



**BASEBALL**  
VICTORIA

Welcome  
to  
Baseball

Welcome to the sport of baseball!

Baseball Victoria is committed to making baseball enjoyable for everyone who wants to be involved.

By working together, athletes, coaches, umpires, and spectators can impact the sports experience in a positive way.

Baseball Victoria encourages high standards of ethics and sportsmanship. We also promote the development of good character and fairness in play.

[Fair Play Code](#)

[Baseball Victoria Code of Conduct](#)

[Baseball Victoria Member Protection Policy](#)

Baseball is a game played between two teams of nine players each. The game is divided into innings, each divided into two halves. In the top half of the inning, the players of one team successively come to bat and attempt to score runs, while the other team plays in the field and attempts to stop the offensive team from scoring. In the bottom half, the teams swap places. The team with the most runs at the end of the allocated innings is the winner of the game.

Understanding some of the basic rules of baseball may alleviate any confusion and contribute to a more enjoyable experience for all involved.



## Player Positions on a Baseball Team

The following figure shows the different positions (and their abbreviations) of the positions on a baseball team. It's baseball's chessboard. Knowing the positions and the way they relate to each other can help you understand the role of each as you watch play unfold.



## What Equipment Do I Need?

Some clubs will provide the baseball specific equipment listed below to train and play. Post COVID-19 members are encouraged to source their own gear.

- Baseball glove
- Baseball bat
- Baseball helmet
- Catcher's protective gear

There are a few items of your own that you will need to make sure you have each week:

- A good set of runners or baseball cleats. Footy/soccer boots work well too (no metal cleats/studs allowed)
- Baseball pants
- Socks (long socks are recommended if you're going to wear shorts and slide into bases)
- Groin guard (this is an insurance requirement for male members of all ages)

## How Batters Make It to a Base

Getting on base is a batter's primary task, and the first step to scoring runs, which is the way to win — and lose — games. This is a list of the ways hitters can get on base, by either swinging or *not swinging*.

- You hit a fair ball that isn't caught by a fielder before it touches the ground.
- You hit a fair ball that touches the ground and is caught by a fielder whose throw fails to beat you to a base.
- The umpire calls four pitches out of the strike zone during your at-bat.
- A pitch in the strike zone hits you without first touching your bat.
- The catcher obstructs your swing.
- You hit a fair ball beyond the playing field (for a home run).
- You hit a fair, catchable ball, but the fielder drops the ball, throws it away, and so on.
- A third strike skips past the catcher and you beat the throw to first.

## How Hitters Make Outs in Baseball

Outs are one of the fundamental elements of the game — the team on offense strives to avoid them while the defending team craves them.

These are the most common ways a hitter can make an out in baseball. This list can help you follow the action throughout the game.

- A fielder catches your fair or foul ball before it touches the ground (unless it's a foul tip to the catcher with less than two strikes).
- You hit a foul tip (a ball caught by the catcher off your bat) for strike three.
- After hitting the ball, you or first base is tagged before you touch the base.
- The umpire calls three strikes during your at-bat (whether you swing or not).
- A ball that you hit fair hits your bat a second time while you're in fair territory.
- While running outside the foul lines, you obstruct a fielder's throw.
- You hit the ball with one or both feet outside the batter's box or step from one batter's box to another while the pitcher winds up.
- You obstruct the catcher from fielding or throwing.
- You run into your own fairly batted ball while running from home to first base.

## How Baseball Players Get an Out on the Base Paths

After a baseball player reaches base, a million things can happen to them, including getting put out. The following is a short list of the most common ways base runners get out.

- You're on the same base with a teammate when the ball is alive (the second runner is out).
- You pass a preceding runner on the base paths.
- You miss a base and the defense notices it and gets the ball to the fielder closest to that base, which he must tag.
- A fielder tags you with a ball that is alive while you're off the base. (However, no one can tag you out if you overrun first base provided you return immediately to that bag without making an attempt toward second.)

- Your teammate hits a ball that touches you in fair territory without it first touching or passing any fielder except the pitcher.
- In the judgment of the umpire, you hinder a fielder from making a play.
- A batted ball forces you to advance to another base, and the fielder possessing the ball tags that base before you reach it.

## **What Is a Strike?**

Each batter has minimum three chances to hit a ball that's pitched to them. If they swing and miss, or they don't swing on a pitch that's ruled fair by the umpire, it's called a strike. After three strikes, the team receives an "out." A legal pitch when so called by the umpire, which:

- Is struck at by the batter and missed
- Is not struck at, if the ball passes through the strike zone
- Is fouled by the batter when he has less than two strikes
- Is bunted foul
- Touches the batter as he strikes at it
- Touches the batter in flight in the strike zone, or
- After being batted, travels directly from the bat to the catcher's hands and is legally caught by the catcher (foul tip)

## **What Is a Ball?**

If a pitcher throws an unfair pitch, it's called a ball. If the pitcher throws four balls, then the batter is allowed to walk to first base.

## **What Is a Catch?**

In baseball, a catch occurs when a fielder gains secure possession of a batted ball before it bounces, and maintains possession until they voluntarily or intentionally release the ball

## **Foul Balls**

There are lines drawn on the field that connect the bases. The lines leading from home plate to first base, and from home plate to third base are used to determine whether a ball is in play. If the ball is hit between the baselines, it's in play. If a ball is hit outside of the baselines, it's called a foul.

If a batter hits a foul on the first or second pitch, it counts as a strike. If a batter hits a foul on the third pitch, it counts as a foul, and the batter is allowed another pitch.



## Innings and Outs

An “out” is when an offensive player must leave the field after:

1. Being tagged by a ball in play
2. Not making it to the base or home plate before a member of the opposing team with the ball in their glove does
3. Swinging three times at a pitch and missing all three times

Once the offensive team gets three outs, it’s their turn to play defense. An inning ends after both teams have played both offense and defense, and each team gets three outs.

## Left-Hand Turn From First Base

A runner may be put out if, after overrunning first base, makes an attempt to run to second base.

The key to this is that the runner continues to second base. There must be at least an attempt to run towards advancing to second base for an out to be called at first base.

## Check Swing

If the plate umpire judges that the batter made an attempt to swing at the ball, the umpire shall call a pitched ball a strike. This call CANNOT be appealed.

However, if the umpires don’t see the attempt at swing (because their views were obstructed), then a ball should be called. With this call, the plate umpire has the opportunity to check with the base or line umpire(s) following a request from the defensive team. The base or line umpire should only answer a check swing call from the plate umpire, and not from the defensive team or the spectators.



## **Infield Fly**

The main concept of the batter being called out on an infield fly rule is to protect runners on base against a team allowing a shallow fly ball to drop in with the intention of causing a force play that would not occur if the ball were caught in the air. There are certain requirements before an infield fly will be called by an umpire.

- Runners on first and second or second and third
- Less than two out
- Not a bunt
- Not a line drive
- Can be caught with ordinary effort by an infielder, including the pitcher or catcher, or any outfielder positioned in the infield

Once an infield fly has been called:

- If the ball is hit foul, no penalty
- If the ball remains fair, the batter is out regardless of whether a catch is made and the ball remains alive, the runners on base may advance, however if the ball is caught the runners must tag up. If the ball is caught, the runners on base may choose to advance, but there is no force play, and they can choose to remain on their base.

## **Catcher Interference**

When the catcher or any other defensive player obstructs, hinders, or prevents the batter from swinging and hitting a pitched ball the umpire will call interference.

If the batter hits the ball and reaches first base, no action needs to be taken.

If the batter was unable to hit the ball, the umpire will ask the batter to advance to their base, and all other runners will advance their base.

## **Stepping Back Towards Home Plate**

Once a batter has hit the ball into fair territory, they must proceed to first base. The batter cannot take a step back to home to avoid being put out.

## **Coaches Assistance**

A coach should not get in the way of a based runner.

A coach should not touch an approaching or rounding player.

A coach is not permitted to touch a running player to help them stop at the base or assist them in progressing toward a base.

With these rules and guidelines in mind, Baseball Victoria hopes everyone enjoys the upcoming baseball season.

## Common Player Statistics

**Batting Average (AVG):** the number of base hits per at bat.

**Games Played (G):** the number of games the player has played in.

**At Bats (AB):** the official number of times the player has taken the plate as a batter, not counting walks or sacrifices.

**Runs (R):** the number of times a batter has crossed home plate.

**Hits (H):** the number of times a batter has safely reached a base, not including walks or sacrifices.

**Doubles (2B):** the number of hits that resulted in the batter hitting second base.

**Triples (3B):** the number of hits that resulted in the batter hitting third base.

**Home Runs (HR):** the number of hits that resulted in a home run.

**Runs Batted In (RBI):** the number of times a batter has made it possible for his teammates to score. Does not include hits resulting in a double play or runs scored because of an error.

**Stolen Bases (SB):** the number of times a base runner has successfully advanced to the next base without the help of the hitter.

**Base on Balls (BB):** the number of times a batter has been awarded first base as a result of four balls being pitched outside the strike zone. Also known as walks.

**Strikeouts (SO):** the number of times a batter has swung and missed on three pitches.

**Games Pitched (GP):** the cumulative total number of games in which a player has pitched.

**Innings Pitched (IP):** the cumulative total number of innings pitched by a player.

**Wins (W):** the number of games won. A starting pitcher will be credited with a win if they pitch at least 5 complete innings, their team is in the lead when they leave the game and their team continues to maintain the lead for the rest of the game.

**Losses (L):** the number of games lost.

**Win/Loss Percentage (PCT):** the total number of wins divided by the sum of wins and losses.

**Saves:** the number of times a relief pitcher finishes a game where the potential tying or winning run is on base, at bat or on deck.

**Hits Allowed (H):** the number of hits given up while pitching.

**Base on Balls (BB):** the number of times a pitcher has thrown four balls, allowing the batter to be awarded first base.

**Strikeouts (SO):** the number of times a pitcher retires a batter after three strikes.



**Earned Run Average (ERA):** the number of earned runs (scored without an error) that a pitcher allows every nine innings. Computed by multiplying the total number of earned runs by nine and dividing by the number of innings pitched.

## **Baseball Terms**

**Balk:** any pitching motion that is against the baseball rules. The pitcher is not to try and trick the base runners with illegal motions.

**Battery:** the battery includes two baseball players, the pitcher and the catcher.

**Bunt:** when a batter holds the baseball bat out and tries to barely tap the ball vs. taking a full swing at the ball. The batter might do this to advance another base runner.

**Changeup:** a slow pitch that is meant to look much faster.

**Cleanup:** the fourth batter in the batting order, usually a power hitter.

**Count:** the number of balls and strikes on a batter. For example a 3/2 count means there are three balls and two strikes on the batter.

**Diamond:** the four bases of the baseball infield.

**Double play:** a defensive baseball play that results in two outs.

**Error:** a mistake in fielding the baseball by the defense that allows a batter to reach base or a base runner to advance.

**Fly ball:** a baseball that is hit high into the air.

**Foul ball:** a baseball that is hit outside the field of fair play.

**Full count:** when the pitch count has 3 balls and 2 strikes. The next strike or ball will end the at-bat. If the batter hits the baseball foul, then the count remains 3 and 2.

**Ground ball:** a baseball that is hit on the ground, also called a grounder.

**Hit and run:** a baseball play where the base runner begins to run when the pitch is released. It's the batter's responsibility to hit the baseball into play so the runner will not get out. This gives the base runner a head start.

**Hit for the cycle:** when a baseball player hits a single, a double, a triple, and a home run in one game.

**Lead runner:** the first base runner when more than one runner is on base.

**Load the bases:** when a base runner is at all three bases.

**On-deck:** the next batter due to bat.

**Pinch hitter:** a substitute baseball hitter.

**Pinch runner:** a substitute base runner.

**Pitch around:** when the pitcher does not throw the batter a pitch near the plate in order to walk the batter.

**Pitch out:** a pitch that cannot be hit by the batter. Used to walk a batter on purpose or to try and catch a base stealer.

**Position player:** any baseball player but the pitcher.

**Power hitter:** a strong batter that hits the baseball far, often for home runs or extra bases.

**Relay:** when one fielder throws the baseball to another fielder who then throws the baseball to another fielder.

**Reliever or relief pitcher:** a replacement pitcher. Usually comes into the game when the starting pitcher grows tired.

**Runners at the corners:** base runners on first and third.

**Scoring position:** a base runner on second or third base is in scoring position.

**Strike zone:** the area above home plate where strikes are called. The pitch must be over home plate, above the batter's knees, and below the batter's belt.

**Walk:** when the pitcher throws four balls to a batter, the batter gets to go to first base automatically.

