

The Geneva History Center is seeking avid baseball fans to help us stage an 1858-rules baseball game at Peck Farm Park. The game is scheduled for Sunday, October 3 at 2 p.m. Our **Geneva Rovers** will be taking on the **Batavia Bat Men** in nine innings of old fashioned fun. Each year we stage a throwback match to remember Geneva's long baseball history. Last year, the **Bat Men** beat us in the ninth so we hope to return the favor in October. If you, or anyone that you know, are interested in playing for the **Geneva Rovers**, please contact Dave Oberg, Executive Director at 630-232-4951 or email Exec_Dir@genevahistorycenter.org. We will hold two practices on Thursday, September 16 and Thursday, September 23 at 6:30 p.m. at Peck Farm Park, Field #2 to familiarize new players with the wildly different rules and customs. A brief description of the rules follows. This is an all ages team and is a great deal of fun. We hope to see you on the diamond.

1858 Rules

The bases shall be placed 90 feet apart, and the pitcher's plate shall be placed 45 feet from home plate and at the center of a line 12 feet long.

The ball shall be pitched underhanded and as close as possible to the center of home plate, for the striker.

The pitcher may begin his approach from any distance behind the pitcher's plate, but must release the ball before either foot crosses the line. Otherwise, a balk is called, and the striker and runners will be given a free base.

Should the pitcher draw back his hand or move so as to give the impression that he is delivering the ball, he must do so, or a balk is called and the striker and runners are given a free base.

A ball is considered foul if it either first touches the ground in foul territory or is caught in foul territory. Likewise, a ball that first touches the ground in fair territory or is caught on the fly in fair territory is considered fair. The umpire is obligated to call all foul balls clearly and in a timely manner. The umpire does not announce fair balls.

Outs: A striker may be put out if a struck ball is caught on the fly or on the bound in fair or foul territory, or if he swings at and misses three pitched balls. If, however, the catcher fails to retrieve the ball on the third strike, either on the fly or the first bound, the ball shall be deemed fair and the striker must attempt to advance. For purposes of play, only a ball that is swung at and missed constitutes a strike. However, should the umpire determine that a player is repeatedly allowing good balls to pass, he will warn the striker, after which he will begin calling strikes on all fair pitches allowed to pass. Players may also be forced out at first base, or at any base where a force play would normally apply. In addition, if a player is touched by the ball in the hands of an adversary at any point when he is off base, he may be put out.

Advancing: Players may advance only on a fair ball that is not caught on the fly. If a ball is caught on the fly in fair or foul territory, players may not advance, even should they tag up. Players may return to their base and may not be put out unless they remain off base until such time as the ball is returned to the pitcher and fairly pitched to the next batter.

Running the Bases: Runners should remain within three feet on either side of the base line.

Any player who intentionally prevents an adversary from catching or fielding a ball shall be declared out.

Adversaries shall not intentionally obstruct players attempting to make a base.

If a player stops a ball with his cap, or takes it from the hands of a party not engaged in the game, that ball must first settle into the hands of the pitcher before a player can be put out.

If a runner tallies an ace before the third out is made, that ace will be counted, so long as the striker does not constitute the third out.

The game shall consist of nine innings, unless the score be tied at the completion of the ninth inning, in which case, the game will continue until the tie be broken and the inning be completed. If play should need to be suspended before the completion of nine innings, and at least five innings should be completed, then the score achieved at the end of the last completed inning shall determine the outcome of the game.

Striking: Strikers must proceed in an orderly fashion and must follow a designated lineup. In each inning of successive play, the first striker shall be the player listed in the lineup who follows the player who had the last at bat in the previous inning of play.

Other: Players who over run first base do not get a free base. Bunting is not allowed, but players may employ a chop. A full nine innings of play is expected, even if the last team at bat is already ahead at the bottom of the ninth.

Customs: In addition, most clubs observe a number of customs that represent how the game was likely played in that era. Some of these are contentious and likely to change as research continues while others are likely to stand.

Currently, clubs following the rules and customs of 1858 practice the following:

Sliding, stealing and leading off are prohibited.

Fielders play in the center of their positions until the ball crosses the plate or is struck. The shortstop may play anywhere and as shallow or deep as he wants. He may also play in foul territory.

Players respectfully ask the scorekeeper to tally their ace, after which they often ring a victory bell.