

# Baseball FAQ/Walkthrough

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## NES Baseball

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## INTRODUCTION

When the Famicom was originally released in 1983, Baseball was the eighth game created for the system in that year. It was also one of the original 17 games available when the NES was released in North America, in 1985. Considering that this game is over 30 years old, it should come as no surprise that it has some notable flaws. Its sound effects are primitive, its music library is just four small tunes, your control over the players is incredibly limited, and the difficulty in getting the ball to move how you want it to is frustrating at best.



But at the same time, this game has a retro charm. It wasn't exactly revolutionary in the video game world (the most original thing about it is that batting and baserunning take place in two different camera angles, but arcade systems and the Intellivision had similar concepts in games released earlier in 1983), but there's just something about this game that keeps me coming back to it.

## VERSION DIFFERENCES

There are very little differences between the Famicom version of this game (released in Japan) and the NES version of this game (from North America and Europe).

In the Famicom game, when you choose which team to play as, your options are the six teams from the Japanese pro baseball Central League: C, D, G, S, T, and W.

**C:** Hiroshima Toyo Carp, wearing white uniforms with red trim.

**D:** Chunichi Dragons, wearing white uniforms with light blue trim.

**G:** Yomiuri Giants, wearing white uniforms with black trim.

**S:** Yakult Swallows (now known as the Tokyo Yakult Swallows), wearing light blue uniforms with blue trim.

**T:** Hanshin Tigers, wearing very light blue uniforms with black trim.

**W:** Yokohama Taiyo Whales (now known as the Yokohama DeNA BayStars), wearing white uniforms with blue trim.



In the NES game, your options are instead based on six teams from America's Major League Baseball: A, C, D, P, R, and Y.

**A:** Oakland Athletics, wearing white uniforms with teal trim.

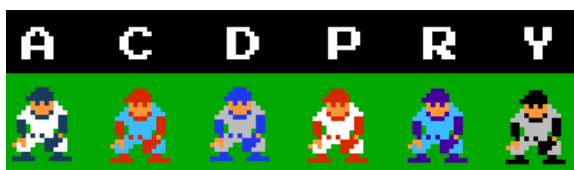
**C:** St. Louis Cardinals, wearing light blue uniforms with red trim.

**D:** Los Angeles Dodgers, wearing grey uniforms with blue trim.

**P:** Philadelphia Phillies, wearing white uniforms with red trim.

**R:** Kansas City Royals, wearing light blue uniforms with blue trim.

**Y:** New York Yankees, wearing grey uniforms with black trim.



The only other difference between the two versions is that in the NES release, the status box uses the terms "IN.TOP" and "IN.BOT" to represent which inning you're playing. The Famicom version uses Japanese characters instead of our letters (回オモテ and 回ウラ). All other English text and terms are used in both versions.

## RULES

As a sport, baseball's rules are a bit complicated to understand in depth. Fortunately, NES Baseball is a bit simplified compared to the real sport.

### The Field



Baseball is played on a wide field surround by stands filled with spectators. About half of the field is taken up by a white diamond drawn on the ground, appropriately called the **BASEBALL DIAMOND**. The field inside of the baseball diamond is the **INFIELD**, and the field above the diamond is called the **OUTFIELD**. The infield and outfield together are called **FAIR TERRITORY**, and the area below the diamond is called **FOUL TERRITORY**. Fair territory and foul territory extend outside of the field and into the stands.

On the bottom corner of the baseball diamond is **HOME PLATE**. Behind home plate is the **CATCHER'S BOX**, and to each side of home plate is a **BATTER'S BOX**. The right corner of the baseball diamond is **FIRST BASE**, the upper corner is **SECOND BASE**, and the left corner is **THIRD BASE**. In the center of the infield is a mound of dirt called the **PITCHER'S MOUND**.

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## The Teams

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Baseball is played by two teams: One starting on defense, the other starting on offense.

The defense team starts with nine players on the field: A **CATCHER** in the catcher's box, a **PITCHER** on the pitcher's mound, and seven **FIELDERS** in the outfield.

The offensive team starts with one player on the field: A **BATTER** in either one of the two batter's boxes (Depending on if the batter is left-handed or right-handed: This is randomly determined for each batter in NES Baseball).

## The Rules

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### PITCHING:

The pitcher tries to throw the ball to the batter in such a way that will make it difficult for the batter to accurately hit it.

- If the baseball is pitched so that it does not pass over home plate, and the batter does not swing at it, the **BALL** count increases by one.
  - If the ball count reaches four, a **WALK** is awarded. The batter moves onto first base.
    - If anyone is already at first base, that player moves to second base as well.
    - If players are already on first and second base, the player on second base moves onto third base as well.
    - If players are already on all three bases, the player on third base moves to the home plate and leaves the field.
- If the baseball is pitched so that it passes over home plate, and the batter does not swing at it, the **STRIKE** count increases by one.
  - If the batter swings at any pitch and misses the ball, the strike count increases by one.
  - If the strike count reaches three, the **OUT** count increases by one. The batter leaves the field, and a new batter replaces him. The strike count and ball count then reset to zero.
- The pitcher may instead throw a **FEINT** by throwing the ball towards any other base with a member of the offensive team on it. More on feints is explained below, in '**baserunning**'.



### BATTING:

The batter tries to hit the ball in such a way that he or his teammates have as much time as possible to run around the baseball diamond (counter-clockwise).

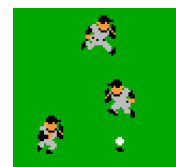
- If the batter hits a pitch, but it passes or lands in foul territory before passing first base or third base, the ball is a **FOUL**.
  - If the batter hits a foul and has zero or one strikes, the strike count increases by one.
  - The strike count does not increase on a foul if the batter already has two strikes.
- The batter may **BUNT** by holding the bat horizontally instead of swinging it normally. This will only barely knock the ball forward instead of sending it deep into the infield or outfield.
  - If a ball is foul while bunting, it always increases the strike count. This means a foul ball can give the batter his third strike (and an out) if he bunts it.
- If the batter hits a pitch into fair territory, he must run towards first base. If he successfully reaches first base without being **TAGGED OUT** (being touched by a defensive player holding the baseball, or if a defensive player holding the baseball touches first base), he becomes a **BASERUNNER**.
  - Whenever the batter is replaced, whether by getting an out or by reaching a base, the strike count and ball count reset to zero.
    - If a batter hits the ball into fair territory and it goes over the stands without touching the ground, this is called a **HOME RUN**. The batter and any baserunner on the field immediately walk around the baseball diamond until they reach home plate, and then leave the field.
- If the ball is hit into the stands after bouncing on the field (a very rare event in NES Baseball), it is called a **GROUND RULE DOUBLE**. The batter advances freely to second base. The strike count and ball count still reset to zero.
  - If there is already a player on first base, he advances to third base.
  - If there is already a player on second or third base, he advances to home plate and then leaves the field.
- If the batter hits the ball, but any defensive player catches it before it hits the ground, a **FLY OUT** occurs. The out count increases by one and the batter is immediately replaced.
  - Even if the ball is caught in foul territory, as long as it is caught before hitting the ground, it is an out.



### FIELDING:

The fielders want to increase the offensive team's out count to three while keeping them from scoring any runs.

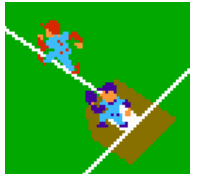
- If a batter or baserunner is tagged out, the out count increases by one. That player leaves the field. Baserunners who are tagged out are not replaced with new players.
  - Multiple outs can occur in one play if more than one player is put out at once.
- When the out count reaches three, any runs that would be scored during that play are ignored. The offensive and defensive teams then switch roles, with the strike count, ball count, and out count being reset to 0.
- A game of baseball is separated into nine **INNINGS** of play. After each team has played offense and defense once, the next inning is played. After all nine innings are played, whichever team has scored the most runs wins.
  - If the team that plays offense second is winning at any time during their half of the ninth inning, the game immediately ends (Because it is now impossible for the other team to overtake them).
  - In NES Baseball, the game does not continue in the case of a tied score: It simply ends in a tie.



### BASERUNNING:

The baserunners want to run around the baseball diamond until they return to home plate, without being caught while off of a base by any defensive team member holding the baseball.

- There can be no more than one baserunner on a base at a time. If a baserunner is forced to run to the next base, any baserunner on that base must also run to the next base.
  - If there is already a baserunner on first base when the batter hits a ball into fair territory, that player is forced to run to second base, because the batter needs to take first base. That baserunner may also be tagged out in the same way as the batter.
  - If there is already a baserunner on first and second base, the player on second base is also forced to run to third base.
  - If there are already baserunners on all three bases, the player on third base is also forced to run to home plate and then leave the field.
- A baserunner is not forced to run if there is no baserunner on the previous base. However, he may choose to run to the next base.
  - This baserunner can only be tagged out by being touched by a defensive player holding the baseball. If he reaches a base while a defensive player is already there with the baseball, he is automatically tagged out.
  - Since this baserunner is not forced to run, he may attempt to return to his original base anytime before reaching a new base or being tagged out (in case he does not think he will successfully reach a new base without being tagged out). However, he can still be tagged out while returning to his original base.
- At any time, a baserunner may try to **STEAL A BASE** by running to the next base, regardless of whether the pitcher has already thrown the ball or the batter has hit the ball. That baserunner is liable to be tagged out, but if he is not, he is permitted to stay on the base he reached.
- A baserunner on third base who steals home plate (a rare event) leaves the field instead of staying on home plate.
- If a baserunner attempts to steal a base that another baserunner is already on, that baserunner must also steal a base, or the first baserunner will automatically be tagged out.
- If the pitcher throws a feint towards a baserunner who is stealing a base, that baserunner is no longer able to return to his original base, and must attempt to successfully steal.
- During a fly out, any baserunner is forced to return to the base he started the play on. If he does not, he can be tagged out.
  - Even if a baserunner has stolen a base during this play, he is obligated to return back to the base he was on when the play started or be tagged out.
  - As soon as a baserunner touches the base he started the play on, he may try to steal a base again if he wants to.
- If a baserunner tries to steal a base while the batter hits a foul, he must return to the base he started the play on, but cannot be tagged out while he does.
  - If a fly out is caught on a foul ball, the baserunner can still be tagged out while he returns to the base he started play on.
- Every time a baserunner crosses home plate (either by getting a walk, running, stealing home plate, hitting a home run, or hitting a ground rule double), the offensive team increases their score by one **RUN**.
  - A team cannot score runs while on the defensive position.



## CONTROLS

The controls in NES Baseball are a bit complicated, and may take some time getting used to.

### On the title screen

- **SELECT:** Switch from '1 PLAYER GAME' to '2 PLAYER GAME' or vice versa.
- **START:** Select a game.

### On the team select screen

- **CONTROL PAD:** Use left and right to scroll through the teams (In a 1 Player Game, you cannot select the team already chosen by the computer).
- **A:** Select a team.

### Any time during play

**START:** Pause the game. Press again to unpause the game.

### On offense

#### BATTING:

- **CONTROL PAD:** Shift your position in the batter's box. You can stand in 6 different spaces horizontally, and 15 different spaces vertically.
- **A:** Hold to bat. Tap lightly to bunt.

#### BASERUNNING:

- **B (While using the control pad):** Tell a baserunner to move to the next base. This can be used to steal a base, or to run when not forced to.
  - In general, baserunners will not automatically move to the next base unless they are forced to.
  - The only exception is if you have two outs: Baserunners will then automatically run.
  - If there is the risk of a fly out, unless you have two outs already, baserunners will not run automatically even if they are forced to (since they could be tagged out for not staying on their base). Once the ball touches the ground, the baserunners will then run automatically as normal. If you have two outs, the baserunners will run, no matter what.
- **A (While using the control pad):** Tell a baserunner to return to his base.
- **CONTROL PAD:**
  - Hold right while pressing B or A to only send the signal to the first baseman.
  - Hold up while pressing B or A to only send the signal to the second baseman.
  - Hold left while pressing B or A to only send the signal to the third baseman.
  - Hold down while pressing B or A to send the signal to all baseman.

### On defense

#### PITCHING:

- **A (Without using the control pad):** Throw a standard pitch to home plate.
- **B (Without using the control pad):** Throw a feint to the closest base with a baserunner on it (In the order: Third base, second base, first base).
- **CONTROL PAD (After pressing A):** Hold left or right to cause the baseball to move slightly in that direction.
- **A (While using the control pad):**
  - Hold right while pressing A to throw a curveball to home plate (A ball that moves significantly to the right).
  - Hold up while pressing A to throw a slowball to home plate (A very slow moving pitch).
  - Hold left while pressing A to throw a screwball to home plate (A ball that moves significantly to the left).
  - Hold down while pressing A to throw a fastball to home plate (A ball that moves incredibly fast)
- **B (While using the control pad):**
  - Hold right while pressing B to throw a feint to first base.
  - Hold up while pressing B to throw a feint to second base.
  - Hold left while pressing B to throw a feint to third base.

## FIELDING:

- **A or B:** Throw the ball to first base.
- **CONTROL PAD:**
  - Hold right while pressing A or B to throw the ball to first base.
  - Hold up while pressing A or B to throw the ball to second base.
  - Hold left while pressing A or B to throw the ball to third base.
  - Hold down while pressing A or B to throw the ball to the catcher at home plate.
- The fielders run for the ball automatically and their running cannot be controlled.
- If the ball is held by any fielder for two seconds without being thrown, and no offensive player is running, the ball returns to the pitcher and a new batter appears automatically.

## STRATEGY TIPS

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The computer's difficult level seems inconsistent, but is generally very high. Some innings, they seem barely able to touch the ball, while others, they get 8 runs before I know what happened. In order to help you win, here are some suggestions.

### Offensive

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- Don't steal bases before the pitcher throws the ball. If he throws a feint when you steal, it's a guaranteed out.
- The baseball and the defensive team move about two or three times as fast as your baserunners. Don't try to outrun either of them.
- Make good use of 'squeeze play' bunts. If you have a runner on third and you bunt the ball, it's likely that you'll reach home plate before the catcher grabs the ball (especially if your baserunner starts to run as soon as the ball is pitched).
  - Do NOT do this if you have two outs! More often than not, your batter will be put out at first base if you use this strategy, and any runs earned at the same time that your third out occurs are invalidated!
- When the ball is in the outfield, the computer throws it towards whichever base closest to home plate has a baserunner approaching (in the order of home plate, third base, second base, first base).
  - This means that if your baserunner is nearing third base, you can safely run from first to second. The computer is going to throw it from the outfield to third base, and then from third base to second base, which almost always gives you enough time to reach second base.
- Never swing at pitches that are going to be 'ball's! Even if you do connect, they'll almost always end up being a foul ball or an easy hit directly to a defensive player. If you don't connect, you get a strike!
- You generally want to hit the pitch as early as possible or as late as possible. This will send them very close to the first base or third base line, which means the defensive team has to run farther to get to them.
- If you think a ball you hit might be a fly out, don't force your baserunners to move. Getting two outs at once is not worth the risk.
  - On the other hand, if you don't expect the hit to be a fly out, get the forced baserunners running right away! Delaying too long means your baserunner has almost no chance of reaching the next base before getting tagged out.
  - And if you already have two outs, make them run. You'll get your third out if it's a fly out anyway, so there's no risk to doing so.
- It won't always work, but if you're desperate for one more run and you have less than two outs, you can follow this strategy to steal home plate:
  - Have a baserunner on first base and third base. As soon as the pitcher lets go of the ball, steal second base with your first baserunner. Then, IMMEDIATELY AFTER, steal home with the third baserunner. The computer will pass the ball to second to tag out the first baserunner, and your other one might make it home (especially if you're lucky and they pitched a slowball).
- If you hit the ball from closer to the top of the batter's box, it'll have more height than if you hit the ball from the bottom of the batter's box. Though this means you risk more fly outs, it also gives you better odds of getting home runs, ground rule doubles, and having the ball bounce away from the fielders.
  - Hitting it from the bottom of the batter's box gives you more grounders, which sometimes can roll right past a fielder's feet.
- Moving left or right in the batter's box only changes the angle of your hit, and doesn't directly change its distance or height.

### Defensive

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- Mix a variety of pitches. Don't risk getting any walks.
  - If you throw a basic pitch (pressing A without using the control pad), it will get a lot of height if the computer hits it. Be wary of pitches that turn into home runs in this way, but it can be useful for getting fly outs.
  - If the computer hits a fastball (holding down while pitching), it tends to either get a lot of distance or turn into a foul.
  - If the computer hits a slowball (holding up while pitching), it rarely gets any notable height, but can sometimes get as much distance as a fastball. Use this pitch if you're worried about homeruns, but be wary that the computer can often run a great deal around the baseball diamond before your fielders retrieve this ball.
  - If you pitch curveballs and screwballs, keep in mind that you risk increasing the ball count and giving away a walk. If the computer does swing at the ball though, it'll almost always be a strike, foul, or fly out.
    - If you throw the ball away from the batter (a curveball to a batter in the left batter's box and a screwball to the batter in the right batter's box), they're less likely to swing at it, increasing the ball count. They're also less likely to hit it if they do swing, increasing the strike count.

- It takes longer for a batter to run to first base than for a baserunner to move forward. If the opponent has two outs already, get the batter out at first base and ignore all other baserunners: Their runs will be invalid anyway.
- You don't get much control of your fielders, so don't waste any time. As soon as one of them grabs the baseball, throw it to a baseman to tag someone out.
- If you have fewer than two outs, try to tag out the baserunner closest to home plate. It's better to get a player on third base out of the game than it is to get a player on first base out.
- The opponent will sometimes steal bases. Unless you get a fly out (or foul), the stealing is valid, even if the pitch is a strike or a ball. So immediately throw the ball to tag the baserunner out when you get it!
- If the computer has two baserunners near third base when your fielder gets the baseball, don't throw it. The computer will automatically run both of them to the nearest base (third base for both), and since there will then be two baserunners on one base, the game will call one of them out.
- The most dangerous spots for the ball to go is into the outfield between your fielders. It takes them a long time to get to the ball if that happens, so try to aim your pitches to make it more difficult for the computer to hit the baseball to that angle.
- Remember that if there's a baserunner on the field, one of your fielders has to move to stand next to that base (in case of a feint). This means that side of your outfield is less defended! Be incredibly careful of the angles the computer hits the ball at in this situation.

## CHALLENGES

For the beginners and experts of NES Baseball, here are a few creative challenges to try out. See how many of them you can do!

### EASY

- Bunt and make it to first base without being tagged out.
- Get walked by a pitcher.
- Steal home base.
- Succeed in a sacrifice squeeze play (Get the third baserunner home with a bunt).

### MEDIUM

- Win a game.
- End a game in a tie.
- Succeed in a full squeeze play (Get the third baserunner home, and get the batter safely onto first base with a bunt).
- Hit a home run.

### HARD

- Succeed in a tag up and run play (During a fly out, have a baserunner touch the base he started the play on, then reach the next base without being tagged out).
- Hit a grand slam (Hit a home run with a baserunner on all three bases).
- Hit a ground rule double.

### VERY HARD

- Hit an inside-the-park home run (Get the batter all the way around the diamond without the ball leaving the field).
- Win a shutout (Beat the computer without letting them score any runs).

### IMPOSSIBLE

- Pitch a perfect game (Win the game without letting any batters get onto any bases). This means:
  - The game must not end in a tie.
  - The opponent must not score any runs.
  - You can never walk the batter.
  - If the batter hits the ball, it must either be a fly out or he must be tagged out before reaching first base.
  - If the batter reaches first base and is put out on the way to second base, it is no longer a perfect game.

