

# MLB 2005 FAQ/Strategy Guide

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This walkthrough was originally written for MLB 2005 on the PSX, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the PS2 version of the game.



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Navigation tip: Press Ctrl and F to bring down a search bar. Then type in the name of the section you're looking for - like [VERSN] for the ever-popular Version History.

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Introduction [INTRO]

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"For the safety of our players and fans, please refrain from throwing objects onto the field. Thank you."

Perhaps the best way to begin my latest guide, which is the first I've written for a PlayStation game. We're rapidly approaching that fine day when pitchers and catchers report to camp, and the local prep field is already ringing with the pings of (aluminum) bats, so it's about time that I made another guide for a baseball game. I've apparently rescinded my earlier threats that I would stop writing guides for older games, and if you're reading this, that's something to smile about.

MLB 2005 was one of the last games released for the original PlayStation. Despite its shortcomings, it manages to be fairly fun despite the fact that it's, well, old. The graphics leave something to be desired. Despite the neat video to open the game, the stadium introductions are wiggly, and all the players are terribly jerky and look like they weigh 350 pounds. As for sounds, Vin Scully is a great announcer, but it's not his fault that his partner, Dave Campbell (the color guy), gets some dumb lines that appear at inopportune times. The PA's announcements are a good touch, but most of the comments occur far too frequently. In addition, all of the voices are radio-quality at best,

and the sounds of the bats seem clunky. The menu music is OK but hardly memorable, while the batter introduction songs are kind of annoying - most of them sound like surfing music, not baseball music (the organs are underused). And while I've sometimes said bad things about patriotism, I think it's mean that they don't play the national anthem before the game. Play control is pretty standard. I like the fact that the bases are all assigned to a button instead of having to use a button in conjunction with the Directional Pad, but other things are awkward - most notably, grounders to a shortstop or second basemen, where one of the infielders is always covering second base, and it can cost a valuable split-second to take manual control of one of them and move him to the ball - by which time the ball has gone into the outfield. Another problem is it's impossible to steal bases (except going 1 for 2 on double steals), and the game usually glitches up on the tag, with the ball shooting off into a random location at the end. MLB 2005 isn't extremely difficult, and on the lower levels of play you can achieve some pretty huge wins. Overall, MLB 2005 is an OK baseball sim despite its over-reliance on the long ball. If you're playing with a friend, you'll probably have more fun, considering how predictable the pitching AI is.

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Modes of Play

[MODES]  
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Here's a brief description of all the games available for selection:

---Select Game---

Exhibition mode pits two teams of your choice against each other. You can determine things like the stadium and the time of day, and you can play two-player games or watch the computer play itself.

All-Star Game pits the American League All-Stars against the National League's best in the midsummer classic. You can even choose the members of the squad you're using.

Season begins various forms of season play. There are standard seasons for one or two players, a franchise mode (which I explain in greater depth in the Strategies section), and a manager mode (which is rather boring, because you don't control the players; you just make managerial decisions like picking lineups and changing pitchers). Because a full 162-game season would take many hours to complete (likely 100 or more), you can select a shorter season or simulate a few games if things get too boring.

Playoffs begins a new playoff series. Choose this if you want to head straight to the playoffs without going through a regular season.

Spring Training allows you to create a player and play him throughout a two- or six-game spring training run. If that player performs well (either by making big hits or by pitching well), his abilities will steadily increase. If you play well enough, you might have yourself an All-Star!

In Home Run Derby mode, you can select any player in the game to participate in a homer-hitting contest. It's best to select top sluggers like Sammy Sosa, Ken Griffey Jr., and Jim Thome; anyone with a Power rating of 99 is ideal. Remember that if you don't like a pitch, you can take it and it won't cost an out. Also, there's no batting cursor, but you can use the Directional Pad to change the trajectory of your hit. By default, the Home Run Derby takes place at Minute Maid Park, the site of the 2004 All-Star Game, so you might want to adjust for that. Of course, you can also change the hosting stadium.

---Quick Start---

This begins a game with two randomly selected teams - a good way to experiment with teams you might not select ordinarily or if you want to get straight to the action and don't care about who's playing.

### ---General Manager---

Here you can make player transactions and change lineups.

Trade Players allows you to make trades between teams.

Create Player enables you to create a custom player - maybe a rookie who isn't in the game, a Cooperstown great, or even yourself! There are quite a few options for player creation, including skin color, stance, bat and glove color, and sock length, and you can also adjust the player's abilities in every aspect of his play. You can even create a 7'0, 100-pound beanpole or a 5'0, 300-pound lump if you want to.

Draft is similar to a fantasy draft - all the players in the game become free agents, and each team takes turns selecting them. I cover this more in the Strategies section.

Free Agents allows you to sign players from the pool of free agents - usually players you've created yourself.

Player Cards shows detailed dossiers for every player in the game.

Reset Rosters restores all team rosters and lineups to the way they were when you first played the game. This undoes all transactions you've made, so be careful when using this option.

### ---User Records---

User Records allows you to set up profiles for up to eight different players and keep track of certain notable performances. User Records can be used for Exhibition Mode and some seasons.

### ---Memory Card---

This lets you save or load modified rosters or a season in progress. Keep in mind that season modes can use a lot of space on the memory card.

### ---Game Tips---

Game Tips displays basic information about various game modes. It's not extremely useful, even for beginners, and everything it discusses appears in much greater detail in the guide you happen to be reading.

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Controls

[CONTR]  
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These are the basics of the game. Many things are explained more thoroughly in the Strategies section.

### ---Before Pitch---

#### Batting

X: Practice swing

Circle: Bunt

Square: Toggle between contact and power swing

Directional Pad: Move contact area

L2 + direction/pitch buttons: Guess pitch type

#### Pitching

R1: Cycle through infield shifts  
R2: Cycle through outfield shifts  
Triangle, Circle, X, Square: Select respective pitch

---Post-Pitch Selection---

#### Batting

X: Swing  
Circle: Bunt  
Square: Toggle between contact and power swing  
Triangle + Directional Pad: Increase lead/steal base  
Square: Increase lead/steal all runners

#### Pitching

X: Throw pitch (hold for faster pitch)  
Directional Pad: Change pitch location  
Square, Triangle, Circle: Pickoff attempt if runners are on (Triangle = second base, etc.)  
R1: Cycle through infield shifts  
R2: Cycle through outfield shifts

---Ball in play---

#### Baserunning

Triangle + Directional Pad: Advance runner from respective base  
X + Directional Pad: Return runner from respective base  
Square: Advance all runners  
Circle: Return all runners

#### Fielding

X: Diving catch  
Triangle: Jumping catch  
Square: Switch to closest player  
L2: Hold for special fielding moves ("Total Control Fielding")  
Square, Triangle, Circle (with ball): Throw to respective base (Triangle = second base, etc.)  
R1: Throw to cutoff man

Press START at most times to pause the game and bring up a menu that allows you to view statistics, change your lineup, watch an instant replay, or adjust game settings. Press SELECT to change camera angles on the fly, although this can also be done from the pause menu.

Most menu controls are explained clearly in-game. However, generally you use the Directional Pad to move up and down, X to select an option, Triangle to return to the previous screen, Square to change sides (on certain screens), L1 for help, and R1 to pull up a shortcut list.

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Team Summaries [TEAMS]  
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MLB 2005 doesn't give teams precise ratings, so I'll step in and provide you

with a general summary of every team.

**Anaheim Angels:** While the Angels (now going by the melodious moniker of the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim) don't have as much starpower as the Yankees of Red Sox, the lineup is full of speedy overachievers like Adam Kennedy and Bengie Molina who do one thing: win games. Vladimir Guerrero, Garret Anderson, and Troy Glaus provide power, too. While some of their starting pitchers had down years in 2004, the rotation is still outstanding, and Troy Percival is a top-of-the-line closer.

**Baltimore Orioles:** The definition of a team lacking in direction. Melvin Mora, Javy Lopez, Miguel Tejada, and 'roided-up Rafael Palmeiro give the O's some pop in the heart of the lineup, but even with the emergence of Rodrigo Lopez and some OK relief, there's some bad pitching on this team.

**Boston Red Sox:** After 86 years of frustration and heartache, the Red Sox finally won their world championship in 2004. Led by Johnny Damon, Manny Ramirez, David Ortiz, and Nomar Garciaparra (who was traded to the Cubs at the deadline), this team can score. And with Curt Schilling and Pedro Martinez anchoring an excellent five-man rotation (and a reliable bullpen), you're looking at what's arguably the best team in MLB 2005.

**Chicago White Sox:** Not a bad team, but they look like they're more than a year away from making it to the World Series. Carlos Lee, Frank Thomas, and Paul Konerko are good sluggers in the middle of the order, and with guys like Joe Crede batting after them, you can keep innings alive. Mark Buehrle is the ace of a tolerable pitching staff.

**Cleveland Indians:** The Indians were still rebuilding in 2004, and their lineup, while fairly balanced, doesn't have many real stars. C.C. Sabathia and Jake Westbrook are two underrated starters, and the bullpen is above average.

**Detroit Tigers:** While vastly improved from their dismal 119-loss 2003 campaign, the Tigers still have major holes in their lineup, especially without Ivan Rodriguez being with the team. The Tigers' young arms are still developing and can't be relied upon yet for consistency.

**Kansas City Royals:** Let's see. Unless you count DH Mike Sweeney or RF Juan Gonzalez (neither of whom was ever healthy in real life), we've got a team with real problems. Despite the emergence of future star Zack Greinke (who isn't in the game), the pitching staff has so many weaknesses it's surprising the Royals lost only 104 games.

**Minnesota Twins:** The Twins of this era had perfected the art of reaching the playoffs on a shoestring budget. Their reliance on speed and lack of real sluggers hurts them unfairly in MLB 2005, but Brad Radke and Johan Santana can still pitch really effectively.

**New York Yankees:** The Yankees forked out a lot of dough for this talented (and aging) ballclub, but it wasn't enough to get them to the World Series. Still, the batting order is probably the most dangerous in baseball, the pitching rotation is one of the game's deepest, and Mariano Rivera is a stellar closer.

**Oakland A's:** The A's had a very strong team that was squeezed out of the playoffs by Anaheim. Oakland's lineup is constructed around players who reach base a lot, with moderate emphasis on power and no emphasis whatsoever on speed. Their devotion to plate patience will do you little good in MLB 2005, where walks are almost nonexistent, but their lack of speed won't hurt much either. Barry Zito, Tim Hudson, and Mark Mulder lead one of the game's best pitching rotations.

Seattle Mariners: With tremendous batting averages and great speed, Ichiro Suzuki is the game's best leadoff hitter, but otherwise you've got an aging lineup and an average pitching staff. Still, this team is stronger in MLB 2005 than their real-life performance indicated.

Tampa Bay Devil Rays: Carl Crawford lights up the basepaths, and Aubrey Huff and Rocco Baldelli show tremendous promise, but back in the Devil Rays era, the star of the show was still... Raymond. The biggest problem is pitching, since there are about zero dependable hurlers on the staff.

Texas Rangers: Every man in the starting nine reached double digits in the homers column, and even with the pitching problems, the Rangers can never be counted out of a game. And dare I say it, Alex Rodriguez is the best player in baseball at the time, even if he cost \$25,000,000 a season. Of course, in real life the Rangers traded him before the season to the Yankees for another superstar, Alfonso Soriano.

Toronto Blue Jays: One of the weakest Blue Jays teams in recent years, 2004 Toronto has two good power hitters in Vernon Wells and Carlos Delgado and one good starting pitcher (Roy Halladay), but the lineup is shallow and the bullpen is shaky at best.

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Arizona Diamondbacks: The D-backs have a good pitcher named Randy Johnson. That's it. The key components of their 2001 World Series winners are mostly past their prime (or retired), and what's left is a hodgepodge of terrible free-agent acquisitions (see Alomar, Roberto; Hillenbrand, Shea; Sexson, Richie) or marginal young players (Cintron, Alex; Kata, Matt) that ended up going 51-111. Youch. In MLB 2005, though, Luis Gonzalez and Steve Finley still have something left in the tank, and Alomar and Sexson remain healthy.

Atlanta Braves: At this point in time, Bobby Cox's team had gotten pretty good at consistently winning division titles (and faltering the playoffs) even after losing quite a few of their more expensive players. Rafael Furcal is one of the game's best leadoff hitters, and Chipper and Andruw Jones were RBI machines at the peak of their careers. The Braves also have plenty of pitching with Greg Maddux (traded to the Cubs before the season), Mike Hampton, Paul Byrd, and John Smoltz as a closer. And don't forget 46-year-old Julio Franco.

Chicago Cubs: Coming off a 2003 season that ended just five outs away from the World Series, the Cubs were National League favorites. It's easy to see why. Sammy Sosa, Aramis Ramirez, Derrek Lee, and Moises Alou provide outstanding power in the middle of the order, and Carlos Zambrano, Kerry Wood, Mark Prior, and Matt Clement make up one of the best rotations in baseball, even if their ratings are a tad low and they're without Greg Maddux, a late acquisition.

Cincinnati Reds: Cincinnati's lineup boasts great power but little else. Ken Griffey Jr. is a more balanced hitter than homer-or-nothing Adam Dunn. Once you get past those two sluggers, you're looking at a team with little contact hitting (besides Sean Casey and Barry Larkin), shaky defense, and bad pitching, especially in the pen.

Colorado Rockies: The Rockies, still first a slugging team, have a few good hitters like Todd Helton and Larry Walker, but the offense was in a down year. Jason Jennings (a highly-rated pitcher in the game who had a 5.51 ERA in 2004) leads a shallow pitching staff.

Florida Marlins: The 2004 Marlins had lost a few of the key players from their

2003 world championship team (like first baseman Derrek Lee), but they remain a contender. Juan Pierre and Luis Castillo are good catalysts batting in front of Miguel Cabrera and Mike Lowell. The Marlins have an underrated pitching rotation, and Ugueth Urbina is a capable closer. Ivan Rodriguez had moved on to Detroit in real life, but he's one of the best catchers around.

Houston Astros: Biggio. Bagwell. Berkman. With the midseason acquisition of Carlos Beltran, stopping the Killer B's (and Jeff Kent) was a real challenge. Roger Clemens, Roy Oswalt, Andy Pettitte, and always-injured Wade Miller make up a great rotation. The bullpen, however, is rather iffy.

Los Angeles Dodgers: The Dodgers lack the big names of the Giants or the pitching of the Padres, but they were the ones who earned the National League West crown. No superstars, but overall a solid team, and Eric Gagne is the game's best closer.

Milwaukee Brewers: I know how to turn this struggling franchise around - trade for the D-backs' infield! That's precisely what the Brew Crew did in the 2004 offseason, and it didn't really work out (Junior Spivey's name was better than his offense). Scott Podsednik is the fastest player in the game, but that's of little consequence if nobody can move him over. Ben Sheets's talent isn't reflected in the game, and overall the pitching is atrocious. And sadly, the game omits outfielder-turned pitcher Brook Kieschnick.

Montreal Expos: The Expos spent 2004 as a lame duck in Montreal and moved to Washington the following season. Not surprisingly, the '04 Expos lost 95 games. Brad Wilkerson can drive people in from the cleanup spot, and Livan Hernandez is the league's best inning-eater. Otherwise, the Expos' lineup includes more than a few holes.

New York Mets: The Mets spent a lot of money to win 71 games. The lineup is pretty mediocre - David Wright isn't in the game and Jose Reyes wasn't ready for the big show yet - and the team wasted a lot of time trying to convert Mike Piazza to first base (although he's a catcher in this game). Still, the Mets might have a shot with Tom Glavine leading the pitching staff after 15+ years in Atlanta.

Philadelphia Phillies: The Phillies were obviously a team on the rise and just missed out on a playoff spot. Jimmy Rollins is one of the best leadoff hitters, Jim Thome is one of the best sluggers, Bobby Abreu can do everything, and Billy Wagner is a lights-out closer. There are still a few questions in the rotation and bullpen, however.

Pittsburgh Pirates: Bad team. Case closed. Jason Kendall is a durable contact hitter, and Jason Bay has some power. The Bucs could seriously use some pitching help.

St. Louis Cardinals: Lately the Cardinals have been winning with Albert Pujols alone, but back when Scott Rolen and Jim Edmonds were in their prime, the Cardinals had three of the best power threats in the game. Don't overlook Edgar Renteria and Reggie Sanders, either. And with a deep (though underrated in places) rotation, it's no surprise the Cardinals won the National League pennant. It should be noted that Albert Pujols moved from left field to first base in 2004.

San Diego Padres: Despite having one of the weakest lineups in baseball, the Padres win games with their pitching: starters David Wells and Jake Peavy, and closer Trevor Hoffman. In MLB 2005, that might be good enough.

San Francisco Giants: Barry Bonds is a pretty good hitter, regardless of what

he might have taken. For whatever reason, though, he's not in the game. Ray Durham is a great leadoff man for MLB 2005 purposes, and Jason Schmidt is a capable starter. Past him and crossword-answer closer Robb Nen, the entire team isn't much good.

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American League All-Stars: As good as they get - the A.L. All-Stars.

National League All-Stars: A great all-around team made up of the best players from the National League. Some of the default selections for starting pitchers were a bit strange, however.

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General Strategies

[STRAT]  
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---Hitting---

\* To make good contact with the ball, swing the bat when the batting cursor overlaps squarely with the pitcher's aiming sight. Watch the latter closely, as it may dip or curve, especially on breaking balls. Usually it's best to aim a little below the ball, although some fastballs rise. Also keep in mind that different pitchers may throw the same pitch in different ways.

\* It's almost always easier to get on base with a power hit than with a contact hit.

\* At the plate, don't try to chase bad pitches that are obviously outside the strike zone.

\* Keep in mind that if you hit just a little above the ball, you'll hit a line drive. Aim a bit under the ball to hit a higher ball, perhaps increasing the chances of a sacrifice fly. The same applies to hitting left or right of the ball if you want to push or pull the ball.

\* Be willing to take pitches. The computer hardly ever gives up walks, but it will throw balls sometimes. Also, swinging at the first pitch every time is a great way to keep the opposing pitcher fresh. Moreover, whenever a new pitcher comes in, be patient so you can see what kind of "stuff" he has.

\* Press L2 and the corresponding button before the pitch to "guess" that the pitcher will throw that particular pitch. You can also use the Directional Pad to guess that the pitcher will throw to a particular part of the zone. If you guess correctly on either the pitch or the zone, your odds of hitting the ball will increase. If you get both right, a special lock-on cursor will appear; when that happens, you'll have a 100% chance of making contact and a decent chance at getting a home run or other extra-base hit as long as your timing is right. If both of your guesses are wrong, the batting cursor will become quite small and you might want to take the next pitch.

\* I strongly recommend guessing both the pitch and the location on EVERY pitch. This way, if for example you guess an outside fastball, and the batting cursor shrinks drastically, you'll still at least know that something other than a fastball is coming and that it won't be an outside pitch. And that's pretty useful.

\* If you correctly guess both the pitch type and the location, the double lock-on cursor will appear. While this will move automatically with the movement of the pitch, you can use the Directional Pad to hit toward a particular part of the field. Hold Left to aim toward left field, Right to hit toward right, Up for a fly ball, and Down for a grounder. Remember that your hitter's natural tendency to pull or push the ball may still affect the trajectory of your hit.

\* Personally, I find good fastballs to be harder to hit than breaking balls. For that reason, I usually guess fastball (unless the opposing pitcher is living off sliders or sinkers or whatnot), so hard-to-hit heaters will be easier to hit, and even if I get a tasty breaking ball, those will already be easier to make contact with anyway.



\* Against a small number of elite pitchers (most of the pitchers with overall ratings in the 90's), the location-guessing zone will have eight sectors instead of the usual four. This doesn't make things much different though, although you can then make location guesses like up/right.

\* It's not very hard to predict what kinds of pitches the computer will dish up, especially if you pay attention to the pitch chart shown when you make your guess. Most computer pitchers throw fastballs about half the time and use one of their other pitches (usually the slider) 25-40% of the time. Changeups are generally very rare, especially on the Rookie and Veteran difficulty levels. The computer hardly ever throws back-to-back pitches in the same part of the zone. Also, a lot of computer pitchers throw only fastballs to the sluggers and save their sliders and curves for the less dangerous hitters.

\* As with computer-controlled pitchers, when you're playing against a real person, you'll probably notice patterns as well (albeit different patterns). If you notice your friend (or enemy) is starting every at-bat with a fastball and only throws curveballs on an 0-2 count, be ready to punish such mistakes.

\* To bunt, hold Circle and use the Directional Pad to angle the cursor so you'll hit the ball strongly toward one of the foul lines. Use Up or Down on the Directional Pad to raise or lower your bat to hit the ball. On sacrifice bunts, it's often a good idea to increase the runners' leads before you bunt. Lastly, remember that bunting is most effective with players who have high Contact and Speed ratings. I'm not a big fan of bunting in this game, though, except to move runners over when a weak hitter is at the plate. It's almost impossible to bunt against fastballs or outside pitches.

\* It's not difficult to pull off a sacrifice fly in this game, but remember to return to the bag, and don't leave until you're sure the fielder has caught the ball, or you may end up getting doubled off. And that's no fun.

\* Use pinch-hitting to your advantage, especially when a tired pitcher is at the plate. But don't pinch-hit for an effective, energized pitcher.

### ---Pitching---

\* Your pitching will be most effective if you aim for the corners of the strike zone. Unlike real umpires, the game's strike zone never changes. Remember that you can aim closer to the corners of the zone if you have a fresh pitcher with good control, and that it's important to remember that different pitchers' pitches move in different ways.

\* If your pitcher is getting tired, don't throw high breaking balls to a heavy hitter unless you'd like to give up a home run.

\* Different pitchers have different pitches to choose from.

\* If you're ahead in the count (like 0-2), throw a tempting pitch at the edge of the strike zone or a weak pitch in the dirt.

\* You can aim breaking balls a little off the plate, and if done properly, they'll curve back for a strike (keep in mind whether you're a lefty or a righty).

\* When pitching to an opposing pitcher, just blow by him with a few sizzlers. Don't waste your time with trickery; the CPU pitchers simply can't hit the ball. Against a human, though, pitchers can hit slightly more effectively, so be a little more cautious.

\* You can see whether the computer batter is hitting for power or for contact.

\* Batters' vertical strike zones vary depending on stance; a player with a very erect stance (like Derrek Lee) will have a bigger zone than someone who's more compact, like Jeff Bagwell.

\* A pitcher's energy level is shown on the meter beside the pitch selection dialog. If the meter drops too close to the yellow region, be ready to give him the yank if your current pitcher gets into trouble. And when it starts flashing, you're going to see a rapid drop in performance and risk wild pitches and hit batsmen.

\* Remember that you DON'T have to warm a pitcher up in the bullpen before

making a pitching change.

### ---Fielding---

\* In this game, fielding can be tough. You may want to use the auto-fielding option when you're starting out. However, even the computer seems to have trouble with dribblers to the pitcher.

\* Bring the infield in (check the Controls section) if you think the opposition is planning to bunt. If you're an advanced player, use infield and outfield shifts to your advantage.

\* Be vigilant at all times! A strong-armed right fielder can often turn a line drive single into an out at first. If there's a runner on first and the ball is hit to the CF, throw to second and you can frequently get the man out. Be aggressive on fly outs, too; it's not difficult to double off the computer-controlled runners, especially on tricky foul outs.

\* Similarly, it's a good habit to throw to the necessary base when you catch what you think is a fly out or a foul ball along the line, just in case what looks foul or caught is actually fair and in play.

\* When making substitutions, don't insert a player into an unnatural position - for example, don't play a first baseman in center field.

### ---Franchise Mode---

Franchise Mode isn't as much a typical franchise simulation where you're in complete control of a franchise and do everything from making trades to setting ticket prices. Instead, it's almost RPG-like in that you use franchise "points" (assigned at the beginning of the game and also earned by winning games and accumulating hits) to sign players from a pool of free agents.

When you begin a new Franchise Mode game, your selected team will automatically be assigned 11 random players (a starting pitcher, a reliever, the eight field positions, and a DH, even for N.L. teams). Most of them will be marginal players like Aaron Miles or Mike Hessman or something - don't expect to get any players with ratings above 80, or if you're lucky, 90.

You'll also be given approximately 4,000 franchise points, which you can use to purchase new players. You can "trade" existing players into the pool, but only half their original value will be returned to you. Since you're working on filling up the roster at this point, I'd only purchase players from the pool right now.

At this point in time, you desperately need pitching help. Sign the best starting pitcher you can find. Get another pitcher, too - either a starter or a good closer or reliever. At this point, you should have enough points left for two or three field players. I strongly recommend getting at least one good power hitter (Sammy Sosa was my pick). Anyone with a Power rating of 99 will average about a home run per game and will vastly improve your team.

From here, just keep playing games. Along the way, you'll earn points for getting hits, winning games, and above all, sustaining long winning streaks. Once you accumulate 600-900 points, go back to the player pool and sign another player. The computer teams will also sign players on occasion, but they don't make very frequent signings. Remember that each computer-controlled team's first transaction will usually be a closer, followed by an ace starter.

### ---Draft Mode---

In the draft, every player in the game is dispersed into a pool of free agents, and each team is restocked round by round. You can take control of one or two teams. Every player is worth a certain number of points (like in many fantasy leagues), and you can set a points limit for each team to help keep teams relatively equal. Point limits can be set as low as 14,000 and as high as 20,000, in 2,000-point increments. Oddly, the time limit for making each draft pick is lower (15 seconds) on 14,000-point drafts than on 20,000-point mode (60 seconds). If you set the point limit very low, many big players will be left on the boards and not all rosters will be full. If you need to take a breather, press Square to see your team's current roster (which is also helpful to make sure you avoid obtaining, say, three left fielders in the first few rounds) The computer's selections generally make sense, but that's not to say you won't be able to find a steal in a later round. Typically, the computer will look for field players in the first few rounds, although a handful of elite pitchers will also be snatched up quickly. The pool of closers is always shallow to begin with, and the computer will grab the best ones in the first two rounds. The first base and left field positions are pretty deep, so it's smart to begin by picking a slugger from a less deep position like third base or catcher with your first few picks. Utility players tend to sit on the draft boards for an eternity. After the draft is over, you may need to adjust your team's lineup and rotation, since the game's automatic lineups can often be improved upon.

---Other Game Notes---

\* If you leave the main menu unattended long enough, the game will go into a demo mode. Press any button to leave the sample game.

\* The game doesn't have balks, catcher's interference, or other rare events. And, of course, there aren't rain delays, bench-clearing brawls, or mound conferences.

\* Home runs are often a bit longer (and for players like Sammy Sosa or Jim Edmonds, more frequent) than they would really be.

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Frequently Asked Questions

[QUEST]

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Q: Are there any cheat codes in this game?

A: None that I know of. If you find anything, tell me and I'll give you credit for it.

Q: How accurate are the rosters in this game?

A: The game's rosters were finalized sometime in January 2004. Some things changed between then and Opening Day - most notably, the Rangers traded Alex Rodriguez to the Yankees for Alfonso Soriano. The Cubs signed Greg Maddux from the Braves, while their fifth starter, Shawn Estes, went to the Rockies. Ivan Rodriguez left Florida for Detroit. And, of course, numerous trades, signings, and other roster moves occurred during the course of the 2004 season. I don't include a section about trades you can make to update your favorite teams, since some people might prefer rosters to look the way they looked in spring training, on Opening Day, or on the last day of the season. If you want to tweak the rosters, look on Baseball-Reference.com, MLB.com, or other sites for 2004 stats. And if realism doesn't matter, feel free to make moves that never occurred at all in real life.

Q: What does the fielding percentage statistic mean?

A: The game omits the first digit of the number (for the game's purposes, always a 9). If a player's listed fielding percentage is 73%, read .973.

Q: Should I hit for contact or power?

A: For almost every player in the game, it's easier to use the power shot. The

only exception is if you're inexperienced and having trouble hitting the ball.

Q: What are the differences between the difficulty levels?

A: The main difference is the size of the contact areas. On Rookie difficulty, the hitting contact area is much larger than it is on the Veteran or All-Star levels. Also, the computer throws a somewhat better variety of pitches on higher difficulties and is less likely to let you get away with throwing dangerous pitches.

Q: Does anything special happen if I pitch a no-hitter?

A: Not really, although the Player of the Game screen will at least note that your pitcher threw a "complete game no-hitter." I earned mine on Veteran difficulty, using Shawn Estes for the Cubs (who didn't actually stay in Chicago in 2004) against the Pirates in Spring Training mode. No save states or Game Genie codes were used.

Q: Why can't the announcers pronounce "Aramis?"

A: For the same reason they can't say "offensive" the right way. And oddly, Coco Crisp goes by his nickname in the game text, but the announcers always call him Covelli Crisp.

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Comparing to Reality [REALL]  
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Yeah, you probably knew I was going to do some kind of season summary in this guide. I'll keep it short.

2004 was the year the Red Sox broke the "Curse of the Bambino" and finally won the World Series, sweeping St. Louis and sending Red Sox Nation into jubilation.

As for notable career achievements, Cubs starter Greg Maddux joined the 300-win club, while Ken Griffey Jr. of Cincinnati hit his 500th homer.

In general, home runs were up in 2004. While new hitter-friendly ballparks had recently opened in Philadelphia and Cincinnati, this power spike was more profound in the American League, and 2005 was much more pitcher-friendly than 2004.

And, of course, everyone was talking about steroids (especially in the 2004-05 offseason).

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Version History [VERSN]  
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Now we're talking.

Date	Version	Size	
2-12-10	0.1	2KB	Began guide.
2-13-10	0.2	19KB	Finished basic guide framework.
2-14-10	0.4	25KB	Worked on Strategies and Team Summaries.
2-15-10	0.7	36KB	Finished Review and Controls.
2-16-10	0.9	40KB	Finished Team Summaries. Nearing completion.
2-17-10	1.0	42KB	Finished revising and proofreading.

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Contact Information

[CONTC]  
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If you have any questions or comments about this guide, please send an e-mail to VHamilton002@gmail.com. That's zero-zero-two, by the way. Remember that not all e-mail messages will be read. Please follow these guidelines:

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For Bobby Ford