

Ball Park Baseball Game

Starter's Guide

Symbols from the Cards

K = Strike out	HR = Home run
IH = Infield hit	WP = Wild Pitch
W = Walk	1BE = One-base error
HB = Hit batsman	2BE = Two-base error
SS = Sharp single	3BE = Three-base error
TL = Texas leaguer	GB = Ground ball: ground out or force out, often a double play
1B = Single	DP = Double play: automatic double play or ground out as with GB
? = Usually paired with an SS or 1B result, may result in a hit or an out depending on the pitcher's control rating and the number of outs in the inning	GO = Ground out: ground out or force out, seldom a double play
1B* = Long single, can often be stretched to a double	DG = Deep grounder: ground out, often with runners advancing on the play
2B = Double	PO = Pop out: a short, easily caught fly ball, to infielder or outfielder; runners do not advance
2B* = Long double, can often be stretched to a triple	MF = Medium fly: medium range fly ball to outfielder, always caught, sometimes allowing baserunners to advance
3B = Triple	DF = Deep fly: a deep fly ball to outfielder, always caught, frequently allowing runners to advance

Symbols from the Ball Park Charts

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- ..** = Possible park-based hit; check the top of the Ball Park chart
 - PU** = Pop up: a fly ball to infielder, sometimes misplayed
 - T** = Tap: tricky grounder to infielder, sometimes misplayed
 - SM** = Smash: difficult chance hit to infielder, sometimes misplayed
 - H** = Hard one: very difficult chance to infielder, often misplayed
 - SF** = Short fly: shallow fly ball to outfielder, sometimes misplayed
 - D** = Drive: ball hit in the gap or down the line to outfielder, sometimes misplayed
 - L** = Liner: long fly ball to outfielder, possible home run, hit or out
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Baseball is more than balls and strikes, base hits, runs and outs. For real baseball fans, the fun is also in the decisions – how to play the infielders or outfielders, when to hit and run or sacrifice, or when to call for a steal! It begins with the convergence of a bat and a ball (or missing the ball!), a runner taking off, a fielder in pursuit of the ball, and what happens as a result of all these actions. That's the game Ball Park Baseball lets you play.

This is the “game within the game” – how all the strategic options, both on offense and defense, play out after the bat strikes the ball. For instance, there's a runner on first and your team is ahead by a run late in the game. Do you bring your third baseman in to defend against a bunt? What about your first baseman? Does he hold that runner close to the bag or does he play off the bag to minimize the gap between him and the second baseman? Such scenarios play out in every baseball contest.

In Ball Park, you make these decisions – in larger numbers and with more effect than any other baseball game, yet the game play is simple, with most plays requiring only one roll of the dice. Almost all are resolved in no more than two. Those few that require three rolls will have you holding your breath to find out what happens.

Now it's time for a game. Choose your teams and park. Roll the dice and check the weather (upper left-hand corner of the Ball Park Chart.) **NOTE:** Ball Park uses two ten-sided dice, one with repeating numbers 00 through 40

and the other with numbers 0 through 9. You will always combine these numbers to yield a number from 1 to 50 (the 00 – 0 combination is read as 50).

Getting Started

Organize your team's cards into lineups and choose your starting pitcher, with one player assigned to each defensive position. Ball Park provides two cards for each pitcher, a pitching card and a hitting card (AL pitchers have only one card since the implementation of the DH rule). Use the pitcher's hitting card in your lineup.

Note that each hitter has four columns on his card describing the base situation (no one on or runners on) against the type of pitcher he is facing (left-hander or right-hander). When you roll 1 through 25, read your result from the appropriate column on the hitter's card.

Each pitcher's card is similarly divided by base situation and the type of batter. When you roll 26 through 50, read the result from the appropriate column of the pitcher's card.

For the first few games, you'll want to keep the last page of this manual handy for quick reference as it contains all the symbols needed for play. While many results are familiar, the others will become so in just a few games.

Some results on the Ball Park chart will refer you to the X, Y, and Z Charts under the Chance Plays tab in the Play Book to determine the final play result. These charts can trigger unusual results.

Controls & Ratings

Both pitchers and hitters may have control ratings that can alter play results depending on that pitcher's and/or hitter's performance. For example, a player who rarely strikes out may have the pitcher's K results modified by a dice roll or eliminated altogether. A pitcher who allows few homeruns might change all or some of these results on the hitter's card.

Many players will have modifiers for ball park hits from the “..” results on the pitcher's card. Checking these modifiers can help you determine your lineup and pinch-hitting choices, and you'll want to get used to taking a quick glance at the bottom of the batter's and pitcher's cards during each at bat to account for any controls affecting the play result.

Each position player is rated for fielding (1 through 9), and outfielders and catchers also have arm ratings (1 through 6), while pitchers have hold ratings for preventing steals and executing pickoffs. Fielding ratings are called into play on most results read from the ball park charts, and a number of base advancement possibilities depend on fielding and/or arm ratings. The fielding ratings can affect errors, base hits, double plays, and tags. Catchers are also rated for “handling,” which is their ability to calm a pitcher who is struggling by calling conferences, and for passed balls.

Pitchers are rated 5, 7, or 9 for their durability:

5 = short reliever who can pitch up to five innings in a single appearance or in multiple appearances over four consecutive days without being penalized

7 = long reliever or spot starter who can go up to seven innings per appearance without penalty, but who must rest more often than a short reliever

9 = a starting pitcher who can pitch up to 12 innings before incurring a penalty; this pitcher can also be used in relief

Some pitchers are also rated as “knucklers,” because their reliance on this pitch is more likely to induce passed balls from their catchers.

Overuse of a pitcher will induce a “Days out of turn penalty” (see Play Book) which can turn certain numbers on the pitcher's card into an automatic hit.

Similarly, a pitcher can begin to lose effectiveness in any inning by giving up a combination of hits and walks. As the pitcher loses effectiveness, specific numbers on his card can become doubles and singles, exacerbating his troubles.

A mound conference with the catcher can reverse this effect. Watch out, though! Using the catcher's allotment of conferences too early can cost your team in a tight situation late in the game.

Advancing Runners

With runners on base a lot happens when the ball is put in play. Ball Park

succeeds at capturing this part of the game quite effectively. As manager you must designate whether each base runner – and even the batter! – is in “Normal,” “Wait and See,” or “Hold” mode.

Your choice affects not only whether the runner advances an extra base on a hit or fly ball but also the likelihood of a double play, the ability to advance on a wild pitch or passed ball, and your ability to employ other strategic options. We recommend that you read page 1 of the Play Book carefully and keep the Play Book open to pages 2 and 3 as you play your first games.

Strategy: The Sacrifice, the Steal and More

Ball Park offers an array of strategic decisions. On offense, the manager can call the hit-and-run, sacrifice, safety squeeze, suicide squeeze, steal, or double steal; have the batter take a pitch; or have the runners “go on contact” when the infield is drawn in halfway or all the way.

On defense, the manager can position any or all infielders and outfielders; shade the shortstop or second baseman toward second to hold the runner closer to the bag; play for the double play; hold the runner at first; play the “no doubles” defense; choose to pitch out; or go for the pick off.

Each of these is explained in detail in the Play Book. What is important to recognize, though, is that calling any strategy introduces not only potential benefits but risks as well (such as a runner picked off or caught in a

rundown on offense, or an out turned into a hit on defense).

Each strategic move can weaken your offense or defense. The pick-off play, for example, can backfire, especially if the runner is not stealing. Getting two strikes on a bunt attempt not only makes a successful bunt highly unlikely, but it diminishes the batter's opportunities to reach base and makes a strikeout more likely. A suicide squeeze can be successful or become a forced attempt to steal home – or a triple play.

These options give Ball Park its great variety and baseball “feel.” After playing your first three or four games, introduce these strategies gradually. As you do, you'll find yourself thinking of each situation in baseball terms: you'll be aware of your fielders' limitations, the speed of the base runner, and the nature of the park your team is playing in.

It's time to begin: Play ball!

This Starter's Guide is intended for use with Charles Sidman's Ball Park Baseball Game. The Play Book referred to throughout this guide is the final authority on all play results and rules interpretations. Special thanks to Jon Barnes for his editorial assistance

–WP & JR, 2009