

baseball

<https://www.agoramores.com/sports/leagues/baseball>

Tags: [sports](#) · [leagues](#)

Related

leagues

- [MLB](#)
- [Minor League Ballparks](#)
- [MLS Teams](#)
- [Cities with the Big 5 Leagues](#)
- [NHL](#)
- [minor league baseball](#)

sports

- [Running in Tennessee](#)
- [Top Ten Ohio 5Ks](#)
- [Ohio 5K Tracker](#)
- [running](#)
- [world market sports](#)
- [sports](#)

Baseball

A bat-and-ball game played by two teams of nine, usually over nine innings. A run scores when a runner legally advances around the bases in order and touches home plate. That is the whole object of the game, and everything else is machinery for getting there or stopping it.

Baseball earns a place on a leisure site for two reasons that pull in opposite directions. It is one of the most heavily professionalised sports in the world — see [top ten big money sports](#) — and it is also one of the easiest to play badly in a park with whatever you have. Both halves are below.

The field, in real numbers

These are rule-book constants rather than estimates, so they are stated directly.

Measurement	Figure	Note
Between consecutive bases	90 feet	First explicitly prescribed by the NABBP Convention of 1857
Pitcher's plate to home plate	60 feet 6 inches (18.44 m)	Front of the rubber to the rear point of the plate

Mound height	No higher than 10 inches (25 cm) above home plate	Was 15 inches (38 cm) from 1903 through 1968
Outfield fence, foul poles	250 ft (76 m) minimum, 320 ft (98 m) recommended	Major League Baseball
Outfield fence, centre	400 ft (120 m) recommended	Major League Baseball
Home plate	One side 17 in, two adjacent sides 8.5 in, remaining two about 12 in	
Bases	18 inches square, 3–5 inches thick	Canvas or rubber cushions
Little League base paths	60 feet	Ages 12 and under

The mound change is worth knowing if you ever read older statistics: pitchers threw from six inches higher until 1969, and the numbers on either side of that line are not really the same sport.

Where it came from

The American-invention story does not survive the record. The earliest known reference to baseball is British — a 1744 publication, *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* — and the first recorded game of "Base Ball" took place in Surrey in 1749.

Year	Event
1744	Earliest known reference, in the British <i>A Little Pretty Pocket-Book</i>
1749	First recorded game of "Base Ball", in Surrey
1838	First recorded North American game, 4 June, Beachville, Ontario
1845	Alexander Cartwright leads the codification of the Knickerbocker Rules
1846	First recorded United States game, 19 June, Hoboken, New Jersey
1857	NABBP Convention fixes 90 feet between bases
1876	National League founded
1901	American League established as a major league; the minor-league body founded 5 September as the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues
1939	Carl Edwin Stotz founds Little League in Williamsport, Pennsylvania
1947	First Little League Baseball World Series, Williamsport
1974	New Jersey Superior Court rules Little League must admit girls, after a suit brought for Maria Pepe by the National Organization for Women; President Ford signs a bill to the same effect in late December
2000	The National and American Leagues merge into a single organisation, Major League Baseball
2013	World Baseball Softball Confederation formed, 14 April, from the merger of the IBAF and the ISF
2021	Restructured 120-team affiliated minor-league system takes effect

Watching it

Major League Baseball has 30 teams split evenly between the National and American Leagues, each playing 162 regular-season games. It describes itself as the oldest major professional sports league in the United States and Canada.

Affiliated Minor League Baseball is the part that matters most for anyone who wants to see professional baseball without travelling to a major market. It is 120 teams in four classes of 30 — Triple-A, Double-A, High-A and Single-A — plus rookie-level complex leagues in Arizona and Florida and the Dominican Summer League. MLB owns and operates it. The 120-team shape dates only from the 2021 season; before the reorganisation the system was much larger, and much larger again before that: 448 teams across 59 leagues in 1949, drawing 39 million attendees that year. Attendance later peaked at 41.6 million in 2009.

This page states no ticket prices, travel costs or parking figures. None of that is sourced here, and it changes every season.

Related pages: [minor league baseball](#) holds the state-by-state list; [West Virginia minor league](#) is the one state worked through in detail.

Playing it

Ordered roughly by how little it costs to start.

- **Baseball5** — the stripped-down version the WBSC proposed in 2017, first played internationally in 2018. Five a side plus three substitutes, five innings, on a 21 m (68.90 ft) square with bases 13 m (42.65 ft) apart. The only piece of equipment is a hollow natural rubber ball: no bat, no glove, no protective gear. It was designed to be cheaper and more accessible than baseball proper, and to be playable in spaces that will not fit a diamond.
- **Wiffle ball, stickball, sandlot ball** — the informal descendants. No governing body, no fixed field, and the rules are whatever the group agrees on before the first pitch.
- **Tee-ball** — the standard entry point for young children, and a Little League division for ages 4–7.
- **Little League** — founded 1939, headquartered in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania, with divisions running from tee-ball up to Senior League for ages 13–16. Following the 2008 season it reported nearly 2.6 million participants worldwide.
- **Softball** — the related game, governed by the same international body.
- **College baseball** — the main amateur route in the United States above school age.
- **Vintage base ball** — period re-creation, played to nineteenth-century rules.

Around the world

Top domestic professional leagues, with founding years taken from each league's own article rather than from summaries elsewhere. The two figures disagree often enough that it is worth saying which was used.

Country	League	Founded	Teams
United States and Canada	Major League Baseball	NL 1876, AL 1901, merged 2000	30
Japan	Nippon Professional Baseball	1950 in its current form; the Japanese Baseball League ran 1936–1950	12
Mexico	Mexican Baseball League (Liga Mexicana de Béisbol)	28 June 1925	20
South Korea	KBO League	1982	10

The Mexican league sat inside the United States minor-league structure for decades — Double-A from 1955, Triple-A from 1967 — and returned to independent status in 2021.

Cuba, Venezuela and the Dominican Republic all have deep baseball cultures and older professional histories; the Wikipedia baseball article dates a Cuban professional league to 1878, a Venezuelan one to 1946 and a Dominican one to 1955. Those cells are left out of the table above because this page has not resolved each of them to a league article it can name with confidence. Winter-league champions from the region meet in the Caribbean Series.

International competition

Governing body. The World Baseball Softball Confederation, formed in 2013 by the merger of the International Baseball Federation and the International Softball Federation. It governs baseball, softball, Baseball5 and blind baseball, is headquartered in Pully, Switzerland, and reports 208 national federation members across 141 countries and territories. Riccardo Fraccari is president.

World Baseball Classic. Run by World Baseball Classic Inc., a partnership of the WBSC, Major League Baseball and the MLB Players Association. Editions have been held in 2006, 2009, 2013, 2017, 2023 and 2026, the last with 20 teams.

Edition	Winner
2006	Japan
2009	Japan
2013	Dominican Republic
2017	United States
2023	Japan
2026	Venezuela

Olympics. Baseball was a demonstration sport in 1912, 1936, 1952, 1956, 1964, 1984 and 1988, and a full medal sport from 1992 through 2008. The IOC voted on 7 July 2005 to drop it from the 2012 programme and reaffirmed that on 9 February 2006, citing the absence of the best players. It returned for Tokyo 2020, was absent from Paris 2024, and is on the Los Angeles 2028 programme as one of five optional sports — six teams at Dodger Stadium, 13–19 July 2028. See [Baseball at the Olympics](#).

Gaps on this page

Honest list of what is missing rather than a pretence of coverage.

- No Ohio or Columbus section yet, which is the obvious local angle for this site.
- No cost figures of any kind, deliberately — see above.
- Women's baseball is named but not covered.
- The Caribbean and Latin American leagues need their own note before their rows can join the table.

Related pages

- [Sports](#) · [Olympic Sports](#)
- [MLB](#) · [minor league baseball](#) · [West Virginia minor league](#)
- [MLB Ballparks](#) · [Minor League Ballparks](#) — every current and former ballpark, with map files
- [Baseball at the Olympics](#) · [softball](#)
- [US Pro Sports](#) · [list of all sports](#)
- [top ten big money sports](#) · [top ten viewership sports](#)
- [outdoor backyard sports](#) · [recreational activities](#) · [acreage activities](#)

Sources

Wikipedia, checked 10 August 2026. Every URL below returned 200 and sits under the /wiki/ path that Wikipedia's robots.txt permits.

- [Baseball](#)
- [Baseball field](#)
- [Knickerbocker Rules](#)
- [Major League Baseball](#)
- [Minor League Baseball](#)
- [Nippon Professional Baseball](#)
- [Mexican Baseball League](#)
- [KBO League](#)
- [Chinese Professional Baseball League](#)
- [Caribbean Series](#)
- [World Baseball Softball Confederation](#)
- [World Baseball Classic](#)
- [Baseball at the Summer Olympics](#)
- [Baseball at the 2028 Summer Olympics](#)
- [Baseball5](#)
- [Little League Baseball](#)
- [Tee-ball](#)
- [College baseball](#)
- [Vintage base ball](#)
- [Softball](#)
- [Wiffle ball](#)
- [Sandlot ball](#)
- [Stickball](#)
- [Women's baseball](#)

The governing bodies

[All Baseball Associations in the World](#) and [Biggest Baseball Organizations](#) cover who runs the sport, worldwide and in the United States. Regional pages: [Baseball Teams in Maine](#), [minor league baseball](#), [MLB](#), [MLB Ballparks](#).