

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 28, 2008

PLAYING RULES COMMITTEE ENACTS RULES MODIFICATIONS FOR 2008

Major League Baseball's Playing Rules Committee has adopted a number of slight changes to the language of the Official Baseball Rules that will take effect this season as well as several experimental initiatives that will be employed at the Minor League level in the 2008 season, it was announced today.

Under Major League Rule 25(c), the Playing Rules Committee is charged with voting to amend the Official Baseball Rules. The Playing Rules Committee addressed a number of areas where existing Rules could be clarified, harmonized with other Rules or amended to be consistent with accepted practices at the professional level. The Rules amendments enacted this year primarily address those areas and do not make any major changes in the way the game is played.

Noteworthy among this year's changes are experimental rules that are to be used in the two Minor Leagues at the Short-Season A classification, the New York-Penn League and the Northwest League, for the 2008 season. New language inserted into Rule 8.04, which regulates the time that a pitcher has to pitch, details additional pace of game measures that will be implemented on an experimental basis. Rule 8.04 will be amended to increase the time within which a pitcher must pitch (from 12 to 15 seconds), but the timing will begin when the pitcher receives the ball, without regard for whether the batter is ready for the pitch. If the batter has had a reasonable opportunity to get ready and is not ready, he would be at risk for having the pitcher pitch or, if the batter is out of the batter's box, for having an automatic strike called, as set forth in Rules 6.02(c) and (d).

In addition, another experimental rule in the New York-Penn League and the Northwest League will regulate visits to the mound, limiting the number of visits to the mound by managers, coaches and infielders. Among the provisions of the rule is that any combination of three or more manager/coach visits to the mound in a game without removing the pitcher will result in the automatic removal of the pitcher from the game on a fourth visit, regardless of whether prior visits were to the same or different pitcher(s), and that no more than one infielder at a time is permitted to visit the mound, including during any visit by a manager or coach. The limitation on the number of mound visits is similar to the rules used in international and NCAA play, and the restriction on infielder visits to the mound is similar to the international rule.

An added comment to Rule 4.05 requires that a coach, until being passed by a batted ball, must position himself no closer to home plate than the front edge of the coach's box and no closer to fair territory than the edge of the coach's box closest to the field.

Other revisions intended to improve, clarify or harmonize language affects Rules 1.14, 3.01, 6.05, 7.03, 8.01 and 8.05. The rules index has also been revised extensively.

"The Playing Rules Committee is pleased to take these additional steps to modernize the Official Baseball Rules and to enhance their practicality wherever possible," said Jimmie Lee Solomon, MLB's Executive Vice President of Baseball Operations and a member of the Playing Rules Committee. "We will be particularly interested in monitoring the new experimental pace of game procedures in the New York-Penn League and the Northwest League. The improvement of pace of game is an important goal common to all levels of professional baseball, and Major League Baseball will remain proactive in this effort."

This marks the second consecutive season in which the Playing Rules Committee has made changes to the Rules. Prior to last year, the Rules had not been changed since the Strike Zone was redefined in 1996. Last year's changes included a modification regarding regulation tie games, providing that a tied regulation game that is stopped would now be suspended and resumed before the next scheduled game between the same two clubs on the same grounds, and extensively revised Official Baseball Rule 10, which concerns official scorers and scoring rules, acting upon recommendations of an ad hoc advisory committee comprised of official scorers, Club personnel and Major League Baseball staff.

The Playing Rules Committee consists of Solomon; John McHale, Jr., MLB's Executive Vice President for Administration; Sandy Alderson, the Chief Executive Officer of the San Diego Padres; Bob Beban, the President and General Manager of the Eugene Emeralds of the Northwest League; Hall of Famer Rod Carew, a 19-year Major League veteran; Terry Ryan, Senior Advisor to the General Manager of the Minnesota Twins; John Schuerholz, the President of the Atlanta Braves; Bill Stoneman, Senior Advisor to the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim; and MLB Umpire Supervisor Larry Young, a 23-year Major League Umpire. Mike Gaski, President of USA Baseball and head baseball coach at UNC-Greensboro, is an advisory member of the Committee.

#

Contact: Richard Levin or Patrick Courtney, Major League Baseball, (212) 931-7878