a baseball match; they are fully aware of game rules and follow baseball games intensely.

Of course, adulation of female and male baseball fans differs greatly. Many female fans adore their favorite baseball players for many different reasons. Some like the way he pitches ball, some like the way batter swings and hits ball, some love his swiftness on baseball field while some are overwhelmed by his excellent behavior and impeccable manners on and off the field. Some female fans love their baseball players for their physical attributes.

However, male baseball fans are a different story altogether. They are more specific about their favorites and their reasons for picking them. They do not go into their physical looks as much as they watch performance of their favorite players. They swear by their capabilities and vouch for their excellent and winning feats.

They remain fully engrossed into game while watching every move and criticizing incorrect and applauding correct moves. This does not conclude that male baseball fans do not adulate their favorite baseball players. Many male baseball fans go berserk over their favorite players and try to manifest their appearances, likings, dislikings, etc.

With all their varied reasons, both male and female baseball fans worship their favorite heroes on the field. They idolize their every move and go to any extent to watch them play game of baseball. It could be that female baseball fans love smile of their favorite player while male baseball fans love his pitching techniques more. In either case, fan adulation remains all too overwhelming and pronounced.

Choosing Baseball Gifts for Baseball-Addicted Men in Your Life

Baseball gifts for the man in your life need to be thoughtful enough to make your boyfriend or husband know how special he is for you. As your man is a baseball addict, you can give these tokens of love on any occasion like birthdays, anniversaries, and special holidays.

However, you need to know his specific favorites to give the perfect gift. It would be best to **accompany him for a game of baseball** and watch with him. This, by itself, will make him happy.

Another aid to choosing the best gift for him is to watch baseball commercials and his reaction to them intently. They will surely provide some more clues for the perfect gift.

While accompanying your man to a baseball game, note the team he cheers for the most. A gift might be just a little more treasured if it has that particular baseball team's insignia.

It could be:

- o a **towel with the team insignia**.
- o an equipment bag for his practice sessions
- o a **commemorative baseball** keepsake or

an **instructional video** about baseball if your man is interested in knowing more about his game.

Whatever the type of gift, you can make your man happy by **wrapping your love and care** in your baseball gift. Even if you fail to get the perfect gift, with a sports gift you can't really go wrong.

'Home Run' Baseball Photography Tips

Baseball is a very popular American game and you can store all your memories of a fantastic afternoon by taking excellent home run photographs of the game with your digital camera. Baseball moves are too swift and you need to freeze actions within split-second reflexes. Combine game photos with those of adjoining areas to relive baseball experiences at a later date.

The following tips can help you in your endeavor:

First check with ballpark rules if you can bring in digital cameras. Some fields impose restrictions on using flash or zoom while some do not allow any cameras at all.

Practice taking photos at high school matches to get a firm grip over camera functioning before taking photos of League baseball matches.

Go through the camera's manual in detail before trying to operate it under the pressure of a real game situation.

You can always wipe bad pictures you take with a digital camera but if you're not fully comfortable with your camera's settings, how to change them, and save photos in the proper format, you'll probably miss some great pictures.

Combine proper picture speed with available light to get good photos. As most baseball games are in bright sunlight, it is simple to click clear photos of baseball action.

Baseball league matches could extend to long hours. So, keep extra batteries handy. You can save on digital camera memory by removing pictures you don't want to keep and possibly make more room available to store the most important and interesting action in the match.

Do not try for continuous photographs of an entire baseball match. That needs huge amount of digital camera memory. Avoid a pitch or a hit here so that you're ready and able to capture the really incredible moments of your game.

Before going to baseball match, know which each team's key players are, and be ready to click them in action. Do not believe that only celebrities provide good actions; there could be emerging players who provide more focused and excellent action. Keep your camera ready to grab those moments.

If you are a fan of the home team, then the best time to take photos of your players is at the beginning of game.

Delete unwanted photos while the game is slow or in an uninteresting phase.

Taking a batter's photo needs practice for efficient focus on the essentials of the batter's action. Zoom appropriately as more zoom lowers shutter speed. Lock your camera's focus by pressing the shutter button halfway and close it fully after clicking at exactly the right moment.

Baseball Trivia

What are the only two (2) days of the year that there are no professional sports played from the (4) four major sports; Football, Basketball, Hockey, or Baseball (MLB, NBA, NHL, and NFL)?

The day before and after the Major League Baseball all-star game.

In baseball, what makes left-handed hitters so successful?

It's a close call, and some believe it doesn't make a difference, but most 'experts' say that:

- A left-handed hitter faces the home plate from a different side. For a pitcher who is not yet used to pitching to lefties, his arsenal of pitches do not have the same effect.
- A normal outside fast-ball to a right-hander becomes an inside fast-ball to a left-handed hitter and the same is true for an inside fast-ball.
- Also, a curve ball curves out for the right-handed would curve in for a left-handed player.
- The difference in how the ball comes to a left-handed hitter is what appears to make left-handers better at hitting.

How about on base hits?

It would seem very logical that a left-handed hitter is a full step closer to first base. How many times are players knocked out on first base by only one step?

What makes left-handed pitchers so successful in baseball?

There are three factors to think about:

1. Left-handed pitchers stand on the mound facing first base, making it much easier to spot base-stealing attempts, and to throw out the runner.

2. The left-handed pitcher's throwing arm is more hidden from view of a right-handed batter, which makes it more difficult for the batter to judge the pitch while it is being thrown.
3. Left-handed pitchers naturally tend to throw the ball towards the left side of the plate (from the batter's perspective), placing the pitch inside for a right-handed batter. An inside pitch in the strike zone is tougher to hit.

A Little History of Baseball

Baseball has a long history dating back to the 18th century. There was a 1791 Pittsfield town's bylaw imposing a ban on baseball.

Professional baseball in the United States began in 1865, but the first true major league, the National League, came up in 1876.

Many leagues came and went after this, but the only other survivor is the American League, founded in 1901. World Series play, between the two leagues, began in 1903.

Women's Baseball History

All-American Girls Professional Baseball (AAGPBL)

The '**All-American Girls Professional Baseball League**' consisted of women who played in the AAGPBL from 1943 to 1954.

The League was set up while many of the major male players were enlisted for World War II. It officially started on May 30, 1943 when South Bend played in Rockford and Kenosha played in Racine. 108 games were played in the regular season, which ran from mid May to the first of September.

The team that had the most wins during the regular season was declared the winner of the pennant. The top teams would then compete in a series of play-off games to determine the League Champion.

At the end of the 1943 season, the Kenosha Comets played a 5 game series against the Racine Belles for the Championship. Racine won and became the first World Champions of the All American Girl's Baseball League. The Racine Belles won hands down, the first three games in that play-off and won the pennant. Women's baseball gained popularity and, at one time, had over 900,000 fans for the teams, but slowly lost popularity by 1954.

To stop women in Major Leagues, Major League Baseball Commissioner Ford Frick

sent out a notice that women were not to play on major league teams. He stated his purpose was to prevent teams from using women players as a publicity stunt.

This ban kept highly skilled women, especially fastball pitchers, from playing in the minor or major leagues for many years.

Until the 1970's, women fought one court battle after another to get back into competitive baseball, and they won!

The league was the subject of a fictional, but very popular, movie called "**A League of Their Own**" that came out in 1992. It starred Geena Davis, Tom Hanks and Madonna. The main theme is the rivalry between two sisters that continue their rivalry when they both join the League and end up playing against each other for the Championship. It's a wonderful movie showing the trials and tribulations of women in a baseball league. If you have not seen it, I suggest that you do.

Mel's Moan

The view from the lump on the couch in front of the TV!

I used to play baseball but never well enough for the top league.

Now, I'm a pretty good Slow Pitch player and confirmed spectator.

I want to back up Tammy's suggestions that, if you are to any degree baseball-phobic, you will help yourself and everyone close to you if you try to share some of this major interest with the man in your life.

Your man is already aware of your opinion of him and his fascination and/or preoccupation with baseball.

He hates that *look*. I hate that *look*. You know the one. *Yeah. That one.*

He already feels self indulgent, because, lets be real about this - it *is* self indulgent to watch sports. It makes the news without being news.

The course of your life won't be altered one iota if your team makes, or fails to make, the playoffs, unless, of course, you've been betting on them. Then, you have a potential problem.

Watching sports is a guilty pleasure that some people will never understand. I'm glad you are reading this book. It's a start. I appreciate it and your man will too.

Well, men don't necessarily understand painted toenails, matching towels, table cloths, dusting, salad forks or replacing the toilet paper every time it runs out while we are using it, doilies, or bed ruffles, or shams (the things that cover pillowcases, and I'm embarrassed just knowing the name), drinking from the proper wine glass, or having to put the toilet seat back down; but we don't go around grumbling and complaining, and making a big fuss over these things unless, you grumble and complain about our disinterest in the subjects that interest you.

We just know that they are the way things must be, and most of us comply. Or,

maybe, that's just me and I've said too much!

I do see the value in *lifting* the toilet seat up. My mom and older sisters made that *very* clear to me, on a number of occasions when I was just little.

In any case, and be that as it may, use his fanaticism as a means to your own end.

Secure his co-operation with whatever is important to you. Do this before the game. He will take out the trash, wash the car, even listen to you and give you personal attention (no joke) in order to indulge his baseball addiction.

Be creative, have fun. Find out just how bad a sports junkie he is. Make him rub your feet!

But, if you use that as ammunition, then be fair, and DO allow him to watch the game, uninterrupted. Let him enjoy. And, just maybe if you do not already, you just might like baseball, too, when you learn the game and discover it is not all brawn, and no brains.

About the Authors

Tammy Griffin likes sports but is not as passionate (or fanatical) about anything like Mel is about baseball.

Mel Griffin enjoyed sports in school and is a fairly good player. Now, he is passionate about watching baseball. He noticed that many of his male friends showed disappointment that their wives and girlfriends had little interest in sharing their enthusiasm about gathering around the T.V. to watch the World Series, or go to a few games.

They were inspired to explain some of the reasons why most men (and some women – to be fair) enjoy baseball and how their baseball-phobic friends can come to either like, love, or at least put up with, baseball better!

They hope that their first ebook will help many couples to add baseball to the interests that they can enjoy together instead of keeping them apart.

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