

Year-by-Year Timeline of Scoring Rule Changes

<http://www.baseballlibrary.com/chronology/rules1.php>

<http://www.baseballlibrary.com/chronology/rules2.php>

The following is a compilation of all the important major-league rule changes that have been made since 1845. In assembling the research for this book, we found a number of small disagreements on dates; virtually all, however, occurred in the nineteenth century, and most discrepancies were of but one year.

The bracketed reference that follows some of these rules refers to the rule number in today's *Official Baseball Rules*. In some cases, the rule as it reads today is considerably different from the way it was written then.

<u>1845</u>	» 1845
	<p>Although some sources say that the first written "baseball rules" date from 1834 or 1842, a more commonly cited year of origin is 1845, when the New York Knickerbockers created a formal code of playing rules. The rules limited each team to nine players, laid out the field in what designer Alexander Cartwright termed his "baseball square" (with ninety-foot sides), and established that the winner was the team who scored twenty-one aces, given that each team had an equal number of turns at bat.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">» There are no restrictions on bat size or shape. [1.10]» The ball weighs three ounces. [1.09]» The pitching distance is forty-five feet. [1.07]» Provisions are made for an umpire. [9.01A]
<u>1846</u> <u>1847</u>	» 1846
	<p>The first recorded argument between a player and an umpire. The umpire wins.</p>
<u>1848</u>	» 1848
	<p>A rule is introduced requiring that a baseman must hold the ball in order to put out a runner. (Before this the base runner was out if the ball hit him.) [7.08]</p> <p>Only the batter-runner making for first may be retired on a force. (Before this any runner could be retired on a force.) [7.08]</p>
<u>1849</u> <u>1850</u> <u>1851</u> <u>1852</u> <u>1853</u>	» 1849
	<p>The New York Knickerbockers introduced the first uniforms, blue and white cricket outfits. [1.17]</p>
<u>1854</u> <u>1855</u> <u>1856</u>	» 1854
	<p>The ball weighs from 5 1/2 to 6 1/2 ounces and is from 2 3/4 to 3 1/2 inches in diameter. [1.09]</p>
<u>1857</u>	» 1857

	The nine-inning game is introduced. [4.10]
1858	<p>» 1858</p> <p>Balls caught on one hop are no longer outs. [6.05]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The called strike is introduced. [6.05] » One umpire, chosen by the home team, is in charge of a game. [9.03A] » The pitcher is allowed to make a short run in his delivery. [8.01]
1859	<p>» 1859</p> <p>The bat is limited to 2 1/2 inches in diameter (before this a bat like that used in cricket with a 4-inch-wide flat face had been commonplace). [1.10]</p>
1860	<p>» 1860</p> <p>Whitewash is used to mark the foul lines. [1.04]</p> <p>The umpire of a game is selected by the captain of each team. He is given the authority to suspend play, and he must make a call when a ball is foul. [9.04]</p>
1861 1862	<p>» 1861</p> <p>At the end of a game an umpire must declare the winning club and record his decision in the scorebook of each team before he leaves the field. [9.04]</p>
1863	<p>» 1863</p> <p>The pitcher is not permitted to take even a step in his delivery. Both feet must be on the ground when he releases the ball. [8.01]</p> <p>The bat must be round and of wood. Its width is still limited to 2 1/2 inches, but its length is not restricted. [1.10]</p>
1864	<p>» 1864</p> <p>When a runner circles the bases, he must touch each one. [7.02]</p>
1865	<p>» 1865</p> <p>The first sliding steal of a base, by Eddie Cuthbert of the Philadelphia Keystones. [10.08]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » The first batting averages are computed. [10.22] » The pitcher's box—twelve feet by three feet—replaces the twelve-foot line. [1.07] » The umpire must also record the results of a game in the scorer's book. [9.04]
1866	<p>» 1866</p> <p>The pitcher's box is enlarged to a four- by twelve-foot rectangle. [1.07]</p>
1867	<p>» 1867</p> <p>The pitcher's box is six feet by six feet. [1.07]</p>

Pitchers are allowed to take as many steps as they like in their delivery. [8.01]

1868 » **1868**

The pitcher's box shrinks to a four- by six-foot box. [1.07]

The Cincinnati Red Stockings introduce knickerbocker trousers. [1.17]

The bat is to be no more than forty-two inches long. [1.10]

1869 » **1869**

The pitcher's box is a six-foot square. [1.07]

1870
1871 » **1870**

A runner is allowed to overrun first base. [7.08]

The batter is given the right to call for a high or a low ball.

1872
1873
1874 » **1872**

The pitcher is allowed to snap the ball during delivery, but he's restricted to a below-the-waist motion. [8.01]

The ball is required to weigh not less than 5 and not more than 5 1/4 ounces, with a circumference of not less than 9 and not more than 9 1/4 inches. [1.09]

An "injured" ball is to be changed only in even innings upon request of the captain of either team. [3.01]

1875 » **1875**

The (unpadded) catcher's glove is introduced, by Charles G. Waite. [1.12]

1876 » **1876**

The National League is established.

The umpire says, "Play" for the first time. [4.15A]

If an umpire is unable to see whether a catch has been fairly made, he may confer with spectators and players.

1877 » **1877**

To choose an umpire the league selects "three gentlemen of repute" in each city where there is a team. At least three hours before a game the visiting team chooses the umpire from among them. [9.01]

A time at bat is not charged to a batter who walks. [10.16]

Canvas-covered bases are required. They are fifteen inches square, the same as today. [1.06]

Home plate is relocated to its present spot. [1.05]

1878 » **1878**

Umpires get paid, by the home team: five dollars a game.

1879 » **1879**

The National League names twenty men living in or near cities where the league has teams as "fit" to be umpires, and each game is run by someone from the list. This rule remained in force until 1883. [9.01]

An umpire's fees and expenses are paid by the visiting club.

An umpire is given the power to impose fines—of not less than ten dollars and not more than twenty dollars—when he thinks it's necessary.

An umpire may terminate a game after a rain delay of thirty minutes. [4.12]

The pitcher is required to face the batter when he pitches. [8.01]

All pitched balls must be called strikes, balls, or fouls.

The number of strikes in an out is officially three. [6.05]

There are nine balls in a walk. [6.08A]

1880 » **1880**

The runner hit by a batted ball is out. [7.08]

The catcher is required to catch a third strike on the fly. [6.05]

The base on balls decreases to eight. [6.08A]

The limits of the fines an umpire may impose change. Now it's not less than five dollars and not more than fifty dollars.

1881 » **1881**

The base on balls is seven. [6.08A]

The pitching distance is lengthened to fifty feet. [1.07]

The pitcher is fined for deliberately hitting a batter with the ball.

A spectator who "hisses or hoots" at or insults the umpire may be ejected from the grounds. [9.01E]

The base runner may no longer be put out when he is returning to his base on a foul ball. [5.09]

1882 » **1882**

The three-foot base line is adopted. [1.04]

Umpires may not reverse decisions on matters of judgment. [9.02]

Umpires may not confer with spectators or players. [*General Instructions to Umpires*]

If an umpire imposes a fine or declares a forfeit, he must report it to the league secretary within twenty-four hours. [4.18]

Umpire corruption rears its ugly head for the first and only time: a National League umpire, Richard Higham, is expelled from the league for collusion with gamblers.

The American League is formed.

1883 » **1883**

A foul ball caught on the bounce ceases to be an out. It must be caught before it touches the ground. [6.05A]

The first system of salaried umpires is introduced, under the same system that is in use today. The four men hired came from cities not represented in the league. [9.01]

An error is charged to the pitcher for a base on balls, wild pitch, hit batter, and balk. [10.13]

Pitching is allowed from anywhere up to shoulder height. [8.01]

1884 » **1884**

Almost all restrictions on a pitcher's motion are lifted. He may throw the ball with virtually any motion he chooses, provided that his delivery is not higher than his shoulders and he is facing the batter at the moment of wind-up. He is allowed only one step before delivery. [8.01]

A base on balls is six. [6.08A]

1885 » **1885**

Home base may be made of marble or whitened rubber. [1.05]

The bat may have one flattened side. (This rule lasted only one year.) [1.10]

The pitcher is credited with an assist on a strike-out. [10.11]

1886 » **1886**

A base on balls is five. [6.08A]

The pitcher's box becomes four feet by seven feet. [1.07]

An umpire may introduce a new ball at any time. Before this year, when a ball was lost, the umpire gave the team five minutes to find it before he threw in a new one. An umpire must have two baseballs at his disposal at all times. [3.01]

First and third base are moved within the foul lines.

A hit batsman is not charged with a time at bat. [10.02]

No stolen base is credited to a runner for bases advanced by his own volition. [10.08]

1887 » **1887**

The pitcher's box is 4 feet by 5 1/2 feet. [1.07]

A pitcher must keep one foot on the rear line of the box and may not take more than one step in delivering the ball. Before delivery he must hold the ball in front of him so that it is visible to the umpire. [8.01]

No error is charged to the pitcher for a base on balls, wild pitch, hit batter, and balk. [10.13]

The umpire may call a game if the spectators are disorderly. The maximum fine for arguing with an ump or protesting a call is ten dollars.

The batter is no longer allowed to request a high or low pitch.

A batter hit by a pitched ball is entitled to first base and not charged with a time at bat. [6.08b]

A strike-out is called on four strikes. (This rule lasted only one season.) [6.05]

Home plate is to be made of rubber and is to be twelve inches square. [1.05]

A base on balls is scored as a hit and counted as a time at bat. This rule lasted one season only. [10.16]

1888 » **1888**

A base on balls is not counted as a hit and not charged as a time at bat. [10.16]

If a runner is hit by a batted ball, the batter is credited with a hit. [10.05]

The strikeout is back to three strikes. [6.05]

It is a ground-rule double instead of a home run if the ball is batted over the fence in fair territory where the fence is less than 210 feet from home plate. [6.09]

The mandatory fine for a coach who leaves the coach's box to protest a call is \$5.

An error is charged to the pitcher for a base on balls, wild pitch, hit batter, and balk. [10.13]

A hit batsman is awarded first base and credited with a hit. [6.08]

A batter is credited with a hit when his batted ball hits a base runner. [10.05]

1889 » **1889**

No error is charged to the pitcher for a base on balls, wild pitch, hit batter, and balk. A pitcher is not credited with an assist on a strikeout. [10.13]

The sacrifice bunt is statistically recognized, but the batter is charged with a time at bat. [10.09]

A base on balls is four, and there it remains. [6.08A]

1890 » **1890**

The ump is called "Mr. Umpire" for the first time.

<u>1891</u>	» 1891
	Substitutions are allowed at any time during a game, but once he has been substituted for, a player may not return. [3.03]
<u>1892</u>	» 1892
	It's a ground-rule double instead of a home run if the ball is hit over the fence in fair territory if the fence is less than 235 feet from home plate. [6.09]
<u>1893</u>	» 1893
	A batter credited with a sacrifice is not charged with a time at bat. [10.09]
	The pitching distance is increased to sixty feet, six inches, where it remains today. [1.07]
	The pitcher's box disappears (never to be seen again) and is replaced by the rubber—a slab twelve inches long and four inches wide. [1.07]
	The pitcher is required to place his rear foot against the slab. [8.01]
<u>1894</u>	» 1894
	The batter is charged with a strike for hitting a foul bunt. [6.05D]
<u>1895</u>	» 1895
	The pitcher's rubber is enlarged to its present size of 24 by 6 inches. [1.07]
	The maximum diameter of the bat is increased to 2 3/4 inches, where it remains today. [1.10]
	The infield fly rule is adopted: the umpire may call an infield fly when there is one out and first and second or first, second, and third base are occupied. [6.05E]
	A strike is charged to a batter for a foul tip. [6.05A]
	The limits on fines change again—to not less than \$25 and not more than \$100.
	If the crowd becomes so unruly that the game is stopped for more than fifteen minutes, the umpire may declare a forfeit. (If that happens, the visitors win, 9-0.) [4.17]
<u>1896</u>	» 1896
	A \$25 fine is imposed on a coach or a player who uses vulgar language. It costs players \$5 to \$10 for any other first offense, \$25 and possibly ejection for a second offense, and mandatory ejection for a third offense.
<u>1897</u>	» 1897
	Intentionally discoloring or injuring the ball is punishable by a \$5 fine. The ball is replaced. [3.02]
	The umpire has twelve hours to report a fine or an ejection to the league president, four hours for a "flagrant offense." [9.05A and 9.05B]

1898 » **1898**

A stolen base is credited to the base runner when he reaches a base he attempts to steal without the aid of batting or fielding errors or a hit by the batter. [10.08]

The first official balk rule: a pitcher is compelled to throw to a base if he makes a motion in that direction. [8.05]

1899 » **1899**

The balk rule is refined: a pickoff throw may not be faked; a pitcher must complete his motion. [8.05]

• [1900](#) » **1900**

A pitcher must win at least fifteen games to qualify as the league leader in the category of Winning Percentage. (The earlier rule stated that a pitcher must appear in twenty-five games.) [10.23]

The shape of home plate is changed, from a twelve-inch square to a five-sided figure seventeen inches wide. [1.05]

• [1901](#) » **1901**

• [1902](#)

The first two fouls are termed strikes (in the National League). [6.05B]

The catcher is no longer allowed to catch two strikes on a bounce. [4.03]

The infield fly rule is in effect when there are no outs as well as one out. [6.05E]

The American League joins the majors (the National League got started in 1876), and the rule discrepancies begin. For instance, the National League declares that any foul ball not caught on the fly is a strike unless the batter has two strikes on him. The AL does not agree—at least not right away. [6.05]

If an offense is "flagrant" enough, the league president may suspend a player or coach who has been fined and/or ejected by an umpire. [9.05C]

• [1903](#) » **1903**

If there is only one umpire in a game, he may stand anywhere on the field he likes. [9.03A]

The American League agrees that any foul ball not caught on the fly is a strike unless the batter has two strikes on him. [6.05]

• [1904](#) » **1904**

The height of the pitcher's mound is established. It may not be higher than fifteen inches above the base lines and home plate. [1.07]

- [1906](#)

>> 1906

- [1907](#)

The umpire gets authority over the groundskeeper. [9.01E]

- [1908](#)

>> 1908

Pitchers are forbidden to scuff or soil a new ball. [8.02]

Four umpires are assigned to the World Series for the first time. Only two work in a game at a given time.

The sacrifice fly rule is adopted, exempting the batter from an at-bat when a run scores after a catch. [10.09]

- [1909](#)

>> 1909

All four umpires assigned to the World Series work in each game.

The pitcher or catcher is charged with an error if a batter reaches first base on a wild pitch or passed ball. [10.13]

A bunt on a third strike is a strikeout. The catcher is credited with the putout. [10.17]

If a runner is thrown out on an attempted double-steal, neither runner shall be credited with a stolen base. [10.08]

- [1910](#)

>> 1910

- [1911](#)

The umpire organization chart is established. The plate umpire-the one who judges balls and strikes-is appointed the umpire-in-chief, and the others are field umpires. An umpire may not interfere with or criticize his colleagues' decisions. Only the umpire-in-chief may declare the game a forfeit. [9.04]

The captain of a team must notify the umpire-in-chief of any substitution. [3.03]

An umpire must warn players on the bench for excessive yelling before he can fine or otherwise punish them for it. [9.01D]

Before a game begins, the umpire must announce any special ground rules. [9.04]

The cork-center ball is adopted for regular use (it had been used in the previous year for occasional play). [1.09]

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1912 • 1913 	<p>» 1912</p> <p>Earned runs are charged to a pitcher when a player scores by means of safe hits, sacrifice hits, bases on balls, hit batters, wild pitches, and balks. [10.18]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1914 • 1915 • 1916 	<p>» 1914</p> <p>In the case of fire, panic, or storm, the umpire does not have to wait until the pitcher has the ball on the mound to call a time-out. [9.04]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1917 • 1918 • 1919 	<p>» 1917</p> <p>Earned runs are also charged to a pitcher when a player scores by means of a stolen base. [10.18]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1920 	<p>» 1920</p> <p>The abolition of the spitball, with a "grandfather clause": each team is allowed to appoint two spitball pitchers for the 1920 season. [8.02]</p> <p>A ball that hits an umpire is in play. [5.08]</p> <p>The umpire may suspend play at any time for an accident to a player or an umpire. [4.12]</p> <p>After a thirty-minute rain delay an umpire may terminate a game. [4 12]</p> <p>A player must appear in at least one hundred games to qualify as the league leader in Batting Average and Slugging Average. Before this there was no official rule, but it was generally accepted that a man had to play in sixty percent of the scheduled games to qualify. [10.23]</p> <p>The category of RBI is added to scoring. [10.04]</p> <p>A runner may not run the bases in reverse order "for the purpose of confusing the fielders or making a travesty of the game." [7.08]</p> <p>The ball has its gloss removed before a game by the umpire. [3.01]</p> <p>Enter the "lively ball." Australian yarn, said to be stronger than its American equivalent, may be wound tighter, so the ball's bounce and hardness increase. [1.09]</p> <p>No stolen base is to be credited when the defense makes no attempt to get the runner out. [10.08]</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1921 • 1922 • 1923 • 1924 	<p>» 1921</p> <p>Another grandfather clause in the spitball rule: eight National League and nine American League pitchers are officially designated as spitball pitchers and allowed to use the spitter for the rest of their careers. [8.02]</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1925 	<p>» 1925</p> <p>Pitchers are allowed to use a rosin bag. [8.02E]</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1926 • 1927 • 1928 • 1929 • 1930 	<p>» 1926</p> <p>Pitchers are not credited with a strikeout if a batter reaches first base because of a wild pitch on the third strike. [10.17]</p> <p>It is a ground-rule double instead of a home run if the ball is hit over the fence in fair territory if the fence is less than 250 feet from home plate. [6.09]</p> <p>The cushioned cork-center baseball is introduced. [1.09]</p> <p>The sacrifice fly rule is amended to exempt a batter from an at-bat when a runner advances from first to second or second to third as well as on scoring. [10.09]</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1931 • 1932 	<p>» 1931</p> <p>A fair ball that bounces through or over a fence or into the stands is considered a ground-rule double instead of a home run. [6.09]</p> <p>The sacrifice fly is eliminated. [10.09]</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1933 	<p>» 1933</p> <p>Three umpires to a daily game come into regular use.</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1934 	<p>» 1934</p> <p>Both major leagues are required to adopt the same brand of baseball. [1.09]</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1935 • 1936 	<p>» 1935</p> <p>The first umpire school opens, in Hot Springs, Arkansas.</p> <p>The first major league night baseball game is played, in Cincinnati on May</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1937 • 1938 	<p>24.</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1939 	<p>» 1939</p> <p>Six umpires are appointed to the World Series, two of whom work as alternates.</p> <p>The pitcher is allowed to have his free foot in front of or behind the rubber, with his pivot foot in front of or on the rubber (but always in contact with it). [8.01]</p> <p>A batter is credited with a sacrifice fly and not charged with a time at bat if he hits a fly ball that is caught and a runner scores on the catch. This rule lasted only a year. [10.09]</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1940 • 1941 • 1942 • 1943 • 1944 	<p>» 1940</p> <p>A batter is no longer credited with a sacrifice fly. [10.09]</p> <p>The pitcher is permitted to take two steps-one forward, one backward-as long as his pivot foot remains in contact with the rubber at all times. [8.01]</p> <p>It is a balk if a pitcher throws or fakes a throw to an unoccupied base. [8.02]</p> <p>The umpire assumes authority over trainers. [9.01E]</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1945 • 1946 	<p>» 1945</p> <p>A player must have at least four hundred at-bats to qualify as the league leader in Batting Average or Slugging Average. [10.23]</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1947 • 1948 	<p>» 1947</p> <p>Six umpires are hired to work in the World Series, all of them on the field.</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1949 	<p>» 1949</p> <p>On December 21 the "new" rules are issued. There are no major changes, but many ambiguities are eliminated, and they are recodified into the ten sections we have today.</p> <hr/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1950 	<p>» 1950</p> <p>An umpire may no longer levy fines. That job is reserved for the league</p>

president.

The pitcher's mound must be fifteen inches above the level of the base lines. [1.07]

A player must play in at least two-thirds of his team's scheduled games to qualify as the league leader in Batting Average or Slugging Average. [10.23]

• [1951](#) » **1951**

A pitcher must pitch a total of at least one inning for every scheduled game to qualify as the league leader in the categories of Earned Run Average or Fielding Average. (Before this, he had to pitch at least ten complete games and at least one hundred innings.) [10.23]

A player must have at least four hundred at-bats to qualify as the league leader in Batting Average or Slugging Average. However, if there is any player with fewer than the required number of times at bat whose average would be the highest if he were charged with this required at-bat total, then he shall be recognized as the league leader. [10.23]

• [1952](#) » **1952**

• [1953](#)

Four umpires to a regular game becomes standard practice.

• [1954](#) » **1954**

A batter is credited with a sacrifice fly and not charged with a time at bat if he hits a fly ball and the runner scores on the catch. [10.09]

Offensive players are required to "carry all gloves and other equipment off the field . . . while their team is at bat." [3.14]

The bat may be made of two or more pieces of wood laminated together. [1.10]

• [1955](#) » **1955**

The 1951 rule is repealed. A player must have at least four hundred at-bats, period, to qualify as the league leader in Batting Average or Slugging Average. [10.23]

When a base is occupied, a pitcher must deliver the pitch within twenty seconds of receiving it from the catcher. If he fails to do so, the umpire may call a ball. [8.04]

• [1956](#) » **1956**

	<p>A base runner who interferes with a batted ball in order to break up a double play is to be declared out, as is the batter. [7.08H]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1957 • 1958 	<p>» 1958</p> <p>A player must have a total of at least 3.1 plate appearances for every scheduled game to qualify as the league leader in Batting Average or Slugging Average. [10.23]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1959 • 1960 • 1961 	<p>» 1959</p> <p>Minimum fence distances are established for new ballpark construction. [1.04]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1962 • 1963 • 1964 • 1965 • 1966 	<p>» 1962</p> <p>Oversized gloves are banned for use by pitchers, infielders, and outfielders. [1.14 and 1.15]</p> <p>Batters may apply a grip-improving substance to the bat, though not beyond eighteen inches of its length beginning at the handle. [1.10]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1967 	<p>» 1967</p> <p>A player must have a total of at least 3.1 plate appearances for every scheduled game to qualify as the league leader in Batting Average or Slugging Average. However, if there is any player with fewer than the required number of plate appearances whose average would be highest if he were charged with this required number of appearances, then the player shall be recognized as the league leader in Batting or Slugging Average. [10.23]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1968 	<p>» 1968</p> <p>The pitcher's mound is lowered to ten inches above home plate and the base lines, where it remains today. [1.07]</p> <p>If a pitcher "goes to his mouth" with men on base, a balk is declared. If the bases are empty, a ball is called. [8.02]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1969 • 1970 	<p>» 1969</p> <p>Runs are earned by a relief pitcher who enters the game in the middle of an</p>

	<p>inning as if he entered the game at the beginning of the inning. [10.18]</p> <p>The category of Saves is added to baseball statistics. [10.20]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1971 • 1972 	<p>» 1971</p> <p>All major league players must wear protective helmets at bat. [1.16]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1973 	<p>» 1973</p> <p>The year of the DH. The American League votes to accept the designated hitter rule on a three-year experimental basis. The National League votes against it. [6.10]</p> <p>A reliever is credited with a save for "protecting" a lead. [10.20]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1974 	<p>» 1974</p> <p>The save rule is amended slightly; no save is to be credited to a pitcher unless the tying run was on base or at the plate or unless he pitched three effective innings. (Before this a reliever was given a save if he maintained the lead, no matter what the score when he arrived.) [10.20]</p> <p>Umpires may declare illegal pitches without any physical evidence. If they think that the motion of the ball indicates that the pitcher is throwing a spitter or a defaced ball, they may issue a warning and, if it happens a second time, eject a pitcher from the game. [8.02]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1975 	<p>» 1975</p> <p>The ball may be covered with cowhide as well as horsehide. [1.09]</p> <p>Cupped bats are allowed. [1.10]</p> <p>The save is refined once more: if the tying run is on deck, a pitcher is credited with a save. [10 20]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1976 • 1977 	<p>» 1976</p> <p>The American League accepts the DH as a permanent part of the rules. The National League reaffirms its opposition. [6.10]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1978 • 1979 	<p>» 1978</p> <p>A pitcher's ERA is to be calculated henceforth with fractions of innings pitched rather than with full innings. [10.22]</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1980 • 1981 • 1982 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1983 • 1984 • 1985 • 1986 • 1987 	<p>» 1983</p> <p>A pitcher who pitches only a third of an inning in a season will not have his ERA rounded off. His total for innings pitched will be carried as one third. [10.22]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1988 	<p>» 1988</p> <p>Protective helmets are mandatory for catchers. [1.16(d)]</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1989 	<p>» 1989</p> <p>The "game-winning RBI" (previously credited to a batter who gave his club "the lead it never relinquished") is eliminated as an official statistic. [10.04(e)]</p>