

INTRODUCTION

This update covers the rules amendments and (in some cases) rules clarifications and notes that along with the version 3.1 rulebook for Gameplan Baseball and version 4.2 update forms the version 4.4 rules. It includes all of the version 4.3 updates (essentially it is the same document, with a few minor additions and clarifications). Rules changes are shown in normal text, with clarifications and notes in italics.

Most of the rules in this update do not come into play until a league has started a new season, at which time it is shown as running under “2009” rules. All changes which apply for 2009 rules only are shown below.

UPDATE TO 2009 RULES

The update to 2009 rules occurs at the end of the third playoff round, after the playoffs, special actions, draft, veteran assessment and reduction of losing points, but before the team report and turnsheet and produced. The first turn run under 2009 rules is therefore preseason.

1.17 ROSTER (2009 Rules)

The RESERVE squad is expanded to four players. When a league updates to the 2009 rules then one of your DRAFT squad players (randomly selected) is automatically promoted to the RESERVE squad (this will appear on the team report you receive at the end of the third draft round turn).

Notes: this means that for the first season of the 2009 rules you’ll have a maximum of two players on your draft squad (because you Reserve includes one of the three draftees) but for the second season you will have the option of carrying four reserve and three draft squad players.

1.21 SEPTEMBER CALLUPS (2009 Rules)

There are no restrictions on selecting players for weeks 16, 17 and 18 of play (“September”) – players may be selected even if they are on the RESERVE or DRAFT squads (the same as for preseason games).

Notes: this mirrors real-life, whereby from September 1st (the last month of the season) rosters are expanded from 25 to 40 players. The restriction on selecting active players returns for the playoffs.

3.12.1 PITCHING FATIGUE (2009 Rules)

Pitchers from the bullpen will suffer fatigue slightly more quickly than in previous versions of the rules, though this does not apply to closers and setup pitchers.

Notes: it’s been noticeable that often pitchers out of the bullpen are lasting longer on the mound than is realistic. Whilst I have not changed the situation for setup and closing pitchers (who know when they’ll enter a game, and generally only have to warm up once) I think an adjustment for other pitchers, who often have to warm up more than once on an evening, and who are not as used as starters to pitching multiple innings is appropriate. This change should mean a slight increase in importance of having depth in the bullpen.

3.14 HOLDOUTS

A player cannot be a holdout in the final week of the regular season.

Notes: as the following turn is the playoffs, and there are no wages paid, a holdout is pointless.

4.5.5 MINBATS (MnB – 2009 Rules)

Minbats is a new pitching parameter, which determines the “minimum” number of batters a pitcher is expected to face. Until a pitcher has faced more than his MINBATS number of batters, his MAXHITS is increased by 50% (rounding down) – once he has faced MINBATS batters, then his MAXHITS returns to normal. MINBATS cannot be set below 1. The initial value of MINBATS is 1.

e.g.: a pitcher has MAXBATS of 27, MINBATS of 15 and MAXHITS of 3. For the first 15 batters he faces, his MAXHITS is actually 4 ($3 \times 1.5 = 4.5$, rounds down to 4), once he has faced 15, then his MAXHITS is 3.

Note – it is quite possible a pitcher may be removed because of his MAXHITS reducing after he has got an out (e.g he allows three hits with an increased MAXHITS of 4, but then gets an out at the same time as his MAXHITS reduces to 3 – he’ll still be removed, regardless of getting one final out).

Notes: The introduction of MINBATS is intended to allow managers more flexibility in deciding when to remove a pitcher from the game. Until he has reached his MINBATS, the threshold for removing him is higher, but once he reaches his MINBATS, then he's more likely to get a "quick hook" from the game. Note that if you leave MINBATS as 1, then effectively it won't ever apply – and the criteria for removing a pitcher is exactly the same as under 2005 rules.

This change has been added in anticipation that some managers will want to allow more leeway for some pitchers (e.g. veterans) in the early innings, but retain an "early hook" for others (e.g. younger pitchers).

4.19 FATIGUED PITCHERS (2009 Rules)

A fatigued pitcher's MINBATS is reduced by the same amount as his MAXBATS.

5.3 LINEUP CHANGES (2009 Rules)

The batting changes have now been changed to "Lineup Changes" and extended to include pitchers. There are still only three changes available. Obviously pitchers cannot be swapped for batters, but you can use this to move players into your starting rotation, bullpen, setup or closer, in exactly the same way as with batting changes. If the player being moved in already occupies a spot in the pitching lineup, then the two players effectively swap (e.g. you could use this to swap your setup and closing pitchers around mid turn).

Note: there is a good deal of flexibility with this change – e.g. allowing a manager to swap a player from his starting rotation with his bullpen. However, you are strongly advised to be careful with this, as there is significant scope for making a mess, in particular the danger of starting a pitcher with significant fatigue.

6.6 SCOUT

Scouting a player now reports his form and total form.

6.25 LONGINN

Longinn may now be set between 1 and 6.

6.37 MINORS (2009 Rules)

The special action MINORS is used to increase the overall level of a ballclubs' Minor League network. The cost is $\text{NewLevel}^2 - \text{OldLevel}^2$ (so the same scale as STADIUM and TRAINERS). The MINORS level decreases by two at the end of each season. The maximum level of Minors is 15.

Each week of the season, the current level of minors is used to affect the Form of players on your Reserve and Draft squads (i.e currently in the Minor Leagues), but not Active Squad players. The higher the level of Minors, the higher their weekly form is likely to be (but there's still a variable element).

Notes: The Minors action is included to reflect a ballclub's commitment to developing its younger players. The higher the level of Minors, the better the form (and therefore Total Form) of players in the minor leagues. Note that a Minors Level of 5 will have the same impact on form gained as in the pre-2009 rules.

7.2 LIST

A player may be listed on consecutive turns.

8.2 SIGNING FREE AGENTS

When a free agent is signed, his form is reset to zero. Total form is unchanged.

8.6 UNSIGNED FREE AGENTS (2009 Rules)

The rule whereby a "new" free agent is assigned randomly a "previous team" has been deleted. Such free agents are assumed to have appeared from outside the farm system, and no compensation is due to any team.

Notes: this change removes the inequity whereby some teams get an influx of LPs via compensation, whilst others get nothing, simply down to luck of the draw and the usefulness of "their free agent". Additionally, it is common in real-life that Major League teams are signing players from abroad and outside the system.

A further change to the 2009 rules is that **any** player who is released with a potential of zero has a chance of announcing his intention to retire immediately (unless, under rule 8.4, he disappears). The chance of this occurring is dependent on his experience, unless he has already been a free agent that season, in which case he will always announce his intention to retire immediately.

*Note: under the 2005 rules, many managers were aware that a player with 12 or less potential would never announce his immediate retirement, and a player with 13 or more would always do so. Both scenarios are unrealistic, and now there's a chance of **all** players deciding they'll retire when they're released, rather than hanging around to find "one last contract". Of course, such players can still be resigned in the usual way – they're simply announcing they're not prepared to hang around and see their value decline.*

11.5 DRAFT LIST

There are no actual changes to the draft, but the draft list has been substantially revised. First of all there is more depth to it, such that players will not be available with a trade level of lower than 8 (7 for "veterans"). Secondly, around a fifth of the draft list will comprise players who, whilst still "rookies", are more developed (mirroring a mixture of the Rule 5 Draft and Overseas postings). These players will be low on potential, but ready to play, and give managers the option of drafting a "quick fix" player.

In addition, the order in which players appear on the draft list has now been changed, with them being ordered according to Trade Level, then Level, then Potential, then Value.

These changes are intended to ensure each round of the draft is meaningful, with scope to add a player who will be productive, either in the short term or in the long term, and give managers serious decisions to make.

11.8 END OF DRAFT (2009 Rules)

When a player is assessed at the end of the season, there is now a chance he will lose two points of potential, in which case his chance of converting it into improved skills increases accordingly. This only applies to players with potential of 15 and above.

Notes: this currently only applies to those with stacks of potential, who effectively develop more quickly.

12.3.12 WON-LOST DECISIONS

A loss is awarded to a starting pitcher who leaves the game with a deficit and his team fails to tie the game.

Notes: this hasn't been in before, but if the starter leaves with his team losing the game, and they fail to tie or take the lead later in the game, then he is responsible for the loss.

12.3.13 SAVES

A save is awarded to a relief pitcher who finishes the game by pitching three or more innings, regardless of the score when he entered the game.

Notes: it's obscure, but it's a MLB rule, so we've mirrored it in Gameplan Baseball.

Design Notes

I'm very aware that these are only a limited set of changes from those potentially outlined in December 2008, but I'm aware of the importance of not making too many potentially drastic changes at once, and significantly changing the balance of the game (as well as my own limited scope for making software changes – many of which will require a fairly major rewrite of the system, as there's a need to expand the data declarations to implement further possible changes)). I therefore think these are sufficient changes to the game, and we can see how they work out and digest them before making further changes.

I am aware that there are a number of changes herein which effectively take LPs out of the system. The change to "no name free agents" I estimate takes a total of 200-400 LPs in compensation out of the system (so an average of 10-15 LPs per team, albeit far from evenly spread) and the MINORS action will require LPs to be spent (if you wish to use it). In addition, the extra space on the reserve squad will require one more player to be paid wages. On the flipside, the new draft list may mean teams have a few more LPs, either through waiving slightly more valuable draftees, or through replacing veterans who they waive.

Nevertheless, I don't think it's right to increase any stream of LP income – coaches can always reduce their TRAINERS (by not updating them) if they need to find LPs. If we think down the road income is too tight, we can address it then.

As far as the other changes I've mooted are concerned, please don't assume they have been rejected, simply that I've not prioritised them this time. I'll keep them up my sleeve to be added when time (and game balance) permit, and in many of the cases, they don't involve the roster system, which I think we want bedding in as soon as possible..