

Baseball field

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6' and over the years it went to 6' x 4' and 5-1/2' x 4' before it became the pitcher's plate in 1893 and finally the 24" x 6" pitcher's plate of today. The pitcher was allowed to run into his pitch from inside the box and release it to the plate before he left the pitcher's box. Now it is illegal to run into your pitch.

Until 1950, there was no required height for the mound, so depending upon the home team's preference, there were a variety of heights. In 1950, the rules gurus decided the height should be 15 inches. There was no slope requirement at that time. It was just a gradual slope until 1969, when the required height became 10 inches and the present day slope became mandatory.

The batter's box was originally 3' x 6' and a distance of one foot from home plate. In 1887 the box size was enlarged to 4' x 6' and moved to within six inches of home plate. All batter's boxes today are partially in fair territory and partially in foul territory, but if the ball hits the batter in the batter's box the result is still a foul ball even if it hits him in the fair portion of the box.

Prior to the use of dugouts, players were required to remain behind a "player's line" which ran parallel to the foul lines 50 feet away. Captains or Assistants were responsible for coaching base runners in a specific area beyond the player's line. This area was parallel to the foul lines and within 15 feet of foul territory. The area was later limited to a space closer to the bases which extended beyond the bases in foul territory. Rectangular boxes of different dimensions eventually gave way to the coach's box that we see in use today. The box came into being because coaches were running wildly along the lines attempting to distract the pitcher.

The catcher's box began as a triangular area formed by extending the foul lines to the backstop or grandstand. The back line of this triangle was later reduced to 10 feet and then to eight feet. In the early 1950's the catcher's box of today was made part of the rules. In professional and high school rules, it is 43" x 8' from the back point of the plate, while NCAA rules have a 48" x 8' catcher's box.

The runner's lane, as it is known today, had its origin in 1882. The rules required a line to be drawn from a point halfway between home plate and first base parallel to and three feet away from the foul line. The only difference in that layout and today's is that originally the foul line ran through the center of first base, meaning part of the running lane encompassed half of the base, and today's runner's lane bypasses first base.

The earliest fields were not always enclosed by fences. Fences became mandated in 1880. Minimum distances have progressed from 235 feet to the present day 325 feet down the lines and a minimum of 400 feet in center field.

I know that dimensions and statistics can sometimes be a dry part of the learning that is necessary to understand the game of baseball, but without understanding how some rules have evolved since the game's inception we cannot truly appreciate how great this game is today. No matter what the major league guys do with their good or bad behavior or the use of performance-enhancing drugs, this game is still fun to play and fun to learn about. I get my kicks out of the challenge of umpiring the game because it offers continual challenges for me to get the calls correct each

THE RANKINGS RACE

AMER. LEGION BASEBALL

- 1 EDEN PRAIRIE
- 2 Burnsville
- 3 Apple Valley 76ers
- 4 Centennial Hopkins
- 6 Rochester Patriots
- 7 St. Michael
- 8 Maple Grove
- 9 New Ulm Gold
- 10 Excelsior
- 11 Rochester Redhawks
- 12 Tri-City Red
- 13 Forest Lake Stillwater
- 15 Hamline Purple
- 16 Lakeville North North St. Paul
- 18 Wayzata
- 19 Sauk Rapids
- 20 Eagan

H.S. BASEBALL AAA FINAL

- 1 ST. MICHAEL-ALBERTVILLE
- 2 Rochester John Marshall
- 3 Centennial
- 4 Maple Grove
- 5 Irondale
- 6 Tartan
- 7 Lakeville North
- 8 Brainerd
- 9 Stillwater
- 10 Forest Lake
- 11 Hill-Murray
- 12 Eden Prairie
- 13 Hopkins
- 14 Mahtomedi
- 15 Burnsville
- 16 Prior Lake
- 17 Duluth East
- 18 Minnetonka
- 19 Andover
- 20 Chisago Lakes

H.S. BASEBALL AA FINAL

- 1 LA CRESCENT
- 2 Luverne
- 3 Glencoe-Silver Lake
- 4 Big Lake
- 5 St. Cloud Cathedral
- 6 Breck
- 7 Kasson-Mantorville
- 8 Minnehaha Academy
- 9 Worthington
- 10 Norwood-Y. America
- 11 Fergus Falls
- 12 Zumbrota-Mazeppa
- 13 Paynesville
- 14 Montgomery-Lonsdale
- 15 New Ulm
- 16 BOLD
- 17 Perham
- 18 Pelican Rapids
- 19 Two Harbors
- 20 International Falls

H.S. BASEBALL A FINAL

- 1 MACCRAY
- 2 New Ulm Cathedral
- 3 Adrian
- 4 Meadow Creek Chr.
- 5 Fosston
- 6 Eden Valley-Watkins
- 7 Mankato Loyola
- 8 Wabasha-Kellogg
- 9 Chisholm
- 10 Hawley
- 11 Blooming Prairie
- 12 Bertha-Hewill
- 13 Martin County West
- 14 Deer River
- 15 Sleepy Eye St. Mary's
- 16 West Lutheran
- 17 Nashwauk-Keewatin
- 18 Royalton
- 19 Wheaton/Herman-Nor.
- 20 St. Bernard's

NCAA DIVISION III MIDWEST BASEBALL

- 1 ST. THOMAS
- 2 St. Olaf
- 3 UW-Stevens Point
- 4 St. Scholastica
- 5 UW-Whitewater
- 6 UW-Oshkosh
- 7 Hamline
- 8 UW-La Crosse

NCAA DIVISION III MIDWEST SOFTBALL

- 1 COE
- 2 Gustavus Adolphus
- 3 St. Thomas
- 4 UW-Eau Claire
- 5 UW-Whitewater
- 6 UW-La Crosse
- 7 Central (Iowa)
- 8 Wartburg

H.S. SOFTBALL AAA FINAL

- 1 ELK RIVER
- 2 Burnsville
- 3 Rosemount
- 4 Hastings
- 5 Osseo
- 6 Mankato East
- 7 Shakopee
- 8 Eagan
- 9 North St. Paul
- 10 Spring Lake Park

H.S. SOFTBALL AA FINAL

- 1 HERMANTOWN
- 2 Minnehaha Academy
- 3 Zumbrota-Mazeppa
- 4 Pipestone
- 5 Waseca
- 6 New Ulm
- 7 St. Cloud Cathedral
- 8 Becker
- 9 Ottertail Central
- 10 Winona Cotter

H.S. SOFTBALL A FINAL

- 1 NEW LIFE ACADEMY
- 2 Maple Lake
- 3 Wabasso
- 4 Lake Crystal-WM
- 5 New Ulm Cathedral
- 6 Kerkhoven-M-S
- 7 Osakis
- 8 Hawley
- 9 Cherry-Cotton
- 10 Chatfield

All rankings are from the 2009 season (unless noted).
Interested in becoming a ranker for the 2009 season?
E-mail us at editor@letsplaysoftball.com

BASEBALL 15 A/AAA

- 1 ANDOVER
- 2 Burnsville
- 3 Prior Lake
- 4 Eastview
- 5 Forest Lake
- 6 Shoreview
- 7 Hopkins/Minnetonka
- 8 Champlin
- 9 Eden Prairie
- 10 Shakopee
- 11 Mendota Heights
- 12 Plymouth/Wayzata
- 13 Eagan
- 14 St. Croix
- 15 Blake

BASEBALL 14 A/AAA

- 1 FOREST LAKE
- 2 Eagan
- 3 Coon Rapids
- 4 Shoreview
- 5 Edina
- 6 Eden Prairie
- 7 Rochester Rattlers
- 8 Brooklyn Bombers
- 9 Lakeville North
- 10 Rocori
- 11 Champlin Park
- 12 St. Cloud Blue Sox
- 13 Plymouth/Wayzata
- 14 Woodbury Bulldogs
- 15 Delano

BASEBALL 13 A/AAA

- 1 WAITE PARK
- 2 Brooklyn Park
- 3 Chaska Purple
- 4 Mahtomedi
- 5 Elk River
- 6 Woodbury WYAL
- 7 Lakeville North
- 8 Apple Valley
- 9 North St. Paul
- 10 Woodbury WAA
- 11 Prior Lake
- 12 Eden Prairie
- 13 Shakopee
- 14 Monticello
- 15 Shoreview

BASEBALL 12 A/AAA

- 1 CHASKA
- 2 Champlin/Dayton
- 3 Woodbury WAA
- 4 St. Michael-Albertville
- 5 Eastview
- 6 Mankato
- 7 Apple Valley
- 8 Eden Prairie
- 9 Lakeville North
- 10 Inver Grove Heights
- 11 Woodbury
- 12 Elk River
- 13 Burnsville
- 14 Waite Park
- 15 Osseo/Maple Grove

BASEBALL 15 B/AA

- 1 BURNSVILLE GOLD
- 2 New Ulm Blue
- 3 Stewartville
- 4 Andover
- 5 Eagan
- 6 Eastview
- 7 New Prague
- 8 Shoreview
- 9 Plymouth/Wayzata
- 10 Forest Lake
- 11 Eden Prairie Black
- 12 Bloomington Eagles
- 13 WYAL
- 14 Centennial
- 15 Prior Lake

BASEBALL 14 B/AA

- 1 SHOREVIEW RED
- 2 Shoreview Blue
- 3 New Prague
- 4 Eden Prairie Red
- 5 Inver Grove Heights
- 6 Chisago
- 7 Minneapolis Orange
- 8 Mankato Gold
- 9 Orono
- 10 Chaska Purple
- 11 Altoona
- 12 Owatonna
- 13 Whitehawks
- 14 Chaska Yellow
- 15 Faribault

BASEBALL 13 B/AA

- 1 CAMBRIDGE-ISANTI
- 2 Shoreview Blue
- 3 Eden Prairie Red
- 4 St. Anthony
- 5 Owatonna
- 6 River Falls
- 7 Eagan
- 8 Burnsville White
- 9 Lakeville North
- 10 Centennial Cougars
- 11 Cannon Falls
- 12 Red Wing Bandits
- 13 WAA #2
- 14 Red Wing Shock
- 15 Shakopee #1

TOWN TEAM BASEBALL

CLASS A (2008)	CLASS B
1 MINNETONKA	1 COLD SPRING
2 Commanding Edge	2 Coon Rapids
3 Lyon's Pub	3 Mankato
4 Green Mill Brewers	4 Chaska
5 St. Louis Park	5 Miesville
6 Sport & Spine	6 Hastings
7 Stockman's Irish	7 Dundas
8 Bloomington Bulldogs	8 Elko
9 Minneapolis Lakers	9 Rochester Royals
10 Wesley Homes	10 Red Wing
	11 Green Isle
	12 St. Michael
	13 Shakopee Indians
	14 Savage
	15 Marshall

CLASS C

1 BLUE EARTH	6 St. Francis
5 St. Cloud Orthopedics	11 St. Stephen
2 Belle Plaine	10 Fergus Falls
4 Moorhead Brewers	13 St. Patrick
7 Midway	12 Nisswa
3 Lastrup	14 Wolf Lake
8 Freeport	15 Dent Wildcats
9 Union Hill	

BASEBALL 12 B/AA

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 EASTVIEW BLACK | 9 St. Louis Park #1 |
| 2 Farmington | 10 Plymouth/Wayzata Blue |
| 3 Anoka/Ramsey | 11 Zimmerman |
| 4 Eden Prairie Black | 12 Prescott |
| 5 WAA Black | 13 Lakeville North |
| 6 Big Lake | 14 Lake Elmo #1 |
| 7 Red Wing Hurricanes | 15 Lake Elmo #2 |
| 8 Chaska Gold | |

BASEBALL 11 A/AAA

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 ROSEMOUNT | 9 Roseville |
| 2 Osseo/Maple Grove | 10 Brooklyn Park |
| 3 St. Michael-Albertville | Bulldogs |
| 4 Plymouth/Wayzata | 11 Lakeville North |
| 5 WYAL Panthers | 12 Burnsville Black |
| 6 Eastview | 13 Eden Prairie Red |
| 7 Prior Lake | 14 Andover |
| 8 Brooklyn Park Blaze | 15 Chaska |

BASEBALL 11 B/AA

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 PLYMOUTH/WAYZATA GOLD | 8 Burnsville Grey |
| 2 Waconia Gold | 9 Woodbury WYAL |
| 3 New Prague | 10 St. Michael-Albertville |
| 4 Lakeville North | 11 Hudson |
| 5 New Richmond | 12 Burnsville Gold |
| 6 Roseville | 13 Osseo/Maple Grove Blue |
| 7 Plymouth/Wayzata Blue | 14 Prior Lake Gold |
| | 15 Shakopee |



time I take the field and make it fair for both teams.

I just love seeing a young player finally succeed at one or more aspects of this game or when I see a young umpire really begin to understand their role and how important it is for us to umpire the game and not the personalities. There are always going to be very good human beings playing this game and then there are going to be the other kind who don't understand being competitive and also being gracious with their opposition. We all love the great player but the great player can never be great unless they have shown us that they are also humble and respect their opponent.

